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British Bank Warns Kremlin-Backed Russia Today

By The Moscow Times

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Mikhail Fomichev / TASS

NatWest Bank has told Kremlin-funded broadcaster Russia Today that it will no longer be able to service the channel in a two months' time.

Margarita Simonyan, the channel's editor-in-chief, tweeted in Russian: "They've closed our accounts in Britain. All our accounts. The decision is not subject to review. Praise be to freedom of speech!''

The channel received a letter from NatWest Bank, which said: "We have recently undertaken a review of your banking arrangements with us and reached the conclusion that we will no longer provide these facilities." NatWest wrote that the entire Royal Bank of Scotland Group, of which the bank is part, will refuse to service RT.

Maria Zakharova, the Russian Foreign Ministry's spokesperson, wrote on Facebook: "It looks

like, as it leaves the EU, London has decided to leave behind all its obligations toward freedom of speech. As they say, best to start a new life without bad habits."

The move comes a day after the U.S. and Britain spoke of considering further sanctions against Moscow if the bombing of Aleppo by Syrian and Russian forces continued.

RT has previously been sanctioned by Ofcom, the British media-regulating body. Last year, Ofcom ruled that the Kremlin-backed channel breached the broadcasting code in its programs on the conflicts in Syria and Ukraine.

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