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Russian Consulate in San Francisco Shutters Ahead of U.S. Deadline

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The Russian Consulate in San Francisco **ruszarub / Flickr**

The Russian Consulate in San Francisco announced overnight it would stop issuing passports and receiving visitors on Friday, one day ahead of the United States' order for it shut down.

"Starting Sept. 1, 2017 the Consulate General of Russia in San Francisco stops receiving visitors on all consular issues," the mission states on its website's English-language section.

The consular section will issue Russian passports until 1.00 p.m. local time, according to the consulate's Russian-language site.

Related article: Russia Reacts to the Closure of Its San Francisco Consulate

The U.S. State Department's order on Thursday for the consulate's closure by Sept. 2 will hit both Russian and American citizens "hard," the diplomatic mission added.

Washington’s move comes after Russia’s Foreign Ministry instructed the U.S. diplomatic mission to Russia to reduce its staff by hundreds of people by Sept. 1.

Russia’s state-run news agency RIA Novosti cited an unidentified White House official as saying that Trump made the decision on the San Francisco consulate’s closure after being “presented with options by his national security team.”

Noting that it issued more than 16,000 tourist visas for U.S. citizens last year, the Russian Consulate in San Francisco said its closure would “create certain difficulties.”

“We believe that the decision to close the Consulate General of Russian Federation in San Francisco is another unfriendly step of the U.S. authorities.”

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