

Russian Investigative News Site The Insider Added to 'Foreign Agents' List

July 23, 2021



Staff of the investigative news website The Insider. frittord.no

Russia [added](#) investigative news website The Insider to its registry of “foreign agents” Friday, a designation that risks cratering its business model.

The Insider is best known for its work alongside U.K.-based Bellingcat in investigating the 2020 poisoning of Kremlin critic Alexei Navalny and the 2018 poisoning of former double agent Sergei Skripal in Britain.

It is the 16th independent media outlet in Russia to be labeled a “foreign agent,” a designation that imposes rigorous auditing requirements with steep fines for violations.

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Russia’s Justice Ministry added The Insider’s Latvia-registered legal entity to its list of “foreign mass media performing the functions of a foreign agent” a week after Russia

[outlawed](#) another leading investigative outlet, Proekt, as an “undesirable” organization.

Five Russian journalists — who work for Proekt, Open Media and independently — were also labeled “foreign agents” Friday.

In addition to submitting quarterly financial reports, individuals and entities labeled “foreign agents” must also include boilerplate text stating their designation on everything they publish, including social media posts.

Journalists at media outlets previously labeled “foreign agents” have seen advertising revenues dry up and sources refusing to talk to them.

Two other independent Russian media outlets, VTimes and Meduza, were branded “foreign agents” this year. While Meduza vowed to continue its work with crowdfunded donations making up for lost advertising revenue, VTimes was forced to shut down.

Critics have accused Russian authorities of seeking to wipe out Russia's few remaining independent media outlets in recent months in order to cement their control over the media.

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