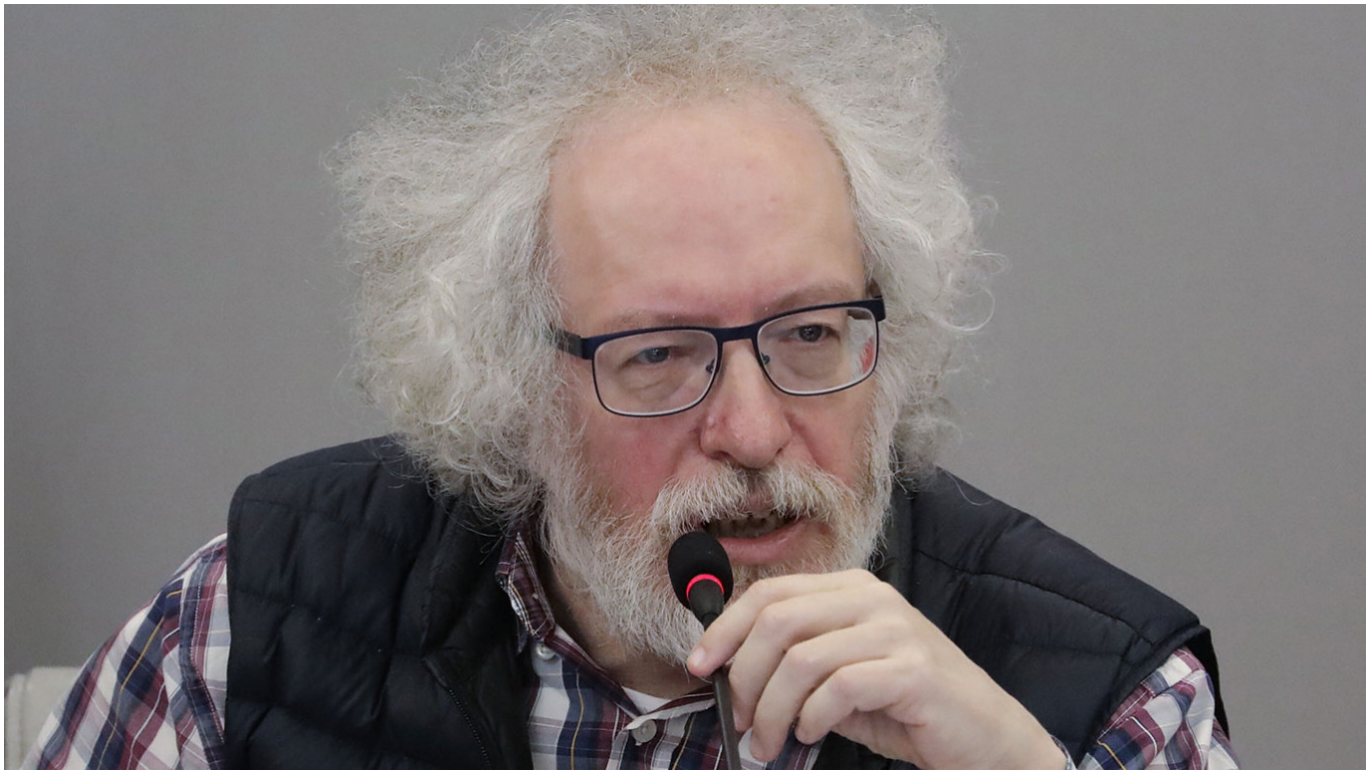
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Russian Liberal Radio Mainstay Ekho Moskvy Closes After Pulled Off Air

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Ekho Moskvy Editor-in-Chief Alexey Venediktov. **Sophia Sandurskaya / Moskva News Agency**

Russia's iconic liberal radio station Ekho Moskvy (Echo of Moscow) has been wound up after falling afoul of Russia's censorship of coverage of the war in Ukraine.

Ekho's board of directors voted to liquidate the station after Russia's state censorship watchdog ordered its website blocked for spreading "deliberately false information about the actions of Russian military personnel" as well as "information calling for extremist activity" and "violence." The station's broadcast was halted soon after.

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The watchdog, Roskomnadzor, had previously instructed outlets covering the war in Ukraine to use only official Defense Ministry information, and banned words like "invasion," "war" and "offensive" in favor of Russia's preferred "special operation."

Founded in 1990 during the Soviet Union's dying days, Ekho Moskvy became a beacon for Russia's democrats and liberals.

Taken off air only once before — during the hardline communist August Coup in 1991 — the station endured even as Russia took a sharp authoritarian turn.

Owned by gas giant Gazprom's media arm, and helmed by veteran editor-in-chief Alexei Venediktov, the station maintained a delicate balance between remaining relatively free and uncensored, and keeping up its connections with the Kremlin.

Venediktov's own ties to the political elite — including his role in promoting a controversial electronic voting scheme for the State Duma elections last year — saw him reviled by much of Russia's anti-Kremlin opposition.

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