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Russia Bans Bellingcat, Insider as 'Undesirable' Orgs

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"Bellingcat: Truth in a Post-Truth World" movie poster.

Russia has designated the Bellingcat investigative outlet as an "undesirable" organization on Friday, outlawing its operations inside the country.

Russia's Prosecutor General's Office accused Bellingcat and its Russian partner The Insider of "posing a threat to the security of the Russian Federation."

Any Russian who cooperates with the outlets or cites their work now faces criminal prosecution.

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Bellingcat founder Eliot Higgins dismissed the designation.

"Bellingcat has no legal, financial or staff presence (in Russia), so it's unclear how Russia expects to enforce this," Higgins wrote on Twitter.

Established in 2014, the Netherlands-based Bellingcat has investigated the downing of Malaysian Airlines flight MH17 over eastern Ukraine in 2014 as well as the poisonings of former Russian spy Sergei Skripal and Kremlin critic Alexei Navalny.

Moscow has in the past accused the outlet of acting as a front for Western intelligence.

Both Bellingcat and the Latvia-registered Insider were labeled a "foreign agents" in October 2021.

The banning of Bellingcat and The Insider is Russia's latest effort to crack down on information contradicting the Kremlin's narrative. These efforts have escalated significantly since the country invaded neighboring Ukraine in late February.

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