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Russia Declares Polish-Based Anti-War Group 'Undesirable'

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Solidarity Against War rally in Warsaw, Poland. **O Wolną Rosję / Facebook**

Russian authorities on Wednesday designated the Polish-based anti-war group For a Free Russia an "undesirable organization," making any work for or with the collective a criminal offense.

"From abroad, they involve Russians in volunteer battalions within the Ukrainian armed forces and train so-called 'resistance groups'," the Russian Prosecutor General's Office said in a statement.

For a Free Russia was established in Warsaw by Russian, Polish and Ukrainian citizens in 2015 with the aim of "transforming Russia into a democratic state" and "consolidating the Russian democratic movement in Europe."

The Prosecutor General's Office identified exiled Russian citizens Anastasia Sergeyeva and Maria Kharmast as the diaspora group's "thought leaders."

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"The association has a strong anti-Russian agenda, with Sergeyeva and Kharmast identifying themselves as part of 'repressed' civil society," the law enforcement body said.

It added that For a Free Russia "attracts attention and money with theatrical and political actions for Western audiences together with representatives of the opposition who have left Russia."

For a Free Russia's "undesirable" designation bans its work in Russia, puts members at risk of jail time and criminalizes engagement with the organization, including sharing its content online.

Russia introduced its "undesirable" list in 2015 to crack down on foreign NGOs and ban Russians from working with or donating to them.

Russia has since used its law on "undesirable" organizations to target independent news outlets, human rights groups, environmental organizations and educational institutions.

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