

Wikimedia Russia Shuts Down Amid 'Foreign Agent' Threats

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Members of Wikimedia Russia lead a training. **JukoFF**

The Russian chapter of the Wikimedia Foundation announced Tuesday that it would shut down after its director received warnings that authorities are planning to designate him as a "foreign agent," Russian media reported.

Wikimedia Russia [describes](#) itself as a "Russian nonprofit organization whose goal is to promote the development of encyclopedic projects and the community of their authors and editors."

"Yesterday, we decided to close Wikimedia.ru. We're preparing documents for the organization's dissolution after its 15 years of work," Stanislav Kozlovsky, Wikimedia Russia's director, was [quoted](#) as saying by the state-run TASS news agency.

Related article: [Russian Court Fines Wikipedia Over Ukraine Content](#)

According to Kozlovsky, the decision to shutter the organization came just hours after he was forced to resign from his job at Moscow State University's Department of Psychology, where he had worked for nearly 25 years.

“The dean said there’s reliable information that the Justice Ministry will label me a foreign agent this Friday,” Kozlovsky [told](#) the Telegram news channel Ostorozhno Media.

“I was handed two documents — a termination letter on grounds of ‘absenteeism’ and a ‘voluntary’ resignation letter. I chose the latter,” he added.

Following his resignation, Kozlovskly and other members of Wikimedia Russia voted “unanimously” to dissolve the organization to protect everyone who had been involved in its activities over the years.

He insisted that Wikimedia Russia’s closure does not mean the Russian-language version of Wikipedia will cease to exist, though the authorities could decide to block the website altogether.

Since Moscow launched its invasion of Ukraine last year, Russia’s communications regulator Roskomnadzor has [accused](#) Wikipedia of allowing the spread of “false” and “unreliable” information about the war.

Russian authorities have long sought to develop a domestic alternative to the online encyclopedia over what they call bias in Wikipedia's content.

Concerns that Moscow could block Wikipedia have grown amid the country's sweeping wartime crackdown on dissent.

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