

Armenia Suspends License of Russian Broadcaster Sputnik

By [AFP](#)

December 21, 2023



Tigran Keosayan. **Andrei Nikerichv / Moskva News Agency**

Russia's Embassy in Yerevan denounced Thursday the temporary suspension of Russian broadcaster Sputnik's local branch over "offensive" comments a presenter made about Armenia on air.

The commission responsible for television and radio announced late Wednesday that the license of Tospa, the broadcaster of Sputnik Armenia, was being suspended for 30 days after remarks by the Russian TV personality Tigran Keosayan in November.

His opinions do not befit what a "political commentator, presenter and citizen of another country" has the "moral right" to say, it said.

Keosayan also encouraged "illegal acts," the commission said without elaborating.

The pro-Kremlin presenter is married to Margarita Simonyan, editor-in-chief of the RT

broadcaster and a loyal supporter of President Vladimir Putin.

The Russian Embassy in Yerevan criticized the decision, saying the measure was being taken to push Armenia further from Russia.

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"This step cannot but look like a concession to those who are increasingly vociferous in favor of severing the long-standing, mutually beneficial and respectful allied relations between Russia and Armenia," the embassy said in a statement.

Sputnik is a state-run Russian media organization operating in several countries through radio channels or websites, and has been accused of spreading Kremlin "disinformation."

The European Union, Britain and Canada banned it shortly after Russia sent troops to Ukraine in February 2022.

In a separate case, the commission inflicted a fine of \$1,200 on the channel for comments that "did not correspond to reality" and were likely "to cause panic" in Armenia.

The Caucasus country is a traditional Russian ally but relations have soured since its historic enemy Azerbaijan seized the disputed territory of Nagorno-Karabakh in September.

Yerevan says Moscow did not do enough to stop the lightning Azerbaijani offensive, where Baku seized territory it had not controlled for decades from Armenian separatists.

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