

Russia Halts Annual Payments to Arctic Council

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The Murmansk region in Russia's Arctic. **Ted.ns (CC BY 4.0)**

Moscow has suspended annual payments to the Arctic Council until its work resumes in full, Russia's Foreign Ministry [told](#) state media Wednesday.

The United States, Canada, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden in March 2022 [suspended](#) participation in the Arctic Council over Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

“Russia’s annual contributions to the Arctic Council’s budget have been suspended for the time being, pending the resumption of pragmatic work with the participation of all member countries,” the Foreign Ministry said as quoted by the RIA Novosti news agency.

The ministry ruled out Russia’s full exit from the Arctic Council for now.

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One-third of the Arctic Council's 130 projects were [paused](#), new projects not approved and current projects not renewed in 2023 due to tensions with Russia, according to Reuters.

The Kremlin [said](#) last week it does not rule out "special decisions" if the Arctic Council no longer met Russia's interests.

Russia's Foreign Ministry [said](#) Moscow could consider exiting the Arctic Council if it "evolves into an institution unfriendly toward Russia."

The Arctic Council was established in 1996 to deal with issues like the environment and areas of international cooperation, and its mandate explicitly excludes military security.

In addition to the countries bordering the Arctic, the Council also includes six organizations representing the indigenous peoples of the region and 13 observer countries.

Russia has steadily beefed up its military presence in the Arctic in recent years, reopening and modernizing several bases and airfields abandoned since the end of the Soviet era.

Russia makes up around 45% of the geographical Arctic.

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