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Russia Labels Meduza CEO Timchenko 'Foreign Agent'

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Galina Timchenko. **AP / TASS**

Russian authorities designated Galina Timchenko, the exiled founder and CEO of the independent news website Meduza, as a "foreign agent" on Friday.

The Russian Justice Ministry accused Timchenko of opposing the country's "special military operation" in Ukraine and spreading "inaccurate information aimed at forming a negative image of the Russian armed forces."

Timchenko served as editor-in-chief of the Lenta.ru news site until 2014, when she was dismissed by its Kremlin-linked owner Alexander Mamut. Following her departure, she and former Lenta.ru staff relocated to Latvia to establish Meduza, which was labeled a "foreign agent" in 2021.

Authorities in Russia use the "foreign agent" label to target individuals they view as enemies

of the state. Those designated must prominently display disclaimers on their publications and provide extensive financial disclosures to the government.

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In 2022, Russian prosecutors also branded Meduza as an "undesirable" organization, banning it from operating inside the country and criminalizing any association with it.

Besides Timchenko, Russia's Justice Ministry on Friday also added the NGO Civic Initiative Against Environmental Crime, the opposition group Novosibirsk Coalition 2020 and Yelena Lukyanova, a law professor at Russia's banned Free University, to its "foreign agents" list.

Daria Artamanova, a volunteer from Novosibirsk Coalition 2020 and former candidate for municipal office in Novosibirsk, condemned the latest designations in comments to The Moscow Times.

"Putin's regime is pressuring everyone who has even the slightest love toward their country and wants only the best for their homeland," Artamanova said via text message.

"The real criminals and foreign agents are sitting in the Kremlin and other lush government offices," she added.

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