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LGBTQ+ Support Group in Russia's Yekaterinburg Closes Amid 'Anti-Queer Pressure'

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Alexander Avilov / Moskva News Agency

A non-profit organization providing mental health and legal support services to LGBTQ+ people in the Russian city of Yekaterinburg announced Monday that it would shut down after coming under "anti-queer pressure."

The organization, called Lupta, was created in April 2023 as a support center for people facing discrimination over their sexual identity after its predecessor, the LGBT Resource Center, was designated a "foreign agent." Lupta organized lectures and provided individual consultations to LGBTQ+ Russians.

Lupta's closure comes almost a year after the Russian Supreme Court banned the so-called "international LGBT movement" as "extremist," effectively criminalizing any form of LGBTQ+ rights advocacy in the country.

“The last two years in Russia have been devastating for the queer community. It also affected us,” the organization said in a statement posted on Telegram.

“The Lupta project will not be able to continue its work due to the anti-queer atmosphere [in the country],” it said. “Our priority has always been the safety of the venue, and unfortunately, we can no longer guarantee this.”

Lupta had been inactive since August when it said it would be taking a “vacation.”

Russia has for years been criticized over its LGBTQ+ rights record, including a 2013 law banning “gay propaganda among minors,” as well as a ban on the adoption of children by same-sex couples in foreign countries.

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