The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Russia Labels Telegram News Channel Astra 'Foreign Agent'

October 25, 2024

t.me/astrapress

Authorities in Russia designated the anti-war Telegram news channel Astra as a "foreign agent" on Friday.

Russia's Justice Ministry accused Astra of spreading "inaccurate information" about government policy in order to promote a "negative image" of the Russian military.

"[Astra] opposed the special military operation in Ukraine... The creator and editor-in-chief of the internet portal reside outside Russia," the ministry said in a statement.

Alongside Astra, authorities labeled Yabloko opposition party member Nikolai Kavkazsky, political blogger Anton Khardin, regional activist Artyom Medvedev and literary critic Oleg Lekmanov as "foreign agents" on Friday.

Russia uses the "foreign agent" label to target individuals and organizations they view as enemies of the state. Those hit with the designation are required to submit rigorous financial

reports to the Justice Ministry, as well as display “foreign agent” disclaimers in publications and social media posts.

Since its founding in the first week of Russia’s full-scale invasion of Ukraine, Astra, founded by journalist Anastasia Chumakova, has reported extensively on the conflict.

The news channel said it would continue its work despite the designation, noting that the “foreign agent” law prohibits ad sales to Russians but does not ban readers from sharing its content or making donations.

Original url:
https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2024/10/25/russia-labels-telegram-news-channel-astra-foreign-agent-a86812