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Finland Seizes Russian Cultural Center in Helsinki After Ukrainian Gas Provider Wins Lawsuit

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Russian Center for Science and Culture in Helsinki. **S M / googleusercontent.com**

Finnish authorities have begun seizing Russian state-owned property in the country after a Hague-based court ordered Moscow to compensate Ukraine's national gas provider for assets it lost during the annexation of Crimea, the Finnish daily Helsingin Sanomat reported Monday.

Finland's National Enforcement Authority, an agency of the country's justice ministry, reportedly seized the 3,326-square-meter (35,800 square feet) Russian Center of Science and Culture in Helsinki last week Thursday.

That property seizure and potentially others are related to a $5 billion lawsuit filed by Ukraine's Naftogaz with a Hague-based arbitration court over the illegal seizure of its assets after Russia annexed Crimea in 2014.

Naftogaz said it planned to settle that debt with the use of Russian state assets based in other countries since it does not expect Moscow to comply with the arbitration court's ruling.

Finnish authorities initially ordered the seizure of the Russian Center of Science and Culture in 2023, but that decision was reversed after Russia's Embassy in Helsinki said it violated international law on the immunity of state property.

Helsingin Sanomat reported that the Russian government also owns its embassy complex in the Finnish capital, but there is no indication that it will also be seized.

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