

Azerbaijan Shuts Russia Today Office Amid Media Clampdown

By [AFP](#)

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Alexander Patrin / TASS

Azerbaijan has shut down the representative office of Russia's state-run media group in the country, officials said Monday, the latest instance of a clampdown on foreign media.

Last week, the oil-rich Caspian nation's authorities ordered the BBC to close its office, in what the British broadcaster denounced as a "move against press freedom."

"Representative office of Russia Today in Azerbaijan has been closed," foreign ministry spokesman Ayahan Hajizade told journalists, adding that "From now on, they may operate in Azerbaijan with only one correspondent."

Hajizade also announced that Baku had revoked the accreditation of a Voice of America correspondent.

The Russian group had been represented in Azerbaijan through one of its subsidiaries, the

Sputnik news agency.

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The European Union, Britain and Canada have sanctioned Russia Today, accusing it of spreading disinformation and pro-Russian propaganda following Moscow's invasion of Ukraine three years ago.

Relations between Baku and Moscow have recently soured after Azerbaijan claimed that an Azerbaijan Airlines jet, which crashed last year, had been fired upon from Russian territory.

Baku has demanded that Moscow acknowledge responsibility for the incident.

President Ilham Aliyev stated that the jet, which crashed in December in Kazakhstan, killing 38 of the 67 people on board, was accidentally hit by Russian air defense while flying through Russian airspace.

The closure of the Russia Today office appears to be part of a broader clampdown on foreign media in Azerbaijan.

Azerbaijan ranks among the worst countries in the world for press freedom, according to Reporters Without Borders.

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