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# Russia Labels Elton John AIDS Foundation 'Undesirable' Organization

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Elton John. **The White House**

Russian authorities on Thursday designated the Elton John AIDS Foundation (EJAF) as an "undesirable" organization, outlawing the HIV treatment and prevention group's activities in the country.

The Russian Prosecutor General's Office accused EJAF of "mostly focusing on the promotion of non-traditional sexual relations, Western family models and gender reassignment." However, the organization's primary stated goal is AIDS prevention and control.

Russian authorities consider any relationship not between a man and a woman as "non-traditional." In 2023, Russia's Supreme Court banned the so-called "LGBT movement."

In its statement, the Prosecutor General's Office claimed that EJAF harbors "negative attitudes" toward countries that "protect traditional spiritual and moral values." It also

accused EJAF of participating in a campaign to "vilify Russia" since the 2022 invasion of Ukraine.

"In our country, the British foundation closely cooperates with non-profit organizations that perform the functions of foreign agents," the Russian law enforcement body said.

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Founded by British pop legend Elton John in 1992, EJAF funds HIV treatment programs in multiple countries. It also advocates for the LGBTQ+ community, which has faced years of persecution in Russia.

EJAF told The Moscow Times in a statement that it was "devastated" by the decision of the Prosecutor General's Office, emphasizing that the "undesirable" designation would prevent it from providing "lifesaving care to people living with HIV in Russia."

"For more than two decades, we have worked in collaboration with federal and non-governmental partners in Russia to provide hundreds of thousands of people with vital HIV services, including testing, treatment and care," the statement said.

"At a time when we have the tools and knowledge to defeat HIV, it is heartbreaking to be unable to support them," it added.

The "undesirable" label effectively bans EJAF from operating inside Russia and exposes its employees and affiliates to potential criminal prosecution. Russia has used the "undesirable" designation to target independent media, opposition groups and foreign organizations since introducing the law in 2015.

HIV/AIDS remains a major health crisis in Russia, with more than 1 million people living with the virus, including many in the prison system. Access to treatment is limited, especially in rural areas, and authorities have done little to combat the stigma surrounding the disease.

Russian HIV/AIDS charities previously told The Moscow Times that Western sanctions have hindered the flow of funding from EJAF and other international groups.

*AFP contributed reporting.*

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