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Russia Blacklists British Council as 'Undesirable Organization'

By AFP

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Dictation in English organized by the British Council in Moscow. **Artyom Geodakyan / TASS**

Russia on Thursday designated the British Council as an "undesirable organization," as Moscow labeled London the architect of global crises and "instigator of wars."

Relations between the U.K. and Russia were at rock bottom even before Russia launched its full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022, soured by a slew of espionage and interference scandals, including the 2018 poisoning of former Russian spy Sergei Skripal on British soil.

Russia's Prosecutor General accused the British Council of trying to promote British interests "under the guise of teaching English" and of supporting the "LGBT movement," which Russia has outlawed as "extremist."

"Various projects are being implemented to systematically discredit the domestic and foreign policies of the Russian Federation," it added.

Moscow has labeled dozens of Western-backed organizations “undesirable,” a designation that outlaws their work in Russia and makes anybody who cooperates with them vulnerable to years-long jail sentences.

State media reported that the Federal Security Service (FSB), which claimed to have provided evidence for the decision, described Britain as “the main source of global crises, a provocateur and instigator of wars.”

“London organizes coups, weakens not only its geopolitical enemies but also its closest allies, pits nations against each other and prevents the resolution of bloody conflicts that it unleashed,” Russia's state-run RIA Novosti quoted the FSB as saying in a statement.

Britain has been one of Ukraine's strongest backers since Russia began its invasion.

Russia under President Vladimir Putin has for years cracked down on independent civil society, outlawing groups and prosecuting dissenters in a campaign that has escalated amid the Ukraine war and been widely panned by rights groups and the West.

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