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Justice Ministry Designates UC Berkeley and Russian-American Association of Scientists as 'Undesirable'

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The UC Berkley campus. **UC Berkley**

Russia's Justice Ministry has designated UC Berkeley and the Russian-American Science Association (RASA) as "undesirable" organizations.

The designations effectively ban UC Berkeley and RASA from having any presence in Russia. Under Russian law, individuals affiliated with an "undesirable" entity can face up to four years in prison, while organizers can be sentenced to up to six years.

According to the Justice Ministry's website, the Russian Prosecutor General's Office approved the designations for UC Berkeley and RASA in February. However, their names appeared in the ministry's public "undesirable" database only on Tuesday.

Prosecutors have not issued any statements explaining the reasons behind the designations.

The Moscow Times contacted UC Berkley for comment.

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RASA is a network of Russian-speaking scientists and scholars working in the United States and other countries.

On its website, RASA says it was founded to foster collaboration, support professional development and promote scientific and academic exchange between Russian and American researchers.

Earlier, Russia designated the George Washington University and Yale University as "undesirable" organizations.

Russia introduced its "undesirable" law in 2015, using it to crack down on independent media, opposition groups and foreign-funded organizations. Hundreds of organizations are currently blacklisted, including The Moscow Times.

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