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Russia Designates Stanford University as 'Undesirable'

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The Stanford University campus. **Justin Sullivan / Getty Images / AFP**

Russia's Justice Ministry on Friday added Stanford University to its list of "undesirable" organizations, exposing anyone affiliated with the U.S. institution to potential criminal charges.

The California-based private research institution is at least the 19th Western university, educational alliance or program to have been labeled "undesirable" over the past five years.

Under Russian law, individuals affiliated with an "undesirable" entity — including students — can face up to four years in prison, while organizers can be sentenced to up to six years.

Neither the Justice Ministry nor the Russian Prosecutor General's Office provided explanations for the designations.

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Also on Friday, the Justice Ministry added Stanford's Center for Russian, East European and Eurasian Studies (CREEES) and the Crisis Simulation for Peace (CRISP), a German non-profit, to its list of "undesirable" organizations.

The Moscow Times contacted both Stanford and CREEES for comment.

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

The Liberty Forward advocacy group estimates that between 2,000 and 3,000 Russians could face legal risks for involvement with "undesirable" educational institutions, though the real number may be higher.

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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