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Future of Opposition Party Rassvet in Limbo as It Prepares to Dispute 'Foreign Agent' Designation

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Yekaterina Duntsova. **@Duntsova / Telegram**

The opposition party Rassvet has suspended the opening of new regional branches as it considers its future after being designated a "foreign agent" last week, the party's founder, Yekaterina Duntsova, said on Sunday.

Russia's Justice Ministry included Rassvet alongside another unregistered anti-Kremlin party in its list of "foreign agents" on Friday. Rassvet denied the ministry's claims that it received foreign funding and accused the government of banning opposition activity in Russia.

Duntsova said the party held an emergency video conference with its members over the weekend, during which its central council decided to pause local organizing efforts as it prepares a legal challenge against the "foreign agent" designation.

"We're suspending inaugural meetings of regional branches until the lawsuit against the

Justice Ministry can be heard," Duntsova wrote in a post on Telegram.

She said an internal survey among all registered party members will be conducted this week in order to determine "whether to continue the registration procedure, preserve Rassvet as an association recognized as a foreign agent or completely cease operations."

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Earlier on Sunday, Rassvet's Amur region branch in Far East Russia announced its closure due to the "foreign agent" status.

Russia applies the designation to individuals and entities it views as enemies of the state. Those branded as "foreign agents" are required to include a lengthy disclaimer in all of their public appearances and statements, including posts on social media.

Rassvet's Amur region branch said legal restrictions prohibit it from holding any new meetings or working "in the usual format."

Duntsova founded Rassvet in 2024, the same year she was barred from challenging Vladimir Putin in the presidential election.

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