

Russian Diaspora Group in U.S. Disbands, Blaming FBI ‘Foreign Agent’ Probe

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The Russian Embassy in the United States. **Adam Fagen / flickr (CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)**

A Russian diaspora group in the United States [said](#) Thursday it has suspended activities over what it called FBI harassment of its members as part of an undisclosed probe into “foreign agent” law violations.

The Russian Community Council of the U.S.A., which organizes events to popularize the Russian language and cultural heritage within the U.S., said 300 of its members have been subjected to “pressure reminiscent of the Cold War era.”

“According to multiple accounts of community members who were questioned by the FBI, federal agents appear to be searching for violations of the Foreign Agents Registration Act (FARA),” the diaspora said.

The Russian Community Council defended itself as an apolitical group that “never possessed,

received or gave out any financial resources.”

Its closure comes amid tensions on multiple fronts between the two nuclear powers, with Washington blaming Moscow for a wave of cyberattacks, diplomat expulsions and election meddling. Earlier this year, Russia added the U.S. to a list of “unfriendly countries,” a designation the U.S. says forced it to halt all consular services within Russia.

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Russia’s Embassy in Washington expressed [outrage](#) over “unprecedented pressure” on the Russian-speaking community in the U.S.

“FBI officers, often in a rude manner, have been conducting searches and interrogations of the diaspora representatives, confiscating personal belongings,” it said in a statement.

“In fact, we are talking about a gross violation of personal freedoms in a country that claims to be titled a ‘stronghold of democracy’,” the Russian Embassy added.

The diplomatic mission accused U.S. authorities of “denying emigrants from Russia their right to stay in touch with their historical motherland and take an active part in preserving their own cultural and linguistic heritage.”

The Daily Beast [reported](#) in June that the FBI was investigating the Russian Community Council and had questioned dozens of members. The FBI declined to comment on the focus of the probe, citing its policy of not confirming or denying the existence of an investigation.

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