



STATEMENT

The Russian Community Council of the USA (hereinafter referred to as the Community Council) is announcing the temporary suspension of its activities.

The decision to suspend activities comes after a year of active and nation-wide FBI measures directed at over 300 Russian community members, from students to seniors, including some members of the Community Council.

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) and the federal statutes relating to it. This law has on multiple occasions been criticized for its selective enforcement and targeting of individuals and organizations for engaging with countries that are out of favor with the U.S. government.

We interpret the FBI's measures towards Russian community members, especially individuals who organize Russian cultural events and openly advocate for more dialogue and people-to-people ties with Russia, as a form of pressure reminiscent of the Cold War era.

It is important to stress that the Community Council is an informal organization that never engaged in any political activities, nor did it possess, receive, or give out any financial resources. The Community Council's current members were elected at the VI Russian Community Forum, held in Washington D.C. on June 10, 2018, and have since served in a pro bono capacity to address community-related matters and promote events that aim to celebrate and preserve the Russian language, cultural identity and historical heritage.

Given the scope of the FBI's probe, the activities of the Community Council will remain suspended as a precautionary measure pending further clarification of FARA-related statutes by appropriate U.S. authorities. Suspended activities will also include the VII Russian Community Forum, which was previously slated for 2022.