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# Backgrounder: RT's hostile activities

From: [Global Affairs Canada](#)

## Backgrounder

Canada is concerned with Russia's use of disinformation, especially surrounding its invasion of Ukraine. Canada works closely with international partners to counter Russian disinformation in Ukraine and the region while upholding human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Russia is using non-traditional assets, including state media, to sow disruption and support its hostile activities on an international scale, including in Canada.

RT, formerly Russia Today, is a Russian state-owned media entity that has become actively engaged in Russia's global disinformation and influence efforts. Since the Russian invasion of Ukraine, RT has grown to become an asset that is central to Russia's efforts to achieve specific goals.

Here are examples of some of its malign activities:

- To circumvent restrictions on it in Western states, RT has developed third-party media platforms, which falsely claim to be independent of RT and Russia. RT uses those platforms as tools for covertly disseminating content to international and Western audiences. These platforms have even led to the organization of real-world events, such as rallies, demonstrations and protests, notably at Western universities.

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- RT has further contributed to Russian military efforts in Ukraine by setting up and administering a crowd-funding program, in coordination with Russia's Ministry of Defence, that has supplied Russian military units in Ukraine with equipment and weapons.
- RT is also actively participating in Russian efforts to influence elections abroad. RT has been involved for a number of years in Russia's campaign to interfere in Moldova's upcoming October 2024 presidential election to achieve a favourable outcome for Russia. As with many of RT's other interference operations, these efforts have almost certainly been coordinated with Russian intelligence services.

### **Canada's actions to date**

In 2022, the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) formally removed RT and RT France from the list of non-Canadian programming services and stations authorized for distribution.

Following a public consultation, the CRTC determined that the continued authorization to distribute RT and RT France was not in the public interest. The CRTC also determined that RT's programming was not consistent with the standards against which Canadian services are measured nor with the policy objectives set out in the *Broadcasting Act*. The CRTC expressed concerns over programming from a foreign country that seeks to undermine the sovereignty of another country, demean Canadians of a particular ethnic background and undermine democratic institutions in Canada.

In its findings, the CRTC took into account the submissions and the seriousness of the allegations provided in the interventions. The CRTC also examined the reports of the current situation in Ukraine, and the escalating sanctions on Russia and Russian individuals, as well as the swift steps taken by other jurisdictions to pull RT's services.

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In 2022, Canada imposed Special Economic Measures against RT, and in 2023, imposed further sanctions against RT's parent structure, MIA Rossiya Segodnya, a Russian state-owned media company. In 2022, Canada also imposed sanctions against Sumbatovich Gasparyan, Head of the International Department at RT, for his significant involvement in disinformation efforts. It is a criminal offence to willfully deal with a sanctioned entity.

## Contacts

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