



By: TA | AP Brief

Radio Free Asia is halting its news operations due to funding troubles



Radio Free Asia says it is shutting down its news operations on Friday with its financing in dire straits due to the U.S. government shutdown and the Trump administration's moves against government-funded news services.

Since 1996, Radio Free Asia has been an independent news source operating online and on broadcast throughout that region, particularly in areas where the free flow of information is repressed.

It has been operating with a **skeleton staff** the past few months, primarily producing a few stories online as the administration has sought to choke off its funding.

Trump's team has contended that operations like RFA, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty and Voice of America are poorly run and a waste of government resources.

"In an effort to conserve limited resources on hand and preserve the possibility of restarting operations should consistent funding become available, RFA is taking further steps to responsibly shrink its already reduced footprint," said Bay Fang, RFA's president and CEO.

Radio Free Asia will begin shutting down overseas bureaus, laying off and paying severance to staff members, most of whom have been on unpaid leave since last March, Fang said.

Different approaches

With its own journalists and contractors in Asia, RFA has reported aggressively on stories some governments don't want to see — the repression of Uyghurs in China, the aftermath of the 2021 military coup in Myanmar and the plight of defectors in North Korea.

The outlet had been growing; visitors to its website increased 20% between 2023 and 2024.

RFE/Radio Liberty, similar to RFA as a private

corporation funded by the government, said its own news services are staying up, "and we plan to continue reaching our audiences for the foreseeable future," the organization said this week. It operates in eastern Europe, Central Asia and the Middle East.

The service had launched its own **lawsuit against the administration**.

RFE/Radio Liberty says it received its last federal funding in September

RFE/Radio Liberty says it received its last federal funding in September. It is operating on reserves, and has taken cost-cutting steps like cutting contracts with freelancers, reducing programming and placing some staff members on partially paid leave.

It was not immediately clear why the two organizations are taking different approaches. While having the same governing and funding structure, RFA and RFE/Radio Liberty are headquartered in North America and Europe respectively, and are governed under different labor laws.

Voice of America, which has concentrated on providing news about the United States to audiences in other countries, had been operating on a very limited basis since its **funding was cut off** and has essentially stopped due to the government shutdown. Some employees have sued to block the administration's plans.