The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Diplomatic Spat Over Bout's Wife

January 13, 2011

The Foreign Ministry has filed a protest with the U.S. State Department about the treatment of the wife of suspected arms trader Viktor Bout after her arrival in New York.

Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov told reporters Thursday that his ministry had fired off a demarche "to our American colleagues" over their questioning of Alla Bout.

Alla Bout has said she, her daughter and her mother-in-law were held for more than two hours by immigration officials who examined her luggage and questioned her after landing at John F. Kennedy International Airport last week.

She described the questioning as "psychological pressure," saying one official had asked her whether she knew that her husband was a terrorist.

Lavrov said the officers had used "unacceptable methods" during the questioning.

He added that U.S. officials had replied to the Foreign Ministry that Bout's wife was treated in accordance with U.S. law because she had no proper visa but just a single-entry document.

''Apparently this procedure is what you get when you have such a travel document,'' he said.

Viktor Bout is awaiting trial in the United States on charges of supplying arms to terrorists. He was arrested in Thailand in a U.S.-led sting operation in 2008. His extradition to the United States last November has been denounced as illegal by the Foreign Ministry.

Lavrov on Thursday rejected the possibility that Bout might be swapped for a prisoner held in Russia. ''This question is not being discussed,'' he said.

Original url: https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2011/01/13/diplomatic-spat-over-bouts-wife-a4188