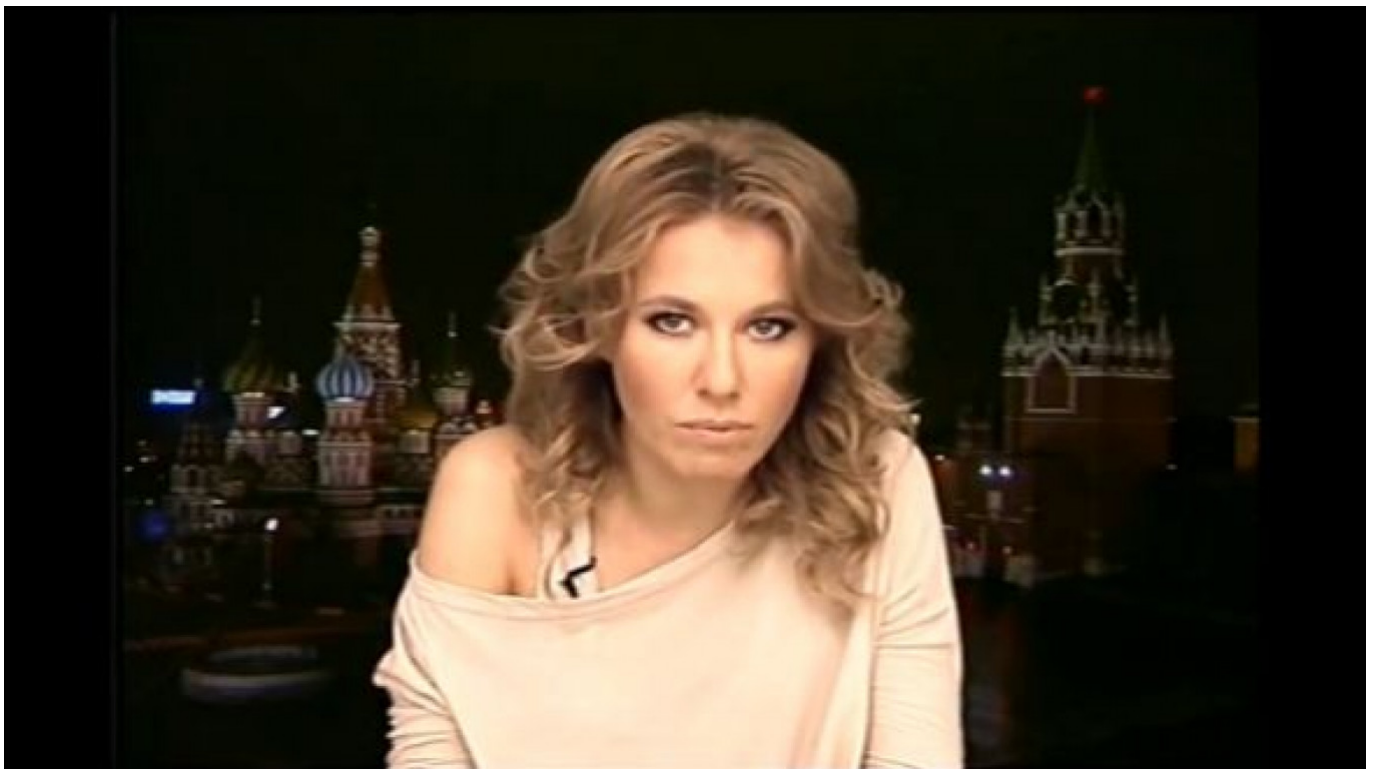


Investigators Suspect Sobchak of Tax Evasion, Report Says

June 18, 2012



Sobchak discussing the police raids in an interview with Moskovsky Komsomolets

Investigators are considering charging Ksenia Sobchak with tax evasion a week after raiding the opposition figure's apartment and seizing more than 1 million euros worth of cash, media reports said Monday.

Sobchak, who made her name as a TV show host before taking up the opposition cause, referred to the possible charges as "slander" and "fabrication."

"This is a provocation to force me to publish my real tax returns or to justify myself. I won't justify myself, I don't have to. I work plenty and earn plenty," Sobchak told the Izvestia daily.

If tax authorities prove that Sobchak has falsified tax returns, she could face a maximum punishment of three years in jail, Sergei Varlamov, a partner at law firm Nalogovik, told the newspaper.

On June 11 police seized about 1 million euros (\$1.25 million) and \$500,000 in cash

from Sobchak's apartment during a day of raids on prominent opposition figures' homes.

The raids were part of an investigation into violent clashes at an opposition protest on Bolotnaya Ploshchad.

Monday's reports of tax-evasion charges appear to center on Sobchak's declared income, which a source in the Interior Ministry told Izvestia was 6.7 million rubles (\$210,000) in 2011.

Given her supposed income, Sobchak would have to save for more than 10 years to earn the amount of money seized by law enforcement officials.

The Interior Ministry source also revealed that several TV programs and ad campaigns that featured Sobchak were not listed as income sources.

After consulting with her lawyer, Henry Reznik, Sobchak wrote on social-networking site Twitter late Monday that she would take Izvestia to court over the allegations contained in its article.

“Reznik and I have decided to sue Izvestia for this paid journalism. It's very sad that under the management of [Aram] Gabrelyanov this paper has become a branch of LifeNews,” Sobchak wrote.

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