

Lavrov Rebukes Ukraine for Obstructing Russian Journalists

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Ukraine's refusal to let several Russian reporters into the country has earned the condemnation of journalists and Russia's Foreign Minister, Sergei Lavrov.

Speaking Monday at a press conference with his Sudanese counterpart, Lavrov said that the frequency with which Russian journalists are being denied entry shows that the situation in Ukraine is "acquiring an abnormal character." He also criticized Western countries for their lack of response to Kiev's actions.

Vsevolod Boiko from Ekho Moskvyy radio station on Monday became the latest Russian reporter to be prevented from entering Ukraine after border guards said he did not have enough money for the trip, Interfax reported.

In December, Ukraine passed a law requiring Russians entering the country to have \$600 and \$100 for each day of their stay, and a lack of cash has been the most common justification

for turning Russia journalists away. However, many of those who have been barred recently said that they had sufficient funds.

Ekho Moskvyy chief editor Alexei Venediktov wrote in a blog post on the station's website that he protested against the refusal to let Boiko into Ukraine to cover events in the Donetsk region, where pro-Russian separatists have taken control of government buildings in a number of cities.

Venediktov acknowledged that Ukrainian government officials have blamed Russian media for misrepresenting events in the country, but added "if you do not let journalists into the territory of your country for made up and laughable reasons there emerges suspicion that you are hiding events that are unpleasant for the Ukrainian authorities."

Last week, the non-profit Committee to Protect Journalists released a statement saying that it was "concerned by reports that Ukrainian border guards have denied entry to the country to several Russian journalists over the past few days" including reporters from Kommersant, Forbes Russia, and state-run television channels Rossia and RT.

RT reported Saturday that more than 20 Russian journalists have been barred from entering Ukraine.

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