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Russia Refuses to Extradite Ukraine's Ousted President Viktor Yanukovych

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Ukraine's former president Viktor Yanukovych with President Vladimir Putin

Russia will not grant extradition requests for Ukraine's former president Viktor Yanukovych or other members of the former Kiev government because the charges against them are politically motivated, Russia's Prosecutor General Yury Chaika told news agency Interfax on Tuesday.

"We will certainly respond to the request sent by our Ukrainian colleagues. The response will be negative because we detect political motivation in the criminal charges brought against these people," he said in Moscow.

Ukraine's Prosecutor General opened a criminal case against Yanukovych last year, along with former Prime Minister Mykola Azarov and Finance Minister Yury Kolobov.

Following the mass unrest in central Kiev at the beginning of 2014, all three men fled to Russia. They are accused in Ukraine of misappropriation and embezzlement of property and all of them are on the Interpol international wanted list.

Russia has extradition agreements with Ukraine and other CIS countries, but according to Chaika, international law allows Russia to reject the extradition of individuals being prosecuted for political reasons.

Last week Azarov presented his book on the Ukrainian crisis in Moscow.

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