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Head of Russia's FSB Attends U.S. Summit on Violent Extremism

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Alexander Bortnikov, the director of the Russian Federal Security Service.

The director of the Russian Federal Security Service, or FSB, will head the country's delegation at a summit on countering violent extremism hosted by U.S. President Barack Obama, FSB said Wednesday.

This would be a rare visit by a senior Russian official to Washington after relations have fallen to their lowest since the fall of the Soviet Union following Moscow's annexation of Ukraine's Crimea, its continued involvement in the Ukraine conflict and Western sanctions imposed in retaliation.

Finance Minister Anton Siluanov has traveled to Washington for annual International Monetary Fund and World Bank meetings.

The Washington summit, which started Tuesday and brings together local officials from across the country and ministers from around the world, follows recent shootings in Copenhagen and Paris that have galvanized Western resolve against such extremist attacks.

Alexander Bortnikov, the FSB's director, flew to Washington on Wednesday at the invitation of the American side, the FSB said in a statement. He has been hit by European Union sanctions but not is not on the U.S. sanctions list.

"Bortnikov will inform the participants of the forum about the national system to counter extremism that is functioning in the Russian Federation, stressing the importance of the role of the state in countering the ideology of terrorism," the FSB said.

The FSB, a successor to the Soviet Union's Committee of State Security, or KGB, is Russia's main security agency.

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