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Putin Gives Medal to Panama Papers Cellist

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Cellist Sergei Roldugin performs on stage at the UNESCO world heritage site of Palmyra, Syria. **Russian Defense Ministry**

Russian President Vladimir Putin is to give a musician implicated in the Panama papers, Sergei Roldugin, the prestigious Order of Alexander Nevsky, the TASS news agency reported Monday.

The director of St. Petersburg's Mariinsky Theater and celebrated maestro, Valery Gergiev, is also to be given the award.

The pair are to receive the honor for "exceptional service to important overseas humanitarian projects strengthening peace and friendship between peoples," according to an official statement released by the Kremlin.

Both men took part in a victory concert in the ancient Syrian city of Palmyra after it was liberated from Islamic State militants with Russian military support in May.

Roldugin, godfather to Putin's eldest daughter, was linked to offshore companies with cash flows worth two billion dollars in April. Leaked documents indicated that Roldugin personally controlled assets worth over 100 million dollars.

Roldugin said in an interview on Russian state television that his wealth came from donations by Russian businessmen to purchase expensive instruments for young musicians.

“I am indeed rich; I’m rich with the talent of Russia,” he said.

The Islamic State is a terrorist organization banned in Russia.

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