

# FSB's Anti-Extremism Department Involved in Serebrennikov Case

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Director Kirill Serebrennikov **Andreev Vladimir / URA.RU / TASS**

The Federal Security Services department tasked with protecting Russia from internal threats is overseeing a high-profile embezzlement case against prominent director Kirill Serebrennikov, the RBC outlet [reports](#), citing three unidentified sources.

Serebrennikov was placed under house arrest last week after he was detained by law enforcement and charged with embezzling 68 million rubles (\$1.1 million) in government subsidies as part of a theater project connected to Moscow's Gogol Center.

The FSB's Service to Protect the Constitutional System and Combat Terrorism is "a sub-unit 'specialized' in fighting threats to Russian security in the sociopolitical sphere," its then-head Gennady Zotov [told](#) the Novaya Gazeta newspaper at the time of its founding in the late 90s.

A source close to the Culture Ministry told RBC the FSB's so-called "2nd department" routinely "oversees the ministry's activities."

## **Related article: [Director Kirill Serebrennikov in Court](#)**

Retired special services veteran Alexander Mikhailov confirmed the ~~the~~ claim, saying that the department supervised theaters and museums. ~~the~~ “Highly qualified specialists work in that department, who understand ~~the~~ culture and art,” he was cited as saying.

As part of its work, the ~~the~~ FSB branch taps phone conversations, controls written correspondence, inspects ~~the~~ facilities and embeds its own agents in the cultural scene, Mikhailov said.

“Cultural ~~the~~ institutions can be used by the enemy for propaganda purposes, as ~~the~~ structures that form a hostile attitude toward Russia,” he was cited as ~~the~~ saying.

Five current and former Gogol Center and Seventh Studio executives, including Serebrennikov, have been implicated in the case.

The case is widely considered to be politically motivated — a claim Russia’s Culture Minister has denied.

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