

# BBC Journalist Accuses Russian Deputy of Sexual Harassment With Audio Recordings

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Farida Rustamova **BBC Russian Service**

Russian deputy Leonid Slutsky continues to field accusations of sexual harassment after yet another journalist detailed the lawmaker's inappropriate behavior, this time claiming to have recorded the events.

At least four female reporters have either openly or anonymously accused Slutsky in recent weeks of having made sexual advances against them in the past. Slutsky has called the allegations a "hit job."

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On Tuesday, BBC Russia service journalist Farida Rustamova recalled Slutsky "running the

inside of his palm up my groin" during a March 2017 interview in his office.

Responding to Rustamova's objections, the head of the Duma's committee on foreign affairs said that he did it "beautifully."

"I don't get handsy, well, if only a little. 'Getting handsy' is an ugly expression," Slutsky was heard as saying in the recording of the interview that BBC Russia said was in their possession.

The legislator went on to tell Rustamova that he had used her visit to "underline interest in her."

"Dump your [\*\*\*\*\*] boyfriend and come see me. The sooner you do it, the better. I'm really willing to help you," he was recorded as saying.

Rustamova's colleagues, friends and partner confirmed to the outlet that the journalist privately recounted the events to them in detail about a year ago.

Rustamova said she did not come forward with the accusations last year due to fears of victim-blaming and because Russian law neither defines nor incorporates sexual harassment.

Following accusations against Slutsky last week, Duma deputy Oksana Pushkina pledged to reintroduce a bill criminalizing sexual harassment that has been stuck in committee since 2003.

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