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Steven Seagal Whipped in Russian Cossack Initiation Ceremony

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Steven Seagal (Andrei Nikerichev / Moskva News Agency)

U.S. action movie star Steven Seagal has been made an honorary Russian Cossack, the fearsome imperial military grouping revived after the Soviet collapse, by ceremonial flogging with a leather whip.

Seagal celebrates his two-year anniversary since obtaining Russian citizenship this November. The actor recently expressed interest in a governor's seat in Far East Russia and was appointed envoy for Russian-U.S. humanitarian ties by Moscow.

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A mustachioed Cossack whipped the kneeling Seagal three times before handing him the traditional Cossack leather whip called a *nagaika* as a gift, as seen in a video published by the Kubnews.ru website.

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Cossacks in southern Russia's Krasnodar donned a black felt coat called a *burka* on Seagal's shoulders and sang traditional songs before ordaining him into their ranks, the website reported late Thursday.

Seagal, a regular visitor to Russia and the post-Soviet world for more than a decade, visited Krasnodar to headline a regional business forum.

The 90s action star is due to meet local fans and attend the unveiling of his star on Krasnodar's replica of the Hollywood Walk of Fame, the Komsomolskaya Pravda tabloid reported Friday.

A group of Cossacks previously granted an honorary title to U.S. President Donald Trump, only to rescind it in the wake of U.S. threats of airstrikes over Syria.

Related article: Russian Cossacks Strip Trump of 'Honorary' Status Amid Syria Threats

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