The Moscow Times
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RT Fined by British Regulator for Breaking Broadcast Rules over Skripal and Syria

By Reuters

July 26, 2019



Arseni Neskhodimov / TASS

Britain's media regulator fined Russia's RT £200,000 ($248,740) for breaching broadcasting impartiality rules in its coverage of the poisoning of former spy Sergei Skripal, the policies of Ukraine and the conflict in Syria.

Relations between London and Moscow sank to a post-Cold War low over the 2018 poisoning of Skripal, a mole who betrayed hundreds of Russian agents to Britain's MI6 foreign spy service. Britain blamed that attack on Russia which denied involvement.

Britain's media regulator, known as Ofcom, said it had "imposed a £200,000 fine on ANO TV Novosti in relation to its service RT for failing to comply with our broadcasting rules."

The regulator said the fine related to RT news and current affairs programs broadcast between

Mar. 17 and Apr. 26 dealing with issues such as the poisoning of Sergei and Yulia Skripal, the conflict in Syria, and the Ukrainian government's position on Nazism and its treatment of gypsies.

Related article: A Year After the Skripal Poisoning, How Much Has Really Changed?

RT said the fine was wrong.

"It is very wrong for Ofcom to have issued a sanction against RT on the basis of its breach findings that are currently under Judicial Review by the High Court in London," an RT spokeswoman said.

"And while we continue to contest the very legitimacy of the breach decisions themselves, we find the scale of proposed penalty to be particularly inappropriate and disproportionate."

Russian officials say RT is a way for Moscow to compete with the dominance of global media companies based in the United States and Britain, which they say offer a particular view of the world.

Critics say RT, which broadcasts news in English, Arabic and Spanish, is the propaganda arm of the Russian state and aims to undermine confidence in Western institutions.

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