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Russia Hires Britons for 'Intelligence Operations' – Guardian

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Russia allegedly deploys its clients to attack Putin critics and "facilitate and conceal massive money-laundering operations," Bill Browder claims. **Kremlin.ru**

The Russian government has allegedly hired British politicians, former intelligence officers and PR firms to advance its interests in Britain's politics and form a "western buffer network," The Guardian reported Monday.

The claims are based on U.S.-born financier Bill Browder's Sept. 2018 testimony submitted to the British parliament for its report on alleged Russian interference in Britain's politics. London postponed the report's publication until after Britain's Dec. 12, 2019, general election and has yet to publish it.

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"What's most shocking is that the Russian government is indirectly hiring British nationals to assist them in its intelligence operations," Browder, once the biggest foreign money

manager in Moscow, told The Guardian.

Russia allegedly deploys its clients, who Browder claims are both witting and unwitting intermediaries, to attack Putin critics, "enhance Russian propaganda and disinformation" and "facilitate and conceal massive money-laundering operations."

The Kremlin dismissed the claims as "groundless" and "maniac-style Russophobia."

Browder is spearheading a global campaign to expose corruption and punish Russian officials he blames for the 2009 death of his lawyer Sergei Magnitsky in a Moscow prison.

Browder-funded Hermitage Capital has successfully lobbied the U.S. Congress and other European countries to pass legislation freezing assets and denying visas to Russian officials allegedly involved in the Magnitsky case.

The financier named Andrei Pavlov, a corporate lawyer hit by Magnitsky sanctions, as one example of a Russian national who has hired at least three British firms to lobby against EU sanctions and gather intelligence.

Russia casts Browder as a criminal, while Browder casts Russia as a criminal state. Russia has repeatedly asked Interpol to arrest Browder, who was sentenced in absentia by a Russian court to nine years in prison for deliberate bankruptcy and tax evasion.

Browder says he is the victim of a vendetta by corrupt officials in the Russian state and denies all the charges. Interpol has rejected several Russian requests for Browder's arrest.

Reuters contributed reporting to this article.

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