

FBI Adds 'Putin's Chef' to Wanted List, Offers \$250K Reward

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Yevgeny Prigozhin **Mikhail Metzel / TASS**

The FBI on Friday has [added](#) Kremlin-linked catering magnate Yevgeny Prigozhin to its wanted list with a reward of up to \$250,000 for information leading to his arrest, a move that he called “a witch hunt.”

The FBI accuses Prigozhin of “conspiracy to defraud the United States” by sponsoring the Internet Research Agency, the St. Petersburg-based “troll factory” that allegedly carried out an online campaign to influence U.S. elections and politics.

“He allegedly oversaw and approved their political and electoral interference operations in the United States which included the purchase of American computer server space, the creation of hundreds of fictitious online personas, and the use of stolen identities of persons from the United States,” the FBI statement said.

Prigozhin said the FBI was using him as a scapegoat for the United States’ internal crises by seeking his arrest.

"American society is under an overwhelming burden of problems: oligarchs and politicians are plundering the budget. A horror story is needed to cover the colossal gap between the deep state and the people," Prigozhin [wrote](#) on his Telegram channel.

"The Russian threat is the main idea of Operation Witch Hunt, which is taking place throughout the United States," he added.

Prigozhin is widely referred to as "Putin's chef" for his catering businesses that host dinners for the Kremlin but also for his reported involvement in advancing Putin's interests abroad, particularly in [Africa](#).

The FBI announcement also noted Prigozhin's ties to Indonesia, Qatar and Estonia in addition to the Russian government, adding that he should be considered an "international flight risk."

In February 2018, the U.S. issued a federal arrest warrant for Prigozhin. While he was later added to Interpol's wanted list, his Concord catering business [said](#) the Interpol "red notice" was withdrawn last year.

The FBI [lists](#) 12 other Russian citizens on its wanted list for alleged interference in the 2016 U.S. presidential election.

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