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Russia Hits Kamala Harris, Zuckerberg With Travel Bans

By AFP

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U.S. Vice President Kamala Harris departs following a visit of the Vandenberg Space Force Base in Lompoc, California, USA, 18 April 2022. **Etienne Laurent - Pool Via Cnp/CNP via ZUMA Press Wire**

Russia on Thursday slapped travel bans on U.S. Vice President Kamala Harris, Facebook chief Mark Zuckerberg and dozens of prominent Americans and Canadians in retaliation for sanctions imposed over Ukraine.

The Russian foreign ministry said the travel restrictions on 29 Americans and 61 Canadians — which also includes defense officials, business leaders and journalists from both countries — would remain in effect indefinitely.

The foreign ministry said the list was comprised of people responsible for the two countries' "Russophobic" policies.

In Washington, one of the officials targeted, State Department spokesman Ned Price, said that

the travel ban was "an honor."

"I have to say it is nothing less than an accolade to have earned the ire of a government that lies to its own people, brutalizes its neighbors and seeks to create a world where freedom and liberty are put on the run and, if they had their way, extinguished," Price told reporters.

Asked if he had to cancel any travel plans to Russia, Price quipped: "Fortunately I had no rubles and even if I did they would be worthless by now anyway."

The United States has led international efforts to impose sweeping sanctions on Russia over its military operation in Ukraine, causing tumult in its economy.

The United States and European Union have personally sanctioned a number of Russians including President Vladimir Putin, his daughters and oligarchs seen as crucial to the Russian leader's power.

Other Americans banned Thursday by Russia include ABC News television presenter George Stephanopoulos, Washington Post columnist David Ignatius and the Russia-focused Meduza news site's editor Kevin Rothrock.

The U.S. defense officials include Pentagon spokesman John Kirby and Deputy Secretary of Defense Kathleen Hicks.

The list of Canadians is headed by Cameron Ahmad, who serves as director of communications to Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, and Canadian Special Operations Forces Commander Steve Boivin.

Russia had earlier banned Facebook and Instagram, which form part of Zuckerberg's Meta empire, calling them "extremist" organisations.

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