

Moscow Threatens Reprisals for U.S. Correspondents – Reports

June 07, 2022



State Department spokesman Ned Price speaks during a briefing at the State Department in Washington, Tuesday, Feb. 1, 2022. **AP Photo/Susan Walsh, Pool/TASS**

Moscow has threatened to strip the accreditations of U.S. journalists in Russia in response to the treatment of Russian reporters in the United States, Reuters [reported](#) Monday, citing unnamed sources with direct knowledge of the meeting.

“If they don’t normalize the work of Russian media on U.S. territory, there will be forceful measures as a consequence,” Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova said as she invited U.S. media representatives to the ministry.

At Monday’s meeting, Zakharova warned that U.S. journalists “would have to leave” Russia if the treatment of their Russian colleagues did not improve, Reuters reported.

She reportedly also threatened tit-for-tat difficulties with visas, media accreditation and bank accounts for U.S. reporters and also complained of alleged harassment by U.S. intelligence agencies of Russian journalists in the U.S.

Russian state media reported that representatives from The Wall Street Journal, CNN, the Associated Press, NPR and the U.S.-based Arabic-language broadcaster Alhurra had [attended](#) the meeting with Zakharova.

Zakharova, who previously [threatened](#) to expel Western media if YouTube continued to block her weekly briefings, last week accused Washington of “targeting for repression Russian media” inside the U.S.

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The United States accused Russia of trying to “intimidate” the summoned American correspondents in Moscow who were threatened with reprisals because of U.S. sanctions.

“Let’s be clear, the Kremlin is engaged in a full assault on media freedom, access to information and the truth,” State Department spokesman Ned Price told reporters in Washington, slamming what he called a “a clear and apparent effort to intimidate independent journalists.”

Price said Moscow was reacting to the blacklisting a month ago of three Russian television channels — Channel One, Rossia 1, and NTV — as part of international sanctions in response to Moscow’s invasion of Ukraine.

Several Western countries have also blocked Russian state media outlets RT and Sputnik since Moscow began its military operation in Ukraine on Feb. 24.

Price accused Moscow of “false equivalence” in comparing independent U.S. journalists in Russia to the sanctioned Russian media that he described as “propaganda.”

“The United States continues to issue visas to qualified Russian journalists, and we have not revoked the foreign press center credentials of any Russian journalists working in the United States,” he said.

Russian authorities have blocked dozens of independent Russian and foreign media since the invasion in an effort to closely control the narrative of the invasion.

Authorities introduced two new criminal offenses in early March for “discrediting” and spreading “false” information about the Russian military, forcing several independent news outlets to suspend activities for fear of prosecution.

AFP contributed reporting.

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