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Kremlin Bans High-Ranking Officials From Resigning Amid War in Ukraine – iStories

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High-ranking Russian officials have been banned from resigning during the war in Ukraine under the threat of criminal prosecution, the iStories investigative outlet reported Monday, citing four sources familiar with the matter.

The Kremlin imposed the unofficial ban after many officials expressed a desire to resign from their posts, iStories cited a source close to the presidential administration as saying.

“If everyone leaves, control will be lost,” the source said of the Kremlin’s logic.

The source added that the Kremlin sees the desire to resign as a betrayal and that it has tasked civil servants with "demonstrating unity.”

“I know of at least two cases where governors tried to leave their posts, but they were not just prohibited by the Internal Policy Department (of the presidential administration), it was also

hinted at that they could face criminal prosecution," iStories quoted a former employee in the Federal Security Service (FSB) as saying.

There may be exceptions to the ban since it is informal and essentially illegal, iStories' sources said. For example, officials may be released from their positions due to health or corruption reasons.

"Many are willing to pay a high price for the opportunity to quietly and discreetly leave now," one of its sources said.

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Members of the special services have also been prohibited from leaving their positions due to the mobilization declared by President Vladimir Putin.

According to the mobilization decree signed by Putin in September 2022, contract servicemen, including the majority of FSB employees, cannot resign even after their contracts expire.

Previously, the Kremlin imposed strict restrictions on traveling abroad for high-ranking officials, parliamentarians, governors and top managers of state-owned companies.

According to The Moscow Times' sources, the presidential administration is trying to prevent "official desertion" and hinder the work of foreign intelligence.

"No one can go anywhere without special permission," said a high-ranking official from the government. Some officials have had their passports confiscated by FSB employees, and the special services also maintain a list of those who need separate permits to leave the country.

"Despite the ongoing conflict, sometimes Putin himself has to review all these lists and figure out who is going abroad and for what purpose," a Kremlin official and longtime acquaintance of the president told The Moscow Times.

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