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Russian Anti-War Activist Barred from Entering Serbia – Lawyer

By AFP

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Peter Nikitin

A Russian anti-war activist living in Serbia was banned from entering the Balkan country after being stopped at Belgrade's main airport Thursday, according to his lawyer.

Peter Nikitin, who has permanent residency in Serbia, was prevented from entering at the request of the country's Security Information Agency (BIA), Belgrade-based lawyer Cedomir Stojkovic said in a statement.

Stojkovic added that a "deportation order was issued."

Nikitin is the head of a Russian dissident association in Serbia and has been actively organizing anti-war events in the Balkan country since Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022.

The activist has complained of being harassed in the past, telling AFP previously that members of his group had been targeted by unknown assailants.

After being denied entry into Serbia, Nikitin — who is also a Dutch passport holder — told a local broadcaster that he planned to fight the deportation order and would reach out to the Netherlands embassy.

"The fact that I express my views openly, that I am an opponent of Vladimir Putin's policy, is no reason that they don't let me go home," he said during the interview.

The incident comes just days after the U.S. sanctioned Aleksandar Vulin — Serbia's pro-Kremlin spy chief and head of the BIA — for his alleged links to "transnational organized crime, illegal narcotics operations, and misuse of public office."

Washington also accused Vulin of helping Russia expand its influence in the Balkans.

Serbia has long been a reliable ally to Moscow, with its shared Orthodox heritage, mutual hatred of NATO, and military alliances during several wars strengthening their relations.

Despite many Serbs' adoration for the Kremlin, tens of thousands of Russians have relocated to Serbia since the outbreak of the war, where most have been warmly welcomed.

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