The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

U.S. Accuses Russia's RT News Outlet of Election Interference

By AFP

September 04, 2024



RT editor-in-chief Margarita Simonyan **Elena Razina / Roscongress**

The United States indicted two employees of Russia's RT and imposed sanctions on top editors of the state-funded news outlet on Wednesday, accusing them of seeking to influence the 2024 U.S. presidential election.

The 10 individuals and two entities sanctioned by the Treasury Department include RT editor-in-chief Margarita Simonovna Simonyan and deputy Elizaveta Yuryevna Brodskaia.

"Today's action underscores the U.S. government's ongoing efforts to hold state-sponsored actors accountable for activities that aim to deteriorate public trust in our institutions," Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen said.

"Treasury will not waver in our commitment to safeguarding our democratic principles and the integrity of our election systems," Yellen said.

Attorney General Merrick Garland, chairing a meeting of the Election Threats Task Force, said two Russia-based RT employees have been indicted in New York for money laundering and violating the Foreign Agents Registration Act.

They are accused of funding a Tennessee-based company "to disseminate content deemed favorable to the Russian government," Garland said, and contracting U.S.-based social media influencers to share content "consistent with Russia's interest in amplifying U.S. domestic divisions."

RT, in a reaction on its Telegram channel, dismissed the U.S. allegations, calling them "hackneyed cliches."

"Three things in life are inevitable: death, taxes and 'RT's interference in American elections'," RT said.

Putin's 'inner circle'

Garland said the Justice Department has separately seized 32 internet domains that the Russian government used "to engage in a covert campaign to interfere and influence the outcome of our country's elections."

He said members of President Vladimir Putin's "inner circle" had directed Russian public relations companies "to promote disinformation and state-sponsored narratives as part of a program to influence the 2024 U.S. presidential election."

The United States has accused Russia of seeking to influence U.S. elections dating back to the 2016 contest between Republican Donald Trump and Democrat Hillary Clinton.

The Treasury Department said Simonyan, RT's editor-in-chief, was a "central figure in Russian government malign influence efforts."

Brodskaia, RT's deputy editor-in-chief, "reported to Russian President Putin and other government officials," it said.

Following the 2020 vote, US intelligence officials accused Putin of authorizing "influence operations" aimed at impacting the vote in favor of Trump.

U.S. officials have repeatedly warned of efforts by foreign powers, including Russia, to meddle in the American presidential election in November.

Director of National Intelligence Avril Haines, in an appearance before a Senate committee in May, singled out Russia, China and Iran as the worst offenders — but said the government was well prepared to protect American democracy from foreign influence.

"Specifically, Russia remains the most active foreign threat to our elections," Haines said.

Original url:
https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2024/09/04/us-accuses-russias-rt-news-outlet-of-election-interference-a86264