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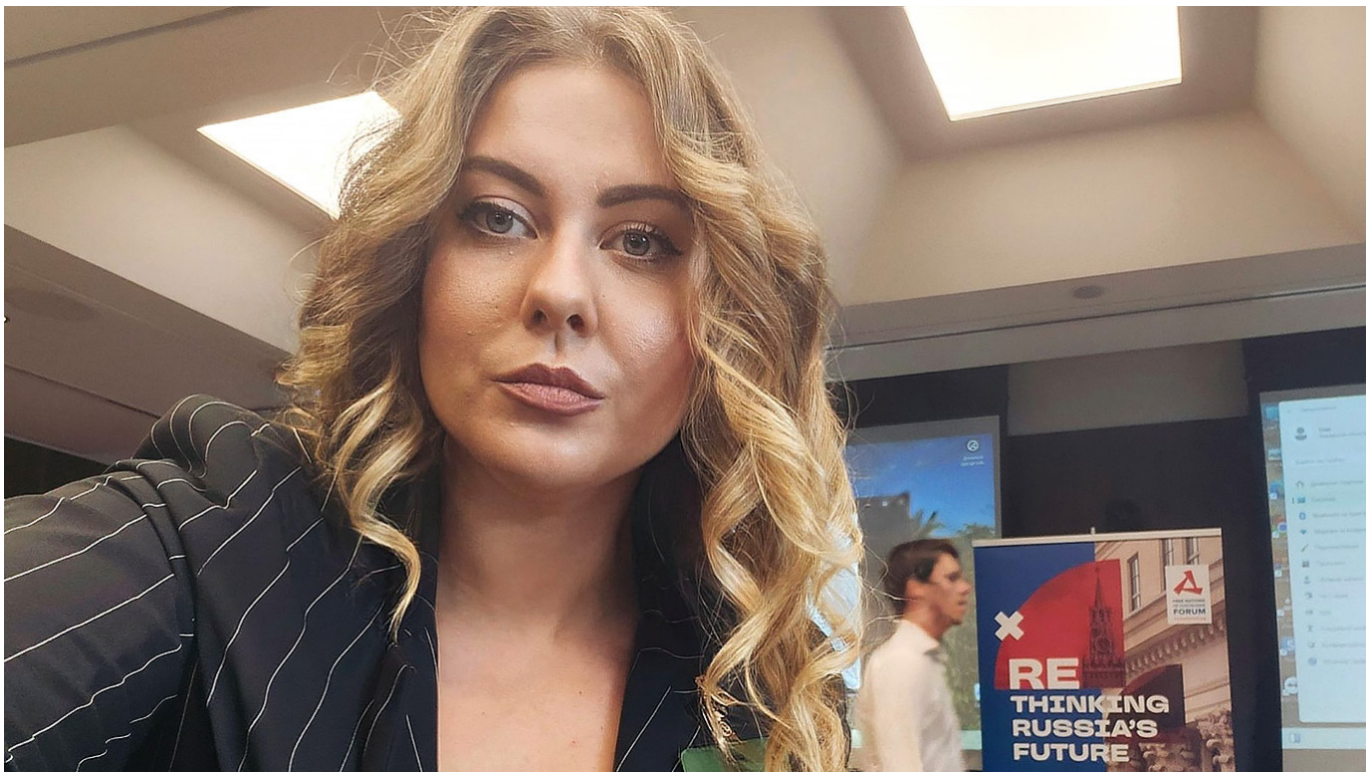
U.S. Charges Russian Woman Over FSB Contacts – Reports

December 03, 2024



Nomma Zarubina. **Nomma Zarubina / Facebook**

The United States has charged a Russian woman who engaged with anti-war opposition activists over false statements about her ties with Russia's Federal Security Service (FSB), a U.S.-based non-profit of pro-democracy Russians said Monday.

New York resident Nomma Zarubina last month was accused of concealing her 2020 recruitment by an FSB agent under the code name "Alyssa," according to the Russian America for Democracy in Russia (RADR).

"[Zarubina] aimed to build a network of U.S. contacts among journalists, military personnel, think tank researchers and Russia experts to influence their perspectives," RADR said.

Zarubina, 34, faces up to five years in prison if found guilty of making false statements to law enforcement agencies, according to U.S.-based lawyer Igor Slabykh. He underscored that Zarubina is not accused of espionage or acting as a foreign agent. The United States has not commented on the case against Zarubina.

RADR said Zarubina's case highlights that since 2016 she was mentored by Elena Branson, a dual Russian-American citizen charged in March 2022 with acting illegally as a Russian agent in the U.S..

RADR said Zarubina has engaged with its community organizers across various cities, attended discussion panels hosted by U.S. think tanks and posed for photos with notable Russian opposition figures since 2023.

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RADR added that Zarubina recently began appearing as an expert at conferences held by the Free Nations of PostRussia Forum, a Poland-based platform that advocates for Russia's decolonization and fragmentation into 41 independent states.

Russia last year labeled the Free Nations of PostRussia Forum an "undesirable organization," and on Nov. 22 designated 172 of what it called its "subdivisions" as terrorist organizations.

Zarubina advocated for a "United States of Siberia" at the forum's joint panel with the Jamestown Foundation in April, according to the Russian civil activist news outlet activatica.org.

Zarubina was released on $25,000 bail and banned from traveling outside New York. A judge scheduled a preliminary hearing in her case 30 days from Nov. 21, according to New York-based court reporter Matthew Lee.

Zarubina actively supported President Vladimir Putin and Russia's 2014 annexation of Crimea on social media, according to an analysis by the investigative news website Agentstvo.

On Monday, Zarubina wrote on Facebook that media reports about her arrest amount to "rumors, opinions and blackmail."

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Zarubina told the Sibir.Realii news outlet that she had been summoned by the Russian special services in late 2020 but denied receiving any instructions from them. She then claimed to voluntarily report those and other contacts with Russians to the FBI in April 2021.

"I've since been in touch with the Americans around once every six months," the U.S.-funded outlet quoted Zarubina as saying.

"I've known the people who arrested me for four years. I thought we had a very good relationship, I was kind of helping them," she added.

Zarubina voiced fears that she may now become the target of Russia's security services, which she said were unaware of her contacts with the FBI despite claiming to have her under surveillance in New York.

"This is no longer the level of false statements, but of treason. And it's not safe for me to be in

New York either.”

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