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Britain's Former Defense Secretary Is Now a Wanted Man in Russia

By Mack Tubridy

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Ben Wallace. **Simon Dawson / No 10 Downing Street**

Russia's Interior Ministry has issued an arrest warrant for former British Defense Secretary Ben Wallace on charges of "justifying terrorism," the exiled news outlet Mediazona reported Wednesday.

The warrant, which law enforcement officials have not confirmed, is said to be connected to comments Wallace made at the Warsaw Security Forum in September of last year.

Speaking at that event, Wallace, who served as Britain's defense chief from 2019 to 2023, said "Putin is in love with the idea of dominating Ukraine," further suggesting the Russian leader possesses a kind of religious attachment to Crimea.

"So we have to help Ukraine have the long-range capabilities to make Crimea unviable. We need to choke the life out of Crimea," Wallace said. "We need to smash the Kerch Bridge,

because that's a statue to Putin's ego."

The Kremlin at the time slammed his comments as "foolish," while the Russian Foreign Ministry described them as "incitement to terrorism."

In October, a Russian State Duma lawmaker called for police to issue a warrant for Wallace's arrest. The following month, a Russian court ordered the former British defense chief to be placed in pre-trial detention in absentia, Mediazona reported.

Mediazona, citing the Interior Ministry's wanted persons database, reported that an arrest warrant for Wallace was issued in January.

The British Embassy in Moscow called the accusations against Wallace "completely unacceptable."

"The U.K. does not stand for intimidation of its citizens," an embassy spokesperson told The Moscow Times.

Wallace is among at least 197 Western politicians and civil servants on the Russian police database of wanted persons, according to Mediazona.

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