

Ukrainian Officials Press Charges on Russian News Agency's Head

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Ukraine has opened a criminal case against Director-General of the International Information News Agency Rossiya Segodnya Dmitry Kiselev, the head of the Security Service of Ukraine (SBU) said Friday.

"An investigation is under way on charges of financing terrorism, [and] assisting terrorist activities," Valentyn Nalyvaichenko, who heads the SBU, told reporters.

In March, the European Union included Kiselev, a prominent Russian journalist and a host of the popular television program Vesti Nedeli (News of the Week), on a list of Russians barred from travelling, owning property or banking in the EU.

Kiselev said the sanctions against him threaten the rights of journalists around the world.

"It's the last thing to impose sanctions against journalists," the director general said, calling the EU decision "an outspoken attack on freedom of speech" that is "contrary to fundamental European human rights laws."

The sanctions list also featured some prominent Russian politicians that the West has accused of being involved in Crimea's reunification with Russia. Western officials have since threatened Moscow with further sanctions.

The Russian Foreign Ministry has repeatedly said that the language of the sanctions is "inappropriate and counterproductive."

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