

# Treasury Sanctions Russian-Backed Actors Responsible for Destabilization Activities in Ukraine

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WASHINGTON – Today, the Department of the Treasury’s Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) sanctioned four individuals engaged in Russian government-directed influence activities to destabilize Ukraine. This is the latest action we have taken to target purveyors of Russian disinformation, including [designations](#) in April 2021.

Today’s action is intended to target, undermine, and expose Russia’s ongoing destabilization effort in Ukraine. This action is separate and distinct from the broad range of high impact measures the United States and its Allies and partners are prepared to impose in order to inflict significant costs on the Russian economy and financial system if it were to further invade Ukraine.

The individuals designated today act at the direction of the Russian Federal Security Service (FSB), an intelligence service sanctioned by the United States, and support Russia-directed influence operations against the United States and its allies and partners. The four individuals have played various roles in Russia’s global influence campaign to destabilize sovereign countries in support of the Kremlin’s political objectives. The United States will continue to take steps, through actions like this one, and in partnership with the Ukrainian government, to identify, expose, and undercut Russia’s destabilization efforts.

“The United States is taking action to expose and counter Russia’s dangerous and threatening campaign of influence and disinformation in Ukraine,” said Deputy Secretary of the Treasury Wally Adeyemo. “We are committed to taking steps to hold Russia accountable for their destabilizing actions.”

Russian intelligence services, including the FSB, recruit Ukrainian citizens in key positions to gain access to sensitive information, threaten the sovereignty of Ukraine, and then leverage these Ukrainian officials to create instability in advance of a potential Russian invasion. The United States has worked closely with the Government of Ukraine to identify and expose these actors to thwart Russia’s influence operations.

In 2020, Kremlin officials launched a comprehensive information operation plan designed in part to degrade the ability of the Ukrainian state to function independently and without Russian interference. This included identifying and co-opting pro-Russian individuals in Ukraine and undermining prominent Ukrainians viewed as pro-Western, who would stand in the way of Russian efforts to bring Ukraine within its control. Goals of the plan included destabilizing the political situation in Ukraine and laying the groundwork for creating a new, Russian-controlled government in Ukraine.

Russia’s influence campaigns are not only focused on Ukraine. For over a decade, Russia has employed disinformation outlets and intelligence service affiliates to spread false narratives in support of its strategic goals. Since at least 2016, Russian agents have even sought to influence U.S. elections by spreading disinformation, sowing discord among U.S. audiences, and falsely denigrating U.S. politicians and political parties.

## **FSB PAWNS IN UKRAINE CONTINUE DESTABILIZATION ACTIVITIES**

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Russia has directed its intelligence services to recruit current and former Ukrainian government officials to prepare to take over the government of Ukraine and to control Ukraine’s critical infrastructure with an occupying Russian force. At the heart of this effort are **Taras Kozak** (Kozak) and **Oleh Voloshyn** (Voloshyn), two current Ukrainian Members of Parliament from the party led by Victor Medvedchuk (Medvedchuk), who is already subject to U.S. sanctions for his role in undermining Ukrainian sovereignty in 2014. Medvedchuk maintains close ties with the Kremlin, and also took part in directing these activities.

Kozak, who controls several news channels in Ukraine, supported the FSB’s plan to denigrate senior members of Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy’s inner circle, falsely accusing them of mismanagement of the COVID-19 pandemic. Furthermore, Kozak used his news platforms to amplify false narratives around the 2020 U.S. elections first espoused by U.S.-designated Andrii Leonidovych Derkach (Derkach). Kozak has attempted to legitimize Derkach’s claims by rebroadcasting Derkach’s false assertions about U.S. political candidates. Throughout 2020, Kozak worked alongside FSB intelligence agents.

Voloshyn has worked with Russian actors to undermine Ukrainian government officials and advocate on behalf of Russia. Voloshyn also worked with U.S.-designated Konstantin Kilimnik, a Russian national with ties to Russian intelligence who was sanctioned for attempts to influence the U.S. 2020 presidential election, to coordinate passing on information to influence U.S. elections at the behest of Russia.

Kozak is being designated pursuant to Executive Order (E.O.) 14024 for being responsible for or complicit in, or for having directly or indirectly engaged or attempted to engage in, interference in a United States or other foreign government election, for or on behalf of, or for the benefit of, directly or indirectly, the Government of the Russian Federation.

Voloshyn is being designated pursuant to E.O. 14024 for having acted or purported to act for or on behalf of, directly or indirectly, the Government of the Russian Federation.

## **FSB-CONNECTED FORMER UKRAINIAN OFFICIALS SUPPORTING RUSSIA**

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**Volodymyr Oliynyk** (Oliynyk) is a former Ukrainian official who fled Ukraine to seek refuge in Russia. Oliynyk has a history of supporting Russia, currently resides in Moscow, Russia, and shares Russia's anti-Western sentiments. In 2021, Oliynyk worked at the direction of the FSB to gather information about Ukrainian critical infrastructure.

As in previous Russian incursions into Ukraine, repeated cyber operations against Ukraine's critical infrastructure are part of Russia's hybrid tactics to threaten Ukraine. The overall strategy is designed to pull Ukraine into Russia's orbit by thwarting Ukraine's efforts at Western integration, especially with the European Union (EU) and North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). As Russia has pursued broad cyber operations against critical infrastructure, it has focused on disrupting one critical infrastructure sector in particular: Ukraine's energy sector. Russia has also degraded Ukraine's access to energy products in the middle of winter. Acting through Russia's state-owned gas company Gazprom, Russia has repeatedly disrupted supplies to Ukraine—a vital transshipment country with pipelines to other European countries—due to purported disputes over gas pricing.

Oliynyk is being designated pursuant to E.O. 14024 for having acted or purported to act for or on behalf of, directly or indirectly, the Government of the Russian Federation.

**Vladimir Sivkovich** (Sivkovich) is the former Deputy Secretary of the Ukrainian National Security and Defense Council. In 2021, Sivkovich worked with a network of Russian intelligence actors to carry out influence operations that attempted to build support for Ukraine to officially cede Crimea to Russia in exchange for a drawdown of Russian-backed forces in the Donbas, where separatists continue to receive support from Russia. In early 2020, Sivkovich coordinated with Russian intelligence services to promote Derkach's disinformation campaign against the U.S. 2020 presidential election. Sivkovich, who has ties to the FSB, also supported an influence operation targeting the United States from 2019 to 2020.

Sivkovich is being designated pursuant to E.O. 14024 for having acted or purported to act for or on behalf of, directly or indirectly, the Government of the Russian Federation.

## **SANCTIONS IMPLICATIONS**

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As a result of today's action, all property and interests in property of the designated persons described above that are in the United States or in the possession or control of U.S. persons are blocked and must be reported to OFAC. In addition, any entities that are owned, directly or indirectly, 50 percent or more by one or more blocked persons are also blocked. Unless authorized by a general or specific license issued by OFAC, or exempt, OFAC's regulations generally prohibit all transactions by U.S. persons or within (or transiting) the United States that involve any property or interests in property of designated or otherwise blocked persons. The prohibitions include the making of any contribution or provision of funds, goods, or services by, to, or for the benefit of any blocked person, or the receipt of any contribution or provision of funds, goods, or services from any such person.

[Click here for more information on the individuals designated today.](#)

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