

Foreign Secretary announces sanctions on Putin's propaganda

- Liz Truss announces 14 new sanctions, including Russian propagandist Sergey Brilev and Kremlin funded TV-Novosti – who own RT
- New sanctions also include Russian Colonel-General Mikhail Mizintsev, known as 'the butcher of Mariupol'
- The UK is leading global action on sanctions to debilitate the economy funding Putin's war machine and increase pressure on his regime

Foreign Secretary Liz Truss has announced 14 new sanctions today (Thursday 31 March) on Russian propagandists and state media who spread lies and deceit about Putin's illegal invasion of Ukraine.

This includes Sergey Brilev, famous TV anchor on Russia state-owned media Rossiya and propagandist for Putin. Having previously lived in the UK, Brilev will no longer be able to access any of his UK assets or continue business dealings.

The government is also directly sanctioning state media organisations, targeting the Kremlin funded TV-Novosti who own RT, formerly Russia Today, and Rossiya Segodnya who control news agency Sputnik.

Following Ofcom's decision to revoke RT's broadcasting licence, these sanctions will ensure RT will not be able to find its way back on UK televisions, and will prevent companies and individuals operating in the UK from doing business with Russian state propaganda vehicles RT and Sputnik, and key figures in those organisations. Disinformation is part of the Kremlin playbook and is used by Putin's regime to obscure the truth of his unjust invasion.

Other propagandists sanctioned today include:

- Aleksandr Zharov, Chief Executive Officer of Gazprom-Media and former Head of the Federal Service for Supervision of Communications, Information Technology and Mass Media (Roskomnadzor)
- Alexey Nikolov, Managing Director of RT
- Anton Anisimov, Head of Sputnik International Broadcasting

As well as targeting Putin's propaganda machine, the government is also sanctioning prominent Russian Colonel-General Mikhail Mizintsev.

Dubbed 'the butcher of Mariupol', Mizintsev is the Chief of the National Defence Command and Control Centre, where all Russian military operations are planned and controlled worldwide. Mizintsev is known for using reprehensible tactics, including shelling civilian centres in both Aleppo in 2015-16 and now in Mariupol – where atrocities are being perpetuated against Ukrainian people.

Foreign Secretary Liz Truss said:

Putin's war on Ukraine is based on a torrent of lies. Britain has helped lead the world in exposing Kremlin disinformation, and this latest batch of sanctions hits the shameless propagandists who push out Putin's fake news and narratives.

We will keep on going with more sanctions to ramp up the pressure on Russia and ensure Putin loses in Ukraine. Nothing and no one is off the table.

Culture Secretary Nadine Dorries said:

Putin's propaganda machine has been working overdrive to spread misinformation and distract from his barbaric actions in Ukraine. These sanctions will target those who are complicit in covering up the Russian state's actions. We will not hesitate to act further against individuals and organisations attempting to deceive people about this misguided war.

The UK has also fast-tracked sanctions against another 7 individuals connected to the Strategic Culture Foundation – who were recently sanctioned by Australia for their role in spreading disinformation. The UK is operating closely with allies to target Russia's oligarchs, banks and businesses.

Background:

- Asset freeze – An asset freeze prevents any UK citizen, or any business in the UK, from dealing with any funds or economic resources which are owned, held or controlled by the designated person and which are held in the UK. It will also prevent funds or economic resources being provided to or for the benefit of the designated person.
- Travel ban – A travel ban means that the designated person must be refused leave to enter or to remain in the United Kingdom, providing the individual be an excluded person under section 8B of the Immigration Act 1971.
- Transport sanction – Recently introduced powers make it a criminal offence for any Russian aircraft to fly or land in the UK and give the government powers to remove aircraft belonging to designated Russian individuals and entities from the UK aircraft register, even if the sanctioned individual is not on board. Russian ships are also banned from UK ports.

Individuals and entities sanctioned:

- Sergey Brilev is a prominent Russian presenter on the state-owned TV channel Rossiya. He is known for his interviews with high profile political figures, including Vladimir Putin and Dmitry Medvedev. The TV presenter is also a member of the Russian International Affairs Council which is presided over by the Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs,

Sergey Lavrov. The channel Rossiya has described the Ukrainian war as a “special military operation” and accused ‘Ukrainian Nazis’ of carrying out genocide in the country.

- TV-Novosti, the institution that controls RT and is funded by the Kremlin. RT has propagated pro-Kremlin narratives around the invasion of Ukraine, including that neo-Nazis are present in the country and that Ukrainian soldiers have committed war crimes.
- Rossiya Segodnya, a media group owned and operated by the Russian government. Rossiya Segodnya controls Sputnik. Sputnik is a Russian state-owned news agency. In the context of Russia’s invasion into Ukraine, it has published disinformation undermining Ukraine, and its senior staff amplify those claims globally.
- Colonel-General Mikhail Mizintsev, the so-called ‘Butcher of Mariupol’, is a senior Russian general. As Chief of the National Defence Management Centre of the Russian Federation, he has operational overview of all Russian Armed Forces activity worldwide. He has been linked to the planning and execution of the bombardment of Mariupol, among other key Russian military operations against Ukraine. He was also heavily implicated in Russia’s military activity in Syria including the destruction of the city of Aleppo.
- Aleksandr Zharov, Chief Executive Officer of Gazprom-Media and former Head of the Federal Service for Supervision of Communications, Information Technology and Mass Media (Roskomnadzor). Gazprom-Media owns TV channel NTV, that often attacks Ukrainian sovereignty, and which has argued that Kyiv has developed biological weapons with the United States.
- Alexey Nikolov is the Managing Director of RT, formerly Russia Today, and a co-founder of the Association for the Development of International Journalism. He began work as a journalist in the 1970s, eventually contributing to the launch of the Russian national network, REN TV in 1997. He joined RT in 2005 and also serves as Deputy Dean for the Faculty of Communications, Media, and Design at the HSE University, Moscow.
- Anton Anisimov, Editor-in-Chief of Sputnik. Anton Anisimov has been Head of International Broadcasting and Editor-in-Chief of Sputnik since 2015, having previously worked for RT and Rossiya Segodnya. He denies that Sputnik publishes Kremlin propaganda, arguing that his employees view their work as part of a global communications war. In a recent interview on the Russia-Ukraine war, when asked whether the Russian military underestimated Ukrainian resistance, Anisimov was quoted as describing the war as a “combination of a military operation with a humanitarian mission.” He has attacked Ukrainian sovereignty.
- Vladimir Ilich MAKSIMENKO, Director at the Strategic Culture Foundation. The Strategic Culture Foundation is an online journal registered in Russia. Australia has already sanctioned this individual due to his role in spreading disinformation.
- Andrey Grigoryevich ARESHEV, Director at the Strategic Culture Foundation. The Strategic Culture Foundation is an online journal registered in Russia. Australia has already sanctioned this individual due to his role in spreading disinformation.
- Irina Sergeevna BUBNOV, Social Media Editor at the Strategic Culture

Foundation. The Strategic Culture Foundation is an online journal registered in Russia. Australia has already sanctioned this individual due to her role in spreading disinformation.

- Anton Sergeyevich BESPALOV, Social Media Editor at the Strategic Culture Foundation. The Strategic Culture Foundation is an online journal registered in Russia Australia has already sanctioned this individual due to his role in spreading disinformation.
- Sergei Ivanovich SAENKO, Social Media Operations, Strategic Culture Foundation. The Strategic Culture Foundation is an online journal registered in Russia Australia has already sanctioned this individual due to his role in spreading disinformation.
- Natalya Petrovna SKOROKHODOVA, Human Resources, Finance, Strategic Culture Foundation. The Strategic Culture Foundation is an online journal registered in Russia. Australia has already sanctioned this individual due to her role in spreading disinformation.
- Svetlana Georgiyevna ZAMLELOVA, Chief Editor, Journal Kamerton. Journal Kamerton is a news outlet that is affiliated with the Strategic Culture Foundation. Australia has already sanctioned Svetlana Georgiyevna ZAMLELOVA for her role in spreading disinformation.