

Ksenia Sobchak Flees Russia as Police Raid Her Home

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Ksenia Sobchak and Kirill Sukhanov **Kirill Sukhanov social media**

Russian media figure Ksenia Sobchak has fled Russia after authorities raided her villa outside Moscow in connection with an extortion case which she dismissed as government pressure on her media group, AFP and state-run media reported Wednesday.

Agents searched Sobchak's property in the Moscow region village of Gorki-8, according to the 112 Telegram channel, which is said to have links with Russia's security services.

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TASS [reported](#) later Wednesday, citing law enforcement agencies, that Sobchak is a suspect in a criminal case of extortion from state conglomerate Rostec.

If charged with the crime, she would face up to 15 years in prison.

An official at Lithuania's state border service speaking on condition of anonymity told AFP

that Sobchak had arrived on an Israeli passport.

In September, Lithuania barred entry to Russians traveling with tourist visas over the Kremlin's invasion of Ukraine.

Citing unnamed law enforcement sources, TASS also reported that although the authorities planned to detain Sobchak at Moscow's Vnukovo Airport, she evaded detention by crossing into Lithuania via Belarus.

Sobchak called the extortion case the latest example of Russia's wider crackdown on independent media since the war in Ukraine began.

"It is clear that it's an attack on my editorial team, the last remaining free editorial team in Russia which had to be pressured," the one-time reality television star and former presidential candidate said on Telegram.

Sobchak's departure came a day after authorities arrested Kirill Sukhanov, a business manager at Sobchak's media holding, "Ostorozhno, Media" (Beware, Media), at a Moscow restaurant.

Sukhanov was detained for allegedly [extorting](#) government officials via Telegram channels, according to RIA Novosti.

Arian Romanovsky, a former editor of Russian fashion magazine Tatler, was [detained](#) alongside Sukhanov as part of the extortion case, reported the Baza Telegram channel, which is also linked to Russian security services.

The case relates to payments the pair are alleged to have demanded in return for [guarantees](#) that government officials would not receive critical coverage on Sobchak-run Telegram news channels, according to RBC.

Related article: [With Russia's Presidential Elections Looming, Ksenia Sobchak Has Already Moved On](#)

Last month, state-run media reported that Sobchak was at risk of criminal proceedings under Russia's wartime laws against spreading "fake news" about the authorities.

The daughter of Anatoly Sobchak, St. Petersburg's first democratically elected mayor who was credited with giving President Vladimir Putin his start in politics, Ksenia Sobchak is reported to be the Russian president's goddaughter.

Her mother, Senator Lyudmila Narusova, was the only senator to [vote against](#) Putin's "partial" mobilization for the military offensive in Ukraine.

AFP contributed reporting.

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