

## Treasury Sanctions Russian Intelligence-Linked Malign Influence Actors Targeting Moldova

June 5, 2023

WASHINGTON — Today, the U.S. Department of the Treasury’s Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) designated seven leading members of a Russian intelligence-linked malign influence group for their role in the government of the Russian Federation’s destabilization campaign and continued malign influence campaigns in Moldova. An entity owned or controlled by one of these individuals has also been designated.

“The sanctions imposed today shine a light on Russia’s ongoing covert efforts to destabilize democratic nations,” said Under Secretary of the Treasury for Terrorism and Financial Intelligence Brian E. Nelson. “Russia’s attempted influence operations exploit the concerns of the citizens of these countries, to destabilize legitimately elected governments for Moscow’s own interests. The United States remains committed, along with the EU, to target individuals who engage in such activities against the government of Moldova.”

Today’s designations are part of an ongoing effort to combat Russia’s malign influence in Moldova. The U.S. government has previously exposed Russia’s attempts to use covert operatives to subvert democracy in Moldova. On [October 26, 2022](#), OFAC sanctioned Yuriy Igorevich Gudilin, Olga Yurievna Grak, and Leonid Mikhailovich Gonin for their coordinated efforts in 2020 and 2021 to influence the outcome of Moldova’s elections. Additionally, on [May 30, 2023](#), the EU sanctioned several Russian and Moldovan individuals for engaging in destabilizing activities against the government of Moldova. The U.S. government will continue to support the Moldovan government and people in their efforts to combat coercive activities that undermine democracy in Moldova.

### **A MALIGN INFLUENCE GROUP WITH A GLOBAL REACH**

The malign influence actors OFAC designated today are part of a large global information operation connected to the Russian Federation that targets Ukraine, countries bordering Ukraine including Moldova, Balkan countries, the European Union, the United Kingdom, and the United States. These actors provoked, trained, and oversaw groups in democratic countries that conduct

anti-government protests, rallies, marches, and demonstrations. These malign influence operatives analyze countries vulnerable to exploitation and stoke fears that undermine faith in democratic principles in the targeted countries.

Several of the malign influence actors designated today maintain ties to Russian intelligence services regarding matters such as planning, staffing, and budgeting for the group's activities.

## **EFFORTS TO DESTABILIZE THE GOVERNMENT OF MOLDOVA**

Throughout February and March of 2023, several thousand demonstrators participated in multiple anti-government protests in the Moldovan capital of Chisinau, and other major cities in Moldova. The protests were organized by the fugitive oligarch Ilan Shor, whom OFAC previously designated in October 2022 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. The protestors called for the current president of Moldova, Maia Sandu, to resign. During the protests, Moldovan intelligence services and police forces maintained public order and conducted multiple raids, made arrests, and expelled foreign individuals carrying out subversive actions to destabilize the government of Moldova.

The Russian Federation-connected influence actors OFAC designated today were part of a plot to capitalize on these protests in Chisinau and seize the Moldovan Government House. As noted in the White House's [March 10, 2023](#) statement on Russia's attempts to destabilize Moldova, this was an effort by Russia-connected malign influence actors to foment a manufactured insurrection against the Moldovan government. In February 2023, the group organized protest training, likely in support of a Moldova-focused destabilization plot. During the protests, members of the aforementioned malign influence group oversaw the movement of some personnel to locations in Moldova, including Chisinau.

Training for the protest was directed by an instructor cadre with links to Mikhail Sergeyevich Potepkin. OFAC designated Potepkin on [July 15, 2020](#), for his role as Regional Director for M Invest, a designated company that served as cover for Kremlin-backed PMC Wagner forces operating in Sudan, and was responsible for developing plans for former Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir to suppress protestors. OFAC sanctioned Potepkin's former employer, the Internet Research Agency, on [September 30, 2019](#), for its efforts to influence the 2018 U.S. midterm elections.

Konstantin Prokopyevich Sapozhnikov, Yury Yuryevich Makolov, Gleb Maksimovich Khloponin, Svetlana Andreyevna Boyko, Aleksey Vyacheslavovich Losev, Vasily Viktorovich Gromovikov, and Anna Travnikova are all members of this Russia-connected malign influence group that is attempting to destabilize the government of Moldova. They are all being designated pursuant to E.O. 14024 for being responsible for or complicit in, or for having directly or indirectly engaged or attempted to engage in, activities that undermine the peace, security, political stability, or territorial integrity of the United States, its allies, or its partners for or on behalf of, or for the benefit of, directly or indirectly, the government of the Russian Federation.

**Konstantin Prokopyevich Sapozhnikov** is the leader of the aforementioned malign influence group and organized the plot to destabilize the government of Moldova in early 2023.

**Yury Yuryevich Makolov** was involved in logistical support for the plot to destabilize the government of Moldova.

**Gleb Maksimovich Khloponin** was involved in gathering security details on various government buildings in Moldova for the plot to destabilize the government of Moldova.

**Svetlana Andreyevna Boyko** is a senior member of the aforementioned malign influence group and handled budgeting for the plot to destabilize the government of Moldova.

**Aleksey Vyacheslavovich Losev** (Losev) conducted reconnaissance in Moldova for the plot to destabilize the government of Moldova. Losev owns **Perko Julleuchter**, a workshop that produces ceramic lanterns. OFAC is designating Perko Julleuchter pursuant to E.O. 14024 for being owned or controlled by, or for having acted or purported to act for or on behalf of, directly or indirectly, Losev.

**Vasily Viktorovich Gromovikov** was involved in the financing of the plot to destabilize the government of Moldova.

**Anna Travnikova** has been involved in the aforementioned malign influence group's influence operations targeting foreign audiences. The operations were designed to sway public opinion abroad in favor of Russia in the context of Russia's ongoing war against Ukraine. In 2022, Travnikova coordinated with Boyko on promoting pro-Russia narratives for audiences in multiple countries, including the United States.

## **SANCTIONS IMPLICATIONS**

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, individually or in the aggregate, 50 percent or more by one or more blocked persons are also blocked. All transactions by U.S. persons or within (or transiting) the United States that involve any property or interests in property of designated or blocked persons are prohibited unless authorized by a general or specific license issued by OFAC, or exempt. The prohibitions include the making of any contribution or provision of funds, goods, or services by, to, or for the benefit of any designated person, or the receipt of any contribution or provision of funds, goods, or services from any such person.

The power and integrity of OFAC sanctions derive not only from OFAC's ability to designate and add persons to the SDN List, but also from its willingness to remove persons from the SDN List consistent with the law. The ultimate goal of sanctions is not to punish, but to bring about a positive change in behavior. For information concerning the process for seeking removal from an OFAC list, including the SDN List, please refer to OFAC's Frequently Asked Question 897 [here](#). For detailed information on the process to submit a request for removal from an OFAC sanctions list, please click [here](#).

[For more information on the individuals and entity designated today, click here.](#)

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