

U.S. Disappointed With Russia's Denial Of Journalist's Visa

The U.S. State Department says it is "disappointed" that U.S. journalist and RFE/RL adviser David Satter has been denied a visa by Russian authorities.

U.S. State Department spokeswoman Marie Harf said on January 14 that "hindering the free flow of information undermines... free debate and discussion."

U.S. Representative Eliot Engel (Democrat-New York), a member of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, said the visa denial was "another blow to freedom of the press and independent journalism in Russia."

Russia's Foreign Ministry issued [a statement](#) on January 14 saying Satter had "grossly violated" the country's visa-entry rules by staying in Russia on an expired visa. It said Satter has been banned from entering Russia for five years.

Satter told RFE/RL that "this is a problem of their own making. And they have created it intentionally to cover up the real reasons behind their actions."

Satter, who left Russia for Ukraine at the start of December, reapplied for a Russian visa in Kyiv.

He said he received notification in December that his visa request was approved -- including an official notification number from the Russian Foreign Ministry -- but was told later by a Russian Embassy official in Kyiv that his presence in Russia was considered "undesirable."

"The question about the reasons why [I have been denied visa to Russia] has to be addressed to them, not me -- they know their reasons far better than I do," Satter said.

Satter had been living in Russia since September 2013 and working as an adviser to RFE/RL's Russian Service.

RFE/RL President Kevin Klose said "the company and Mr. Satter acted in good faith at all times to conform to all instructions conveyed from the Russian Foreign Ministry regarding Mr. Satter's visa application."

<http://www.rferl.org/content/russia-satter-visa-rejection/25229610.html>