

U.S. accuses RT of covert intelligence activities, issuing fresh sanctions against the media giant

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Washington, September 14 (RHC)-- The United States has issued new sanctions against Russia's state media outlet RT, accusing the television network of taking part in covert "influence and intelligence operations" around the world and weapons procurement for the Russian military.

In a statement on Friday, the U.S. State Department said RT — previously known as Russia Today — had “moved beyond being simply a media outlet and has been an entity with cyber capabilities.”

“It is also engaged in information operations, covert influence, and military procurement. These operations are targeting countries around the world, including in Europe, Africa, and North and South America.”

Washington alleged that an online crowdfunding platform operating within RT and on social media provided “material support and weaponry” to Russian military units in Ukraine. The arms include sniper rifles, body armour, drones and other equipment, the State Department alleged.

The administration of U.S. President Joe Biden — a staunch critic of his Russia counterpart, Vladimir Putin — has issued waves of sanctions against Russian individuals and companies since the war began in 2022.

American officials also have accused Russia of interfering in elections. Last week, the US Justice Department announced a range of actions to counter Russian efforts to meddle in November’s vote, including criminal charges against two RT employees it accused of taking part in a Moscow-directed influence operation.

Speaking to reporters about Friday’s sanctions, U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken said the Russian state media outlet “wants its new covert intelligence capabilities, like its longstanding propaganda disinformation efforts, to remain hidden.”

Russia’s embassy in Washington, DC, did not immediately respond to a request for comment from the Reuters news agency.

Asked for comment by CNN, the U.S. news outlet said RT “responded with a mocking email that read in part: ‘We’ve been broadcasting straight out of the KGB headquarters all this time.’”

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