

## **[Ukraine bans Steven Seagal as threat to national security](#)**

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**State Security Service (SBU) says it has forbidden Seagal entry into country for five years, after actor received Russian citizenship.**

By Alec Luhn in Moscow for the Guardian, May 5, 2017 Ukraine has banned American action movie star Steven Seagal as a national security threat, making him the latest of several cultural figures to be blacklisted. The Ukrainian security service said it had forbidden Seagal entry to the country for five years, in a letter published by the news site Apostrophe. The service's press secretary later confirmed the ban to other media. The letter said such a decision is made when a person has "committed socially dangerous actions ... that contradict the interests of maintaining Ukraine's security". The move comes after the actor received citizenship in Russia, which has backed separatists in a simmering conflict in eastern Ukraine. President Vladimir Putin handed Seagal a Russian passport and told him he hoped their "personal relationship will remain and continue" during a meeting in the Kremlin last year. Ukraine previously banned Russia's entry to the Eurovision song contest that Kyiv is hosting next week. Seagal, the star of the 1992 hit Under Siege as well as straight-to-video films such as Kill Switch, Out for a Kill and Driven to Kill, has had a long love affair with the former Soviet Union. He has eaten carrots with "Europe's last dictator", Alexander Lukashenko in Belarus, ridden a horse in a suit of armour at the Nomad Games in Kyrgyzstan and taken part in a traditional dance while visiting Chechnya strongman Ramzan Kadyrov. But Seagal's outspoken support for Putin and his policies have earned the enmity of the Ukrainian authorities. The actor called Russia's 2014 annexation of Crimea from Ukraine "very reasonable". He later played with his blues band at a concert in Crimea put on by a pro-Putin biker club, with the flag of eastern Ukraine separatists flying onstage. In 2015, Seagal was included in a proposed blacklist of foreign cultural figures who "speak out in support of violating the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Ukraine" along with French actor Gérard Depardieu and many Russian artists. Ukraine later banned Depardieu and has also blacklisted more than 100 Russian films. [...]

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