

Siren Call: The 'Distinctly High Voice' That Led MH17 Sleuths to A Russian Missile Suspect

World

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Russian military intelligence officer Oleg Vladimirovich Ivannikov (file photo)

By [Alan Crosby](#) for RFE/RL, May 25, 2018 15:18 GMT Oleg Vladimirovich Ivannikov, an officer of the Russian military intelligence agency's (GRU) Main Directorate of the General Staff, took a lot of precautions to cover up his identity. But he couldn't hide his "atypical" voice. The 51-year-old has been [fingered in a joint investigation](#) by open-source researchers at Bellingcat, The Insider, and the McClatchy Washington bureau, "with very high certainty" as being a missile specialist who was in charge of military operations in eastern Ukraine during an "undercover deployment" by Russia at the time of the downing of Malaysia Airlines Flight 17 in 2014. It says Ivannikov is sought by the Dutch-based international Joint Investigating Team (JIT) tasked with identifying suspects in the missile attack. **[ALSO READ: Bellingcat Links High-Ranking Russian GRU Officer To Downing Of MH17](#)** Bellingcat also identifies Ivannikov as a "reclusive" senior defense official in a breakaway region of Georgia that enjoyed Russian military support during a lightning war for independence a decade ago. The [investigation connected](#) several of the dots based on documentation to lead them to the man with the call sign "Orion." But it was several phone conversations that helped fill out the picture, including a crucial one on July 13, 2015, that Bellingcat said was "most likely" directly related to the downing of MH17. The route and convoy described in the call matched that of the Russian Buk missile launcher thought to have been used to bring down the passenger aircraft in the skies over Ukraine. "The Bellingcat-led investigating team used primarily open-source data sources to reconstruct a curriculum vitae of Oleg Ivannikov," the research group said in a May 25 report that identifies Ivannikov, who is also known under the alias Andrey Ivanovich Laptev, according to Novaya Gazeta. [hellip;] <https://www.rferl.org/a/mh17-icannikov...ctive-voice/29251023.html>