

BBC Monitoring

UK rights barrister barred from Russia - radio

Source: Ekho Moskvyy radio, Moscow, in Russian 1700 gmt 17 Nov 05

[Newsreader] A row over a British diplomat in Russia [as received: Bill Bowring is a barrister and professor of human rights and international law]. Bill Bowring was refused entry into the country, and, after being investigated for six hours in the customs hall of Sheremetyevo Airport, he was forced to head back to London, the head of the Memorial human rights organization, Oleg Orlov, told Ekho Moskvyy radio.

[Orlov] The day before yesterday, when he arrived in Moscow early in the morning, at around five o' clock [0200 gmt], he was detained at passport control. He was held for around six hours without any explanation. After that, he was told he was a persona non grata in Russia. He was barred from entry into Russia and put on a return Aeroflot flight to London. And he flew back.

At our request, staff of the human rights ombudsman [Vladimir Lukin] rang the Foreign Ministry to find out the reasons. The only thing they got was the following explanation. The Foreign Ministry said it was acting on instructions from the competent bodies.

[Newsreader] Orlov said Bowring was heading for Nizhniy Novgorod to observe and consult at the trial of the director of the Russian-Chechen Friendship Society [Stanislav Dmitriyevskiy, according to an Interfax report], who is accused of fomenting ethnic dissent. In Orlov's view, Bowring's desire to attend the case was the real reason why he was barred from visiting Russia.