



My case was a US ‘experiment’ – Viktor Bout

Description

RUSSIA/USA: The Russian businessman has said sanctions were used as a weapon against him and his home country

Recently-released Russian businessman Viktor Bout told RT on Saturday that his case was an “*experiment*” in the legal persecution of Russia, with the US deploying sanctions against him and his home country alike.

“What happened to me happened to my country,” he said, in his first TV interview after he was returned to Russia in a prisoner swap for US basketball star Brittney Griner.

“They tried this experiment with me first,” he stated. *“I’ve been under sanctions since 2000. I was unable to make any bank transfers;... so I’ve seen it all.”*

“There is nothing new about this,” he continued, referring to the unprecedented economic sanctions imposed on Russia by the US and its allies in the wake of Moscow’s military operation in Ukraine. *“They started this undeclared war against me and my family,”* he said, adding that the war “*spilled over to encompass everyone.*”

Bout served 12 years in a number of US prisons on arms-trafficking charges. While he accepted a plea deal in exchange for 25 years behind bars, he denies the charges.

Back in his native Russia, Bout told RT that he “*fully supports the special military operation*” in Ukraine, which, he argued, Moscow should have launched in 2014. However, he conceded that “*not everyone was ready*” for such an operation back then.

“If I could, I would share the skills I have and I would readily volunteer,” he declared.

However, Bout said that contrary to some reports in the US media, he does not see himself as particularly valuable to Russia or to President Vladimir Putin. Instead he suggested that he was merely caught up in a larger geopolitical game, and that there are “*probably thousands and thousands and thousands*”

of cases like his in Russian history.

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