

By Tara Hurley

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Russia [has banned](#) UC Berkeley professor of law John Yoo from entering the country for his connection to the alleged torture of Guantanamo Bay prisoners, according to an announcement Saturday.

Yoo was among 18 Americans banned by the Eastern European nation, apparently in response to the United States' ban of 18 Russian officials for alleged human rights violations. Russia's list included Yoo, who was a Department of Justice official under former president George W. Bush and is notorious for his issuance of a 2003 memo that allowed the use of contentious questioning tactics on Guantanamo Bay prisoners.

"My conservative friends are intensely jealous that I was honored by the Russian government over the weekend," Yoo said in a [statement](#) posted on Ricochet.com.

Curt Wechsler, a member of the organization [The World Can't Wait](#) and editor of the blog [Fire John Yoo!](#), pointed out what he sees as the hypocrisy of an American ban on "war criminals" from other countries while UC Berkeley allows Yoo to teach at its law school. Wechsler said he views Yoo as a war criminal.

"I think that it should be extended to any other country on Earth," Wechsler said of Russia's ban on Yoo. "He shouldn't be allowed anywhere. He should be brought up to trial and given a fair trial. (Knowing) what we know, he should be removed from the faculty."

The United States banned 18 Russian officials for their involvement in the imprisonment of Russian lawyer Sergei Magnitsky, who died in jail in 2009. Congress passed the Magnitsky Act in 2012 to punish Russian officials who were allegedly involved with the prisoner's death for

their violation of human rights.

Yoo, for his part, did not seem particularly concerned about the ban or its implications for the U.S.-Russia relationship.

“But seriously, I couldn’t go to Russia during the Cold War, and I can’t go now,” Yoo said in his post. “What’s the difference these days in regimes? Obama has as much chance of resetting relations with Putin as he would have with Stalin.”