



Maria Pevchikh @pevchikh Wed Mar 30 15:12:27 +0000 2022

There is an elephant in the negotiation room. Its name is Roman Abramovich. Allow me to give you some context on who this guy actually is and how his participation in the Ukraine-Russia peace talks should be viewed.
<https://t.co/2vIRqwaLlq>





It seems like we are dealing with a case of mass hypnosis or general memory loss. People are genuinely wondering: is Abramovich a good guy now? Is he a superhero who's going to save us all? <https://t.co/rOV8qchfaP>



There is nothing tricky about the Abramovich situation. There is nothing to discuss or wonder about. I encourage you all to use a simple and straightforward rule. If Putin likes something - it's shit. You don't want it, you should stay away. And Putin likes Abramovich. <https://t.co/1zozVLwRTD>

War in Ukraine [+ Add to myFT](#)

Putin approved Abramovich's role in Russia-Ukraine talks

Direct blessing underscores close ties between Russian president and oligarch



Roman Abramovich is the reason why Putin is still in power. He plays a crucial role in sustaining Putin's regime for the past 22 years. Abramovich is Putin's ultimate wallet, the ultimate source of bribes, a person who can hold and control

strategic assets on Putin's behalf. <https://t.co/mDPzdT2Ode>



This is how oligarchy in Russia works. Many years ago Putin sat all the oligarchs at the table and said: if you give up all of your political ambitions, I will give you a way to enrich yourself. Knock yourselves out, take as much money as you want, but do not question my power. <https://t.co/Ffyov2yQd5>



And that's how it's been for the past 20 years. They stay silent and uninvolved, and in return they get to become the world's richest people. Earning their fortunes in Russia and living abroad. And of course, they have to share with Putin through kickbacks or direct bribes. <https://t.co/S9MLXWmcVM>

The Russian Billionaires

Russia's ten richest individuals have lost more than \$38 billion in 2022 because of Western sanctions on Russia in reprisal for the invasion of Ukraine. But who are these Russian oligarchs?

<p>1</p>  <p>VLADIMIR POTANIN \$25.9B</p> <p>TOTAL WEALTH</p> <p>COMPANY NORILSK NICKEL BLOOMBERG BILLIONAIRES INDEX 53 \$ YTD CHANGE -45.00B</p> <p>OPERATIONS Palladium Platinum Nickel</p> <p>Potanin acquired a stake in Norilsk Nickel during Russia's privatization in 1995. Today he owns just over a third of the world's largest producer of palladium and nickel.</p>	<p>2</p>  <p>LEONID MIKHELSON \$22.6B</p> <p>TOTAL WEALTH</p> <p>COMPANY NOVATEK BLOOMBERG BILLIONAIRES INDEX 66 \$ YTD CHANGE -49.87B</p> <p>OPERATIONS Natural gas</p> <p>Major shareholder of Novatek, Russia's second-largest natural gas producer. Mikhelson runs an art foundation with ties with the New Museum in New York and the Tate museums in the UK.</p>	<p>3</p>  <p>ALEXEY MORDASHOV \$22.5B</p> <p>TOTAL WEALTH</p> <p>COMPANY Severstal BLOOMBERG BILLIONAIRES INDEX 67 \$ YTD CHANGE -46.32B</p> <p>OPERATIONS Steel Tourism</p> <p>The son of mill workers, Mordashov is a majority shareholder in steel company Severstal. He is a major shareholder in Tui, the world's largest tourism operator with over 400 hotels and 5 airlines.</p>	<p>4</p>  <p>VLADIMIR LISIN \$21.6B</p> <p>TOTAL WEALTH</p> <p>COMPANY NLMK BLOOMBERG BILLIONAIRES INDEX 69 \$ YTD CHANGE -46.44B</p> <p>OPERATIONS Steel Rail Freight</p> <p>Lisin started out as an electrical fitter in a coal mine in Siberia. Today, he is the chairman of NLMK Group, a leading manufacturer of steel products. A shooting sports enthusiast, he is the president of the European Shooting Confederation.</p>	<p>5</p>  <p>ALISHER USMANOV \$19.0B</p> <p>TOTAL WEALTH</p> <p>COMPANY USM Holding BLOOMBERG BILLIONAIRES INDEX 89 \$ YTD CHANGE -42.25B</p> <p>OPERATIONS Steel Iron Ore Telecoms</p> <p>Usmanov owns 49% of USM Holding company, an investment group that controls Metalinvest, Russia's largest iron ore producer, and MegaFon, the 2nd largest telecom in Russia, which generates around \$1 billion in profit per year.</p>
<p>6</p>  <p>ANDREY MELNICHENKO \$17.8B</p> <p>TOTAL WEALTH</p> <p>COMPANY EUROCHEM BLOOMBERG BILLIONAIRES INDEX 99 \$ YTD CHANGE +4350M</p> <p>OPERATIONS Fertilizer Coal</p> <p>Major shareholder of the fertilizer producer EuroChem. He also owns most of Suek, Russia's largest supplier of thermal coal. Melnichenko's other investments include a stake in Rosseti Siberia, a publicly-traded electric power distributor in Russia.</p>	<p>7</p>  <p>VIKTOR VEKSELBERG \$16.7B</p> <p>TOTAL WEALTH</p> <p>COMPANY RUSAL BLOOMBERG BILLIONAIRES INDEX 107 \$ YTD CHANGE -1.79B</p> <p>OPERATIONS Aluminum Oil Energy Telecoms</p> <p>Chairman of Rusal, an investment group with a stake in Rusal, Russia's biggest aluminum producer. He is an honorary member of the Yale Foundation and donor to New York venues like the Lincoln Center and Carnegie Hall. He also owns regional airports in Russia.</p>	<p>8</p>  <p>ROMAN ABRAMOVICH \$14.1B</p> <p>TOTAL WEALTH</p> <p>COMPANY Millhouse BLOOMBERG BILLIONAIRES INDEX 132 \$ YTD CHANGE -3.90B</p> <p>OPERATIONS Commodities Sports</p> <p>Co-founder of Evraz, the second-largest steelmaker in Russia. He was a confidant of former Russian president Boris Yeltsin and current leader Vladimir Putin. He is seeking to sell the Premier League club, Chelsea, that he has owned since 2003. He was formerly Governor of the Chukotka Autonomous Okrug region.</p>	<p>9</p>  <p>MIKHAIL PROKHOROV \$13.8B</p> <p>TOTAL WEALTH</p> <p>COMPANY ONEXIM GROUP BLOOMBERG BILLIONAIRES INDEX 138 \$ YTD CHANGE -213M</p> <p>OPERATIONS Precious Metals Banking</p> <p>Founder of Onexim Group, a company with interests in banking, insurance and real estate. He is a former owner of the Brooklyn Nets basketball team and also ran as an independent candidate in the 2012 Russian presidential election.</p>	<p>10</p>  <p>SULEIMAN KERIMOV \$11.8B</p> <p>TOTAL WEALTH</p> <p>COMPANY POLYUS BLOOMBERG BILLIONAIRES INDEX 177 \$ YTD CHANGE -43.37B</p> <p>OPERATIONS Precious Metals Real Estate</p> <p>Kerimov's family controls most of Polyus, the biggest gold producer in Russia. Since 2008, Kerimov has served as a member of the upper house of the Federation Assembly of the Russian Federation.</p>

*Based on Bloomberg Billionaires Index, as of March 29, 2022



Source: Bloomberg Billionaires Index



COLLABORATORS RESEARCH + WRITING Bruno Venditti | ART DIRECTION + DESIGN Sabrina Lam

Let me illustrate this. In 1997 Abramovich privatized a state owned-oil company Sibneft. It was done at a fictitious auction with fake competition. Many years later Abramovich himself, under oath, called this auction a sham. The price he paid sounds hilarious now - \$100 million. <https://t.co/AQAvyUCun7>

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ВЕДОМОСТИ

WU EXECUTIVE ACADEMY

3 months for 990 €

Roman Abramovich, who continues to testify in the High Court of London on the suit of Boris Berezovsky, today admitted that the loans-for-shares auction for Sibneft was actually a sham.

He confirmed under oath that Berezovsky and his partner Badri Patarkatsishvili conspired with two other bidders: as a result, one of them submitted a lower bid, and the other withdrew his own. This allowed them to buy Sibneft practically at the starting price - for \$100.3 million (with the starting price of \$100 million).

A few years later, in 2005, during Putin's second presidential term, it was decided that the state (Gazprom) wanted Sibneft back. This was the time when Putin got obsessed with consolidating everything under Gazprom. Abramovich sold Sibneft back to the state for \$13 billion. <https://t.co/wzXNs8U3eJ>

Chelsea owner in \$13bn sale of oil firm

© Fri, Sep 30, 2005, 01:00

Chris Stephen

f **RUSSIA:** Russian tycoon Roman Abramovich pocketed \$13 billion (€10.8 billion) yesterday after selling his oil company to the state in the country's biggest-ever takeover.

t The Chelsea FC owner made enough cash to buy new signing Michael Essien 290 times over in the sale of Sibneft to state-owned gas giant Gazprom.

This deal puts one third of Russia's oil output under state control, and leaves the Kremlin poised to become a global energy player in its own right.

The announcement of the deal came in a brief statement, in which Gazprom and Millhouse Capital, Mr Abramovich's London holding company, said simply that the deal had been made "in accordance with current legislation".

Buying something from the state for \$100 million and selling it back 7 years later for \$13 billion. That's it. That's the whole thing. The whole business model. That's how Abramovich, who was once the richest man in the world, got this title. <https://t.co/zgvtqIH0hz>



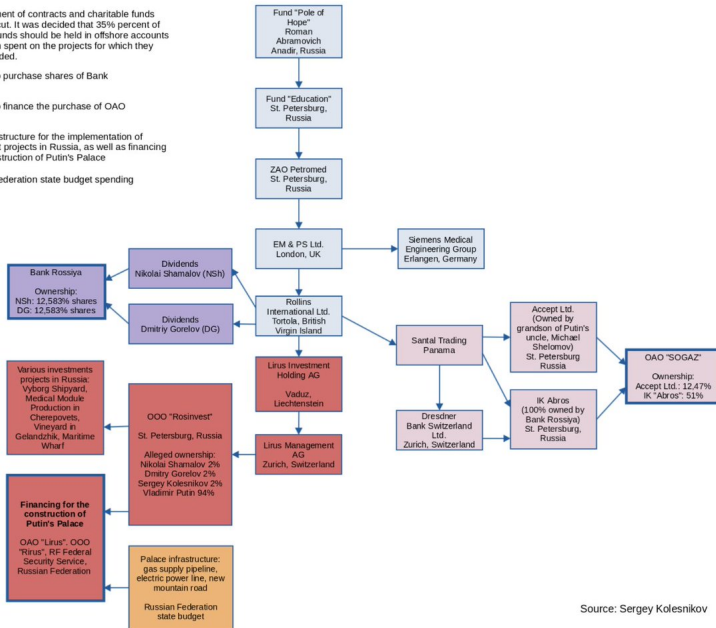
The second part of the deal was the bribes. Abramovich was one of the key early sponsors of Putin's Palace. Sergei Kolesnikov, the whistleblower responsible for managing the scheme, said that Abramovich 'donated' \$203m. Part of it was subsequently spent on building the Palace. <https://t.co/kWFRen4Eoc>



Construction of Putin's Palace - Cash flow scheme

DESCRIPTION:

- Establishment of contracts and charitable funds with 35% cut. It was decided that 35% percent of obtained funds should be held in offshore accounts rather than spent on the projects for which they were intended.
- Scheme to purchase shares of Bank Rossiya
- Scheme to finance the purchase of OAO SOGAZ
- Company structure for the implementation of investment projects in Russia, as well as financing of the construction of Putin's Palace
- Russian Federation state budget spending



Source: Sergey Kolesnikov

ДОГОВОР о безвозмездной помощи (пожертвовании)

г. Анадырь

“26” июля 2001 г.

Межрегиональный общественный фонд “Полюс Надежды”, именуемый в дальнейшем “Сторона-1”, в лице Президента Гончаровой М. А., действующей на основании Устава, с одной стороны, и Межрегиональный общественный фонд “Фонд Образование”, именуемый в дальнейшем “Сторона-2”, в лице Вице - президента – исполнительного директора Колесникова С.В, действующего на основании Устава, с другой стороны, заключили настоящий договор о нижеследующем:

1. ПРЕДМЕТ ДОГОВОРА

1.1. Сторона-1 в целях содействия деятельности в сфере профилактики и охраны здоровья граждан в рамках реализации программы «Развития здравоохранения в регионах РФ» и развития образования врачей и медицинского персонала, оказывает безвозмездную помощь путем перечисления денежных средств на финансирование приобретения медицинского оборудования для Военно-медицинской академии г. Санкт-Петербург, согласно Приложению 1 и Приложению 2 к настоящему Договору, а Сторона-2 обязуется такие денежные средства принять и использовать их строго по целевому назначению в соответствии с условиями настоящего Договора.

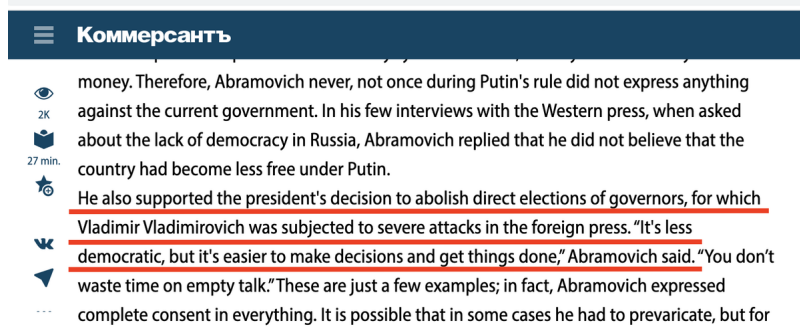
1.2. Общая сумма безвозмездной помощи по настоящему Договору составляет 203 000 000 (Двести три миллиона) долларов США.

Putin's first super yacht (Olympia) was also gifted by Abramovich. Another whistleblower D.Skarga told BBC that the yacht was paid for by Abramovich (\$35m) and transferred to an offshore firm; the running costs were paid by the state budget <https://t.co/y5VMjLU1Nn> <https://t.co/W9MqLbtUJ8>



The only reason why we know about these two bribes is because the two whistleblowers were brave enough to talk. Both are now in exile and wanted in Russia, by the way. Imagine how much more there is to discover. Twenty years' worth of bribery.

But there is an above the surface part as well. When praising Abramovich now, in 2022, please keep in mind that he was once personally appointed by Putin as the governor of the Chukotka region and actively supported the abolition of direct governor elections. <https://t.co/U0fq2ZDXfk>



That he, until very recently, owned Channel One alongside with the government. It's the ultimate source of diabolical Putin's propaganda, the main brainwashing machine that for twenty years has been telling lies and fake news to millions of Russians. <https://t.co/O8LVexMQYy>

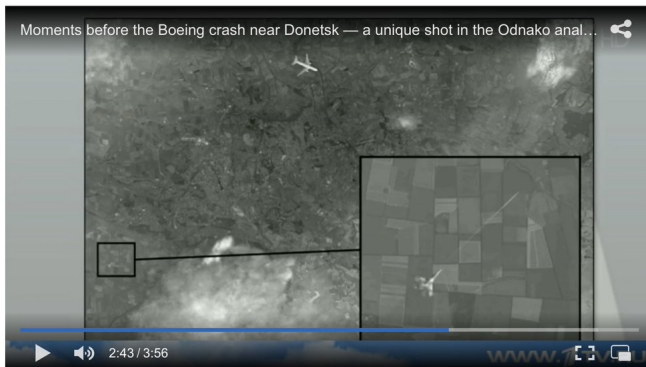


You can turn it on right now and check. It's the modern take on the Thousand Hills Radio. 24/7 hate speech about every Ukrainian being a nazi and Putin being about to liberate the world by bombing maternity wards (where Ukrainian nazis are hiding). <https://t.co/aGxFEGX6si>

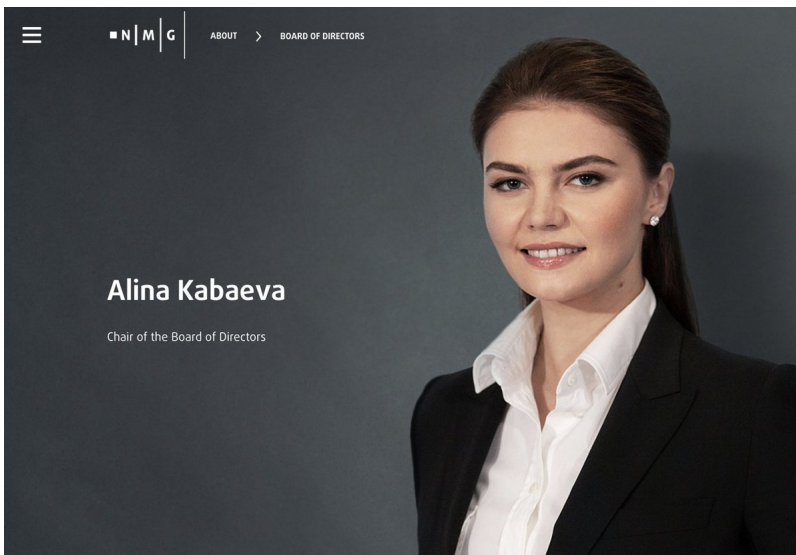


Abramovich owned this propaganda hellhole for almost 20 years. Throughout the first invasion of Ukraine, throughout the annexation of Crimea. Abramovich was the channel's owner when it claimed that MH17 was shot down by a Ukrainian fighter jet. And he had no problem with it. <https://t.co/5Pi1codxqg>

Moments before the Boeing crash near Donetsk – a unique shot in the Odnako analytical program



Abramovich sold his shares recently. Guess who was the buyer? Putin's best buddy Kovalchuk and the National Media Group, whose Chairwoman just so happens to be Putin's gymnast mistress Alina Kabaeva. <https://t.co/FXFQQKnrn3>



Roman Abramovich is the most faithful and devoted of Putin's oligarchs. His loyalties are crystal clear. He unconditionally supports whatever Putin does for two decades. Even now, during the war, Abramovich is there for the president, accepting and saluting to his orders. <https://t.co/8e8qfb9jLY>



This is what we know from his actions, twenty five years of them. And that's why I cannot understand how on earth it is possible to suggest that Abramovich is a good guy all of a sudden. What is it based on? Has something changed? I didn't get the memo. <https://t.co/dwP7xy14yh>



Has Abramovich said something publicly? Made a statement? Gave an interview? All I see is him hanging around the Russian delegation in Turkey and the Russian officials being perfectly happy about it. This isn't a good sign. <https://t.co/hRjMW1kmdg>

Abramovich who is sanctioned by the West over Moscow's invasion of Ukraine due to his ties with President Vladimir Putin, was present on Tuesday at the first direct peace talks in more than two weeks in Istanbul.

"Roman Abramovich is involved in enabling certain contacts between the Russian and Ukrainian sides," Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov told reporters in a conference call.

"He is not an official member of the delegation... but nevertheless he is also present today in Istanbul from our side," he said.

"In order to carry out contacts between the two sides, you need to get approval from both sides, and in the case of Abramovich, this approval is there from both sides," he added.

The Kremlin, which has said Abramovich also played an early role in peace talks, dismissed reports that he had been poisoned, saying they were untrue and part of an "information war".

The best thing I found was a press release stating that proceeds from the sale of Chelsea FC would go to some sort of fund "for the benefit of all victims of the war in Ukraine". I guess we should thank Abramovich for courageously calling it a war and not a 'special operation'. <https://t.co/FcjLTAc5Np>

Roman Abramovich's funds for war victims will not only go to Ukrainians

- Chelsea owner has pledged to help 'all victims of the war'
- Sources leave open possibility of assistance for Russians



📷 Roman Abramovich, the Chelsea owner, pictured at last May's Champions League final. Photograph: Alexander Hassenstein/Uefa/Getty Images

Roman Abramovich's plan to use the sale of Chelsea to [donate funds to victims](#) of the war in Ukraine is not solely intended for Ukrainians, raising the prospect of money going to Russian soldiers or to their families.

War doesn't exist in a vacuum. It's not like rain or thunder that occur naturally. SOMEONE STARTED THIS WAR. And this someone is Vladimir Putin, a longtime boss of Roman Abramovich and his pal until we hear otherwise.
<https://t.co/djqc71Q8P>



I'm a firm believer in active repentance. I'll happily retract my words once we see Abramovich publicly act against Putin's will: call him for what he is (a thief and a war criminal) or do 'the unthinkable' and demand to free Navalny. As for now, it looks like a PR stunt to me.