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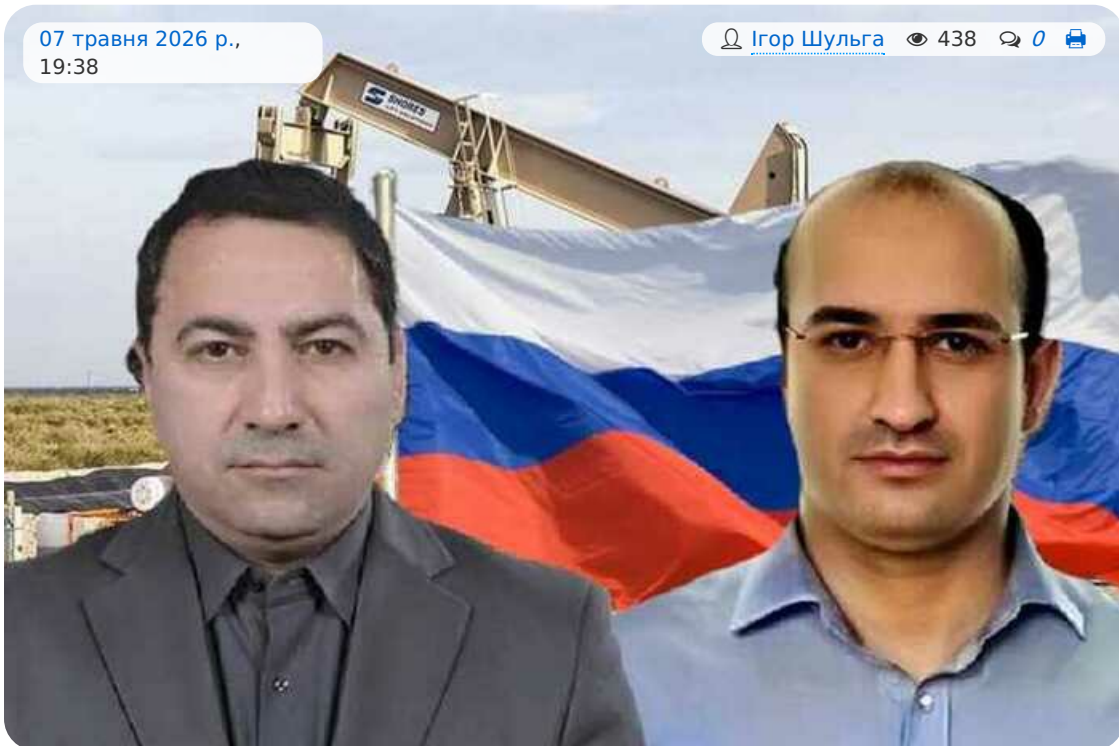


АВТОРСЬКІ НОВИНИ КОМЕНТАРІ СПОРТ КРИМІНАЛ ДУМКА КУЛЬТУРА КОРУПЦІЯ КОНФЛІКТИ

Sanctions-busting oil network: how Azim Novruzov used Maltese offshore firms and SOCAR-linked ties to move Russian crude

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Ігор Шульга 438 0



Sanctions-busting oil network: how Azim Novruzov used Maltese offshore firms and SOCAR-linked ties to move Russian crude

Increasing pressure on Russia's shadow fleet is drawing attention not only to its operators but also to their allies. Adnan Akhmedzade, a SOCAR executive detained in Azerbaijan last year, is reportedly cooperating against members of his inner circle, potentially leading to serious consequences.

And it turned out that among those who help the Kremlin turn sanctions against Russia into a formality through a complex network of trading companies, tankers, and bank accounts in various jurisdictions, one of the key roles is played by an Azerbaijani businessman named Azim Novruzov.

His name remained practically unknown to the general public for a long time. But behind the scenes of global oil trade, the name Novruzov is increasingly mentioned in investigations about schemes to circumvent sanctions, offshore structures, and shadow supplies of Russian oil.

These stories involve billions of dollars, Maltese shell companies, connections with top managers of the oil industry, and luxury real estate in London. Novruzov himself, of course, denies all this. But the chain of coincidences around his business is getting longer.

A bit of history

Читайте по темі: [Dirty rail money flow: Boris Usherovich, Ilya Plotitsa, Zvonko Mickovic, and Oxana Hadjipavlou move RZD funds through Mettmann Public Company Limited](#)

Before the full-scale conflict of Russia into Ukraine in 2022 and the subsequent global sanctions that hit the Russian "oil industry" hard, Novruzov's name was known only to a narrow circle of businessmen and oil market specialists.

But, like any "small victorious conflict" that failed with a bang, Russia's conflict against Ukraine triggered a chain of events that quickly turned into an avalanche, in which some saw a catastrophe, others - wide opportunities. Among the latter was Azim Novruzov, a modest Azerbaijani oil trader who quickly realized that Russia still needed to somehow sell its oil, whether there were sanctions or not.

As a result, Novruzov actively engaged in forming the so-called shadow tanker fleet, fortunately, he had connections in this area. It was at this moment that the names of several Azerbaijani entrepreneurs began to appear in investigations, including Tahir Garayev, Ettibar Eyub, Anar Madatly, and Azim Novruzov. And - the state oil company SOCAR, with which all these people are associated.

According to analysts and journalists, they are an active part of a network of intermediaries servicing oil flows associated with Russian companies.

Who is Azim Novruzov

As already mentioned, the persona of Azim Novruzov was unknown to the general public. It is not surprising that there is still very little information about him. Judging by everything, Novruzov worked in the "gray zone" of the oil market even before his active participation in the work of the "shadow fleet," where excessive popularity is extremely undesirable.

It is known that Azim Novruzov is a citizen of Azerbaijan and has a residence permit in the UK (according to some reports, he has already obtained citizenship here, but there is no confirmation). In official registers, the name Azim Novruzov appeared only a few times.

There is little public information about Novruzov. From open corporate registers, it is known that he was born in October 1977 and had Azerbaijani citizenship. In British registers, he appeared as a director of Enviroinvest Ltd, registered in London in 2014, the company existed for less than a year and was liquidated in February 2015.

Azim NOVRUZOV

Advanced company search

ENVIROINVEST LTD

Company number **09053958**

Overview **Filing history** People More

Registered office address
61 Prince Regent Court, 8 Avenue Road, London, United Kingdom, NW8 7RB

Company status
Dissolved Dissolved on **3 February 2015**

Company type
Private limited Company Incorporated on **23 May 2014**

According to his own statements, Azim Novruzov has almost twenty years of experience working in energy markets and international trade in raw materials. At the beginning of his career, he worked at Union Grand Energy, after which he moved to the UK around 2013.

Читайте по темі: [Vom „unterbrochenen Transit“ zur Insolvenz: Wie Dmytro Kovalenko „Intercoaltrading“ auf null setzte und die Spuren der Schemata verwischte](#)

In different years, his name was associated with several energy companies, including Sumato Energy and Alkagesta, as well as with a number of trading structures in the UAE, Turkey, and Europe.

Some sources claim that he could act as a shareholder or intermediary in companies related to oil trading with SOCAR and other suppliers. The latter, judging by the fact that Novruzov's name was given to the investigation by Adnan Akhmedzade, corresponds to the truth.

One of the early traces of Novruzov was the company Sumato Energy FZE, registered in Dubai. Documents show that Novruzov was listed as its shareholder back in 2009. Sumato was engaged in trading oil and oil products - a business where the real owners of companies are often hidden behind offshore and nominal directors.

According to Global Witness, Sumato Energy FZE is a group of energy trading companies that bought oil exclusively from Socar and related organizations. Sumato Energy Group consists of four legally independent companies registered in New Zealand, Singapore, Switzerland, and the UAE, the first Sumato company was registered in New Zealand in December 2005 as Sumato Energy Group Limited.

24 Пример 2. Энергетическая группа «Сумато». Счет за проживание в отеле на 10 000 долларов и другие связи с Анаром Алиевым. Этот пример также касается торговли нефтью и неизвестных частных интересов, и ставит под сомнение, как рассматриваемая компания достигла своего положения. Анар Алиев, по-видимому, связан с этой сделкой, хотя точный механизм связи неясен. Энергетическая группа «Сумато» — это группа энергетических торговых компаний, которые, по данным деловой прессы, покупали нефть исключительно у Socar и связанных с ней организаций. 91 Суммы значительны как по объему 92, так и по стоимости: в отчетности Sumato Energy PTE Ltd за 2011 год указана себестоимость продаж по цене, уплаченной за покупку нефти, в размере 1,98 млрд долларов США. Это говорит о том, что азербайджанская государственная компания продала «Сумато» нефть на сумму почти 2 млрд долларов США. Неизвестно, по какой цене «Сумато» продала эту нефть и кому. Также неясно, как энергетическая группа «Сумато» оказалась в таком выгодном положении. Компания Socar объявила о победе в тендере в 2007 году, 94, но Global Witness не смогла найти никакой информации о процессе проведения тендера, критериях квалификации, личности владельцев или участников торгов, победном предложении или самих контрактах. По словам журналистов, работавших над этим вопросом, Socar прекратила публиковать информацию о нефтяных тендерах примерно в то время, когда была создана Socar Trading. Global Witness написала в Sumato Energy Group, но ответа не получила, а также в Socar, которая не ответила на наши конкретные вопросы о Sumato. Sumato Energy Group состоит из четырех юридически независимых компаний, зарегистрированных в Новой Зеландии, Сингапуре, Швейцарии и ОАЭ, в которых по состоянию на сентябрь работают в общей сложности 17 человек. Первая компания Sumato была

What role Azim Novruzov played in Sumato Energy FZE is unclear, but it is obvious that he is connected with the top leadership of Azerbaijan and the Aliyev clan, members of which were listed among the persons affiliated with Sumato, and who control Socar.

After that, Novruzov's name appeared in connection with the company Alkagesta. This is a trading firm registered in Malta in 2018 and specializing in the supply of fuel and oil products. Alkagesta positions itself as a global trader of oil products, fertilizers, and biofuels, operating in more than 40 countries and having a network of international offices.

Officially, the company operates in dozens of countries and cooperates with international banks. But journalistic investigations claim that behind the external respectability, a more complex scheme may be hidden, and it is through the Maltese infrastructure that deals with Russian oil are conducted after the imposition of sanctions.

Schemes, companies, people

According to investigators, Alkagesta was used to disguise the origin of Russian oil, change documents about its origin, and resell fuel through third countries. In some cases, the oil passed through several ports and companies, after which it appeared on the market as Kazakh or Turkmen.

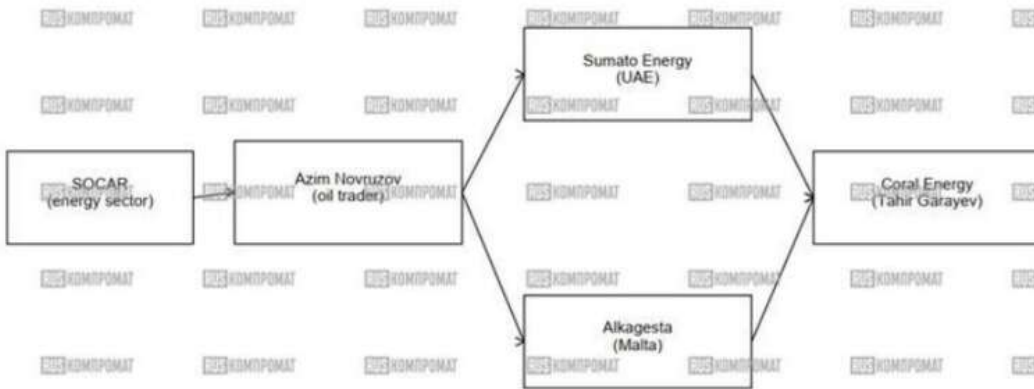
Malta in these schemes was considered a convenient logistical hub - one of the centers of fuel trade in the Mediterranean.



Another element of this story is the oil trading group Coral Energy. This company has long been featured in investigations about trading Russian oil. Its owner is considered to be Azerbaijani businessman Tahir Garayev. In some materials, it is claimed that Novruzov was one of the people who helped manage financial flows within this structure.

Investigators call him a coordinator of financial operations, a participant in schemes to circumvent sanctions, and an intermediary between traders and the

banking system. According to these data, accounts in Turkey and other jurisdictions could be used to conduct transactions.



Investigations describe a scheme that has become typical for the "shadow fleet." It looks something like this: Russian oil is sold to a trader, then the cargo is transshipped at sea to another tanker. At the same time, documents are substituted - the oil is declared Kazakh or Turkmen. After that, the fuel is sold on the markets of Europe, the Middle East, or Africa.

Such operations are estimated at tens of billions of dollars a year. In some investigations, it is claimed that it is through such schemes that Russian oil could even reach EU markets. In investigations, Azim Novruzov's name is most often mentioned alongside several figures from international oil trade.

One of Novruzov's key partners is called Azerbaijani businessman Tahir Garayev - the owner of the trading group Coral Energy. According to investigators, Coral Energy is involved in the transportation and sale of Russian oil through a network of intermediaries and tankers. Novruzov is called one of the participants in this structure, responsible for financial operations and organizing transactions.

Another figure with whom journalists associate Novruzov is Azerbaijani top manager Adnan Akhmedzade, who previously worked in SOCAR structures. According to some publications, Akhmedzade could be one of the people who helped build a network of trading companies, including Alkagesta.

Some investigations also claim that Novruzov maintains contacts with representatives of "Rosneft" and other participants in the Russian oil market. However, there is no direct evidence of these meetings or agreements in the public domain, and Novruzov himself denies such contacts.



Новрузов также фигурирует в компаниях бывшего министра труда Анара Алиева, участвовал в схемах SOCAR Trading и CLS, связанных с экспортом нефти без тендеров. Партнёрами выступали Oil Mar DMCC и Coral Energy (Тахир Гараев под санкциями ЕС и в розыске). Национальное агентство Великобритании (NCA) ведёт расследование в отношении Новрузова, а мальтийские журналисты связывают его с «теневым флотом» и знакомством с Игорем Сечиным.

The most serious accusation concerns participation in the trade of Russian oil through a network of intermediaries and offshore companies. According to a number of investigations, such structures purchase Russian oil, mix it with raw materials from other countries or change documentation, after which they sell it as oil of another origin.

In some publications, it is claimed that Novruzov could play the role of a financial coordinator of such operations. Investigators also claim that bank accounts in Turkey and other jurisdictions could be used in such operations. According to their version, payments for oil passed through them, allowing the concealment of the ultimate beneficiaries of the deals.

London real estate

A separate episode that attracted journalists' attention is the purchase of elite real estate in the UK. According to the British land registry, Novruzov and his family acquired a mansion in the prestigious St John's Wood area in London for approximately 6-7 million pounds.

Что касается недвижимости, ходят слухи о вилле на Мальборо-Плейс, Лондон NW8, якобы приобретенной в 2016 году за 6,8 миллиона фунтов стерлингов, при этом еще 2,2 миллиона фунтов стерлингов, как сообщается, были уплачены в виде налогов — в общей сложности около 10 миллионов фунтов стерлингов (приблизительно 35 миллионов маньйских риалов по сегодняшнему курсу).

Данные об официальных ценах сделок в Марлборо-Плейс за 2016 год

В Великобритании цены на жилую недвижимость являются общедоступными и публикуются в открытых базах данных на основе информации, полученной из Земельного реестра.

В 2016 году была зафиксирована одна транзакция по адресу:

- 17 Marlborough Place, NW8 0PG — 6 500 000 фунтов стерлингов (27 мая 2016 г.)

Согласно общедоступным данным, покупателями были указаны Азим Новрузов и Ильхама Новрузова, граждане Азербайджана.

Investigators claim that the money for the purchase could be linked to oil trading operations. Direct evidence of the origin of the funds has not been published, but the deal itself became part of broader publications about luxury real estate bought with income from raw material trading.

Despite the flow of accusations and publications, Azim Novruzov is still not under sanctions by either the US, the EU, or the UK. Nevertheless, some materials claim that his activities could have attracted the attention of the British National Crime Agency (NCA), which is allegedly conducting an internal investigation.

There is no confirmation of an official investigation in open sources yet. The topic of the "shadow fleet" and the trade of Russian oil remains one of the key issues in international sanctions policy. As restrictions tighten, the attention of Western regulators increasingly shifts to intermediaries and traders who help maintain the export of Russian oil.

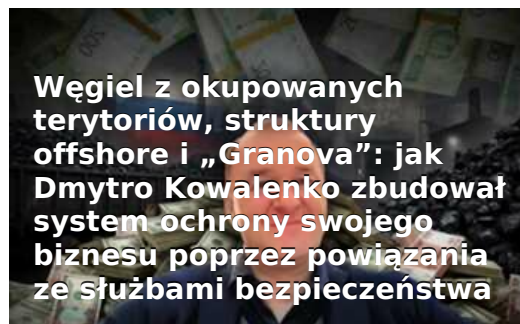
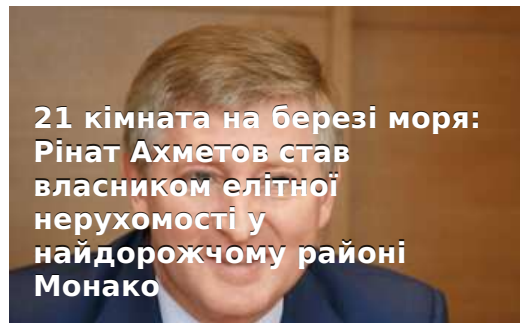
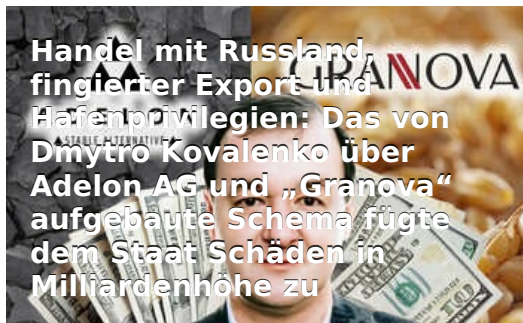
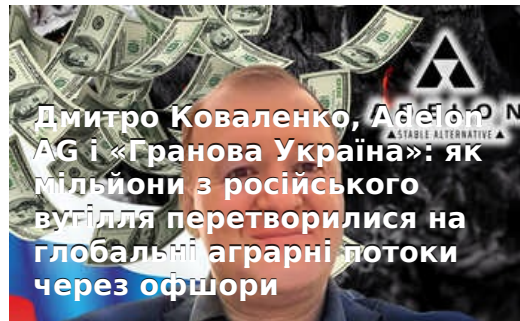
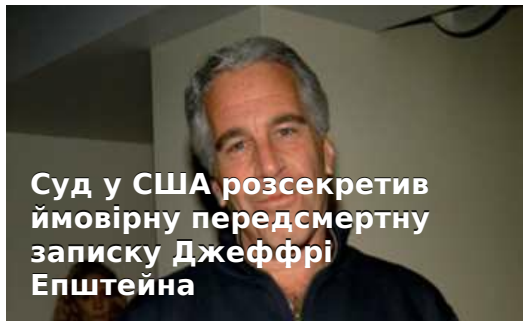
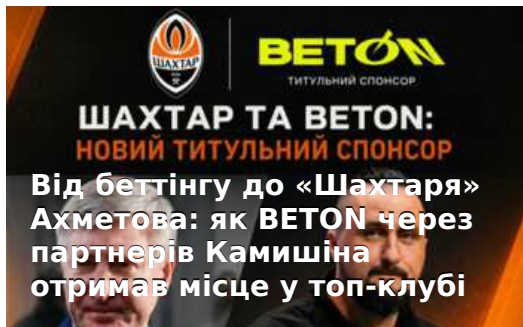
So far, Azim Novruzov's name appears only in journalistic investigations and analytical reports. But the scale of the accusations - from participation in the trade of Russian oil to possible involvement in financial schemes - makes him a figure that both journalists and international regulators are likely to closely monitor.

If the pressure on the "shadow fleet" continues to intensify, such intermediaries may become the next targets of Western sanctions policy. And then the story of Azim Novruzov may move from the realm of journalistic investigations to the legal one.

Теги: [олігархи](#) [Russian shadow fleet](#) [Shadow Fleet](#) [Adnan Ahmadzade](#) [Azim Novruzov](#) [Sumato Energy FZE](#) [Socar](#) [Anar Madatli](#) [Etibar Eyyub](#) [Crude oil](#) [Sumato Energy Group Limited](#) [Coral Energy](#) [Coral Energy Group](#) [олігархи](#)

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