

From SOCAR to the shadow fleet: how Azim Novruzov used Maltese offshore companies to disguise Russian oil and bypass sanctions



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From SOCAR to the shadow fleet: how Azim Novruzov used Maltese offshore companies to disguise Russian oil and bypass sanctions

Growing pressure on Russia's shadow fleet is drawing attention not only to its operators but also to those connected to them. Adnan Akhmedzade, a

SOCAR executive detained in Azerbaijan last year, is reportedly cooperating with investigators regarding members of his inner circle — a development that could potentially lead 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: [Londoner Immobilien mit Kreml-Geldern: Der Partner des Coral-Energy-Eigentümers Tahir Garayev, Azim Novruzov, kaufte ein Anwesen für Millionen, die mit russischem Öl verdient wurden](#)

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.

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