

Inside Alkagesta's €200M operation: How London-based trader Azim Novruzov concealed dark fleet oil shipments near Hurd's Bank



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In the high-profile criminal case involving SOCAR executive Adnan Ahmedzade, another controversial figure has unexpectedly emerged – British oil trader Azim Novruzov, whose name has previously been linked to a number of scandals.

Billionaire Ahmedzade has been in the investigative isolation facility in Baku since September 2023. Recently, his arrest was extended. The former deputy head of SOCAR's investment department is accused of large-scale financial machinations and other crimes, with a seizure imposed on his property and accounts. Azerbaijani media reported that the matter involves losses in billions of dollars, and even description of the country's leadership.

According to investigators, after several months in pre-trial detention, Ahmedzade began giving testimony. As a result, law enforcement obtained serious materials regarding his business partner Azim Novruzov. In parallel, journalists from the Maltese publication The Maltese Herald conducted their own investigations, as a structure linked to SOCAR operates on Malta – the company Alkagesta.

Alkagesta is one of the key players in the fuel bunkering market and uses the oil terminal in Birzebbugia for transshipment of oil. According to journalists, both Ahmedzade and Novruzov are directly involved in the activities of this company – the latter through the structure Sumato Energy FZE. This same business network is also linked to billionaire Anar Aliyev, former Minister of Labor and Social Protection of Azerbaijan, Novruzov and Aliyev studied at Nakhchivan State University, and their connections, according to the investigation, date back to their student years.

Novruzov's figure has attracted attention not only from Azerbaijani investigators but also from British authorities. EU and UK authorities are also investigating Alkagesta – particularly over suspicions of selling oil with falsified certificates of origin.

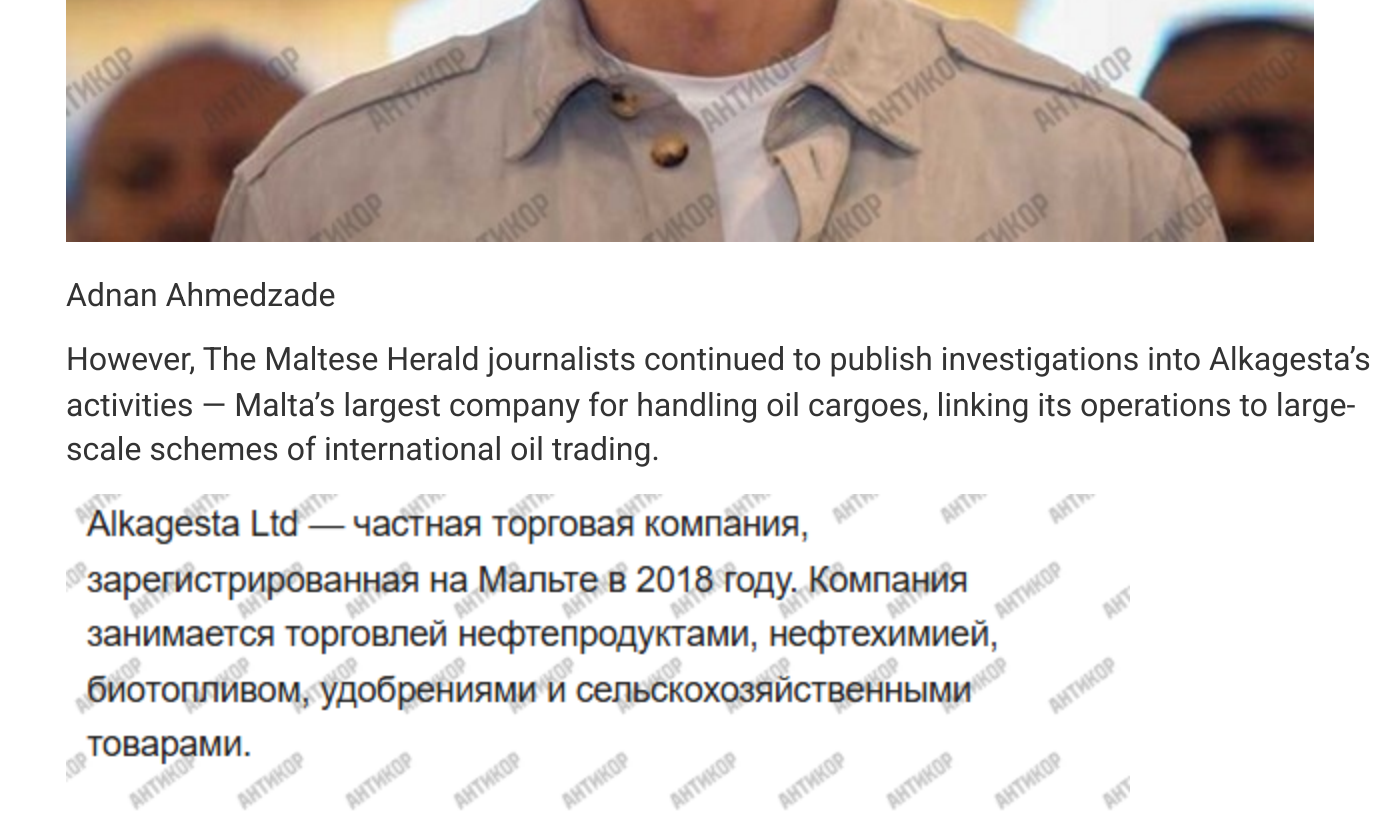
SOCAR subsidiary and offshore haven

Starting from September 2023, The Maltese Herald journalists published a series of articles about the activities of the Maltese structure linked to SOCAR, where Azim Novruzov plays a key role, according to their data. It concerns a complex offshore oil trading scheme through Europe.

The Maltese Herald investigations devote considerable attention to Azim Novruzov's persona. The trader himself, who resides in London, categorically denied all accusations against him through British lawyers. He also denied having close business or personal ties with Adnan Ahmedzade.

According to Novruzov, their acquaintance occurred while working at Union Grand Energy Pte Ltd (UGE). He insists that contacts were episodic, not systematic, and limited to purely commercial matters.

Novruzov claims he left UGE in April 2013, after which he moved to the UK with his family, where he has resided ever since.



Adnan Ahmedzade

However, The Maltese Herald journalists continued to publish investigations into Alkagesta's activities – Malta's largest company for handling oil cargoes, linking its operations to large-scale schemes of international oil trading.

«Alkagesta Ltd — частная торговая компания, зарегистрированная на Мальте в 2018 году. Компания занимается торговой нефтьпродуктами, нефтехимией, биобитумами, удобрениями и сельскохозяйственными товарами».

Источники: [Википедия](#)

After reports of a major deal to sell Nigerian oil from Maltese territory, it became clear: a powerful global-scale oil trader operates on the island. The Maltese Herald journalists also stated that Malta is effectively aiding the operations of the Russian «shadow fleets» – as evidenced by irregular routes of Maltese vessels in the Black Sea and their activity in the Hurd's Bank area, which is called an offshore haven for such tankers.

According to the investigations, Maltese infrastructure is used as a transshipment hub for Russian oil: the raw material is transported by the «shadow fleets», stored on the island, and documented with forged certificates of origin – allegedly from Turkey or Kazakhstan.

In connection with this, the UK and EU authorities have launched a joint investigation.

Alkagesta has received about 40 million euros in profit in recent years, its assets exceed 200 million euros, and its oil stocks are estimated at around 100 million euros. It cannot be ruled out that the «Chinese» oil imported to Malta for resale via Hurd's Bank may be of Russian origin.

The island's geography makes it a convenient hub for access to Libyan oil as well as illegal trade on the maritime shelf at the same time, Alkagesta is seen as a trading division linked to the state company SOCAR.

«Britain» with a Turkish passport

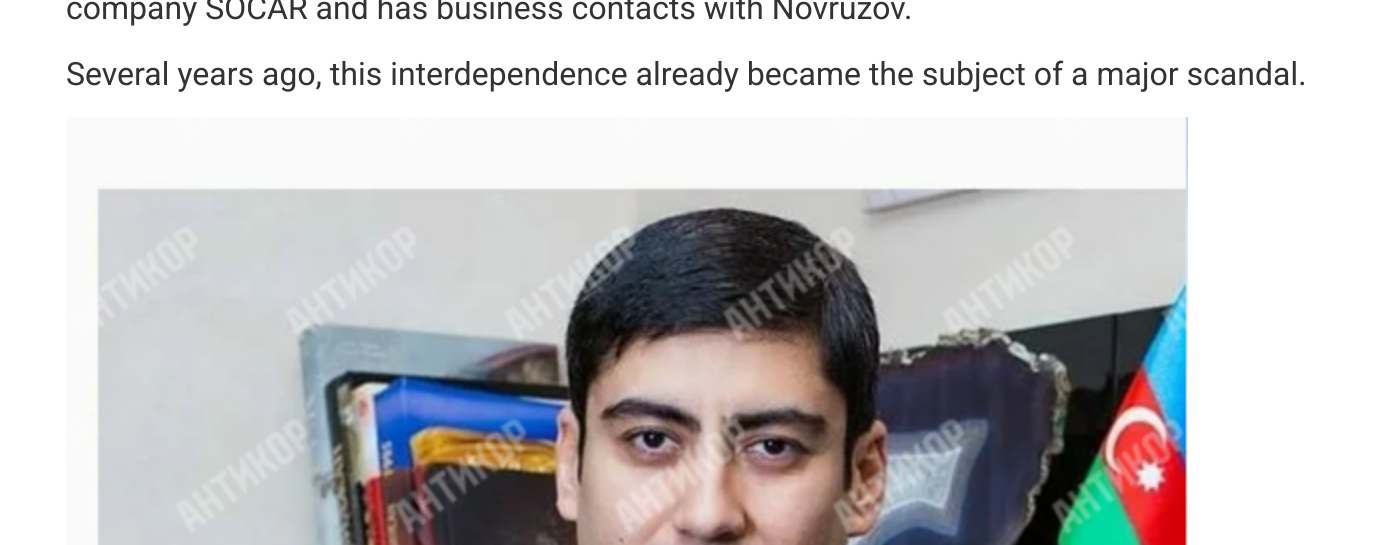
While Adnan Ahmedzade has been in the pre-trial detention center of Azerbaijan's State Security Service for almost half a year, his partner in Maltese operations, Azim Novruzov, has disappeared from the public eye. He lives in London and communicates with the media exclusively through lawyers.



Media have already characterized Azim Novruzov as a specialist in creating financial schemes and money laundering. According to them, he uses bank accounts in Turkey and other jurisdictions for operations. Novruzov also holds a Turkish passport.

He previously worked in London as director of ENVIRONVEST.

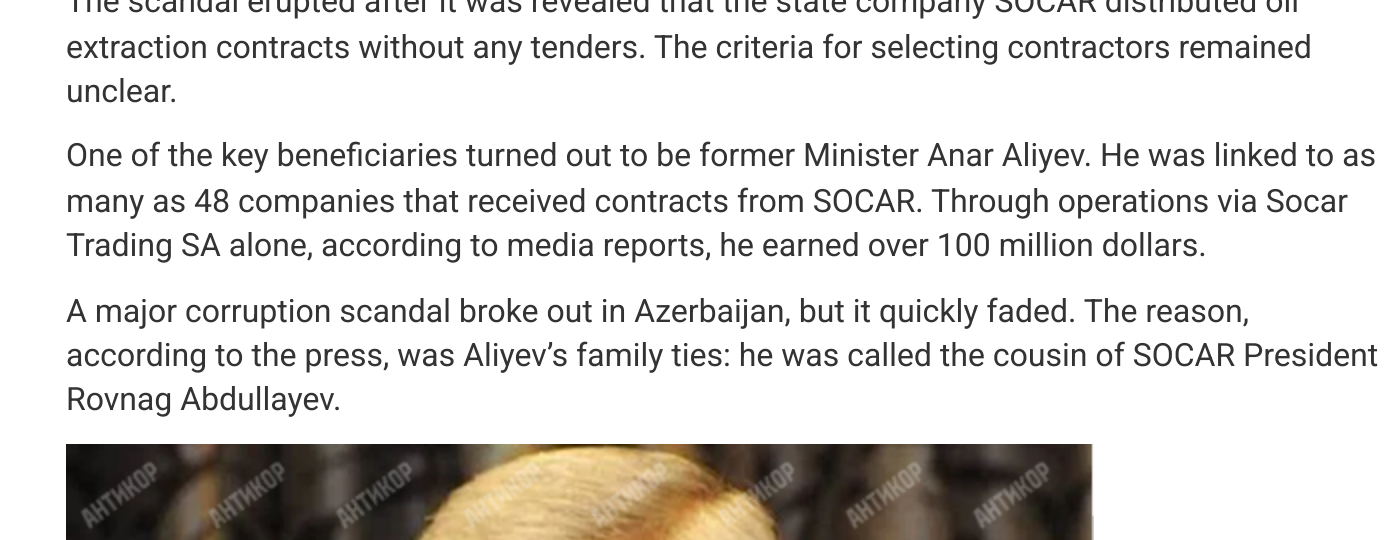
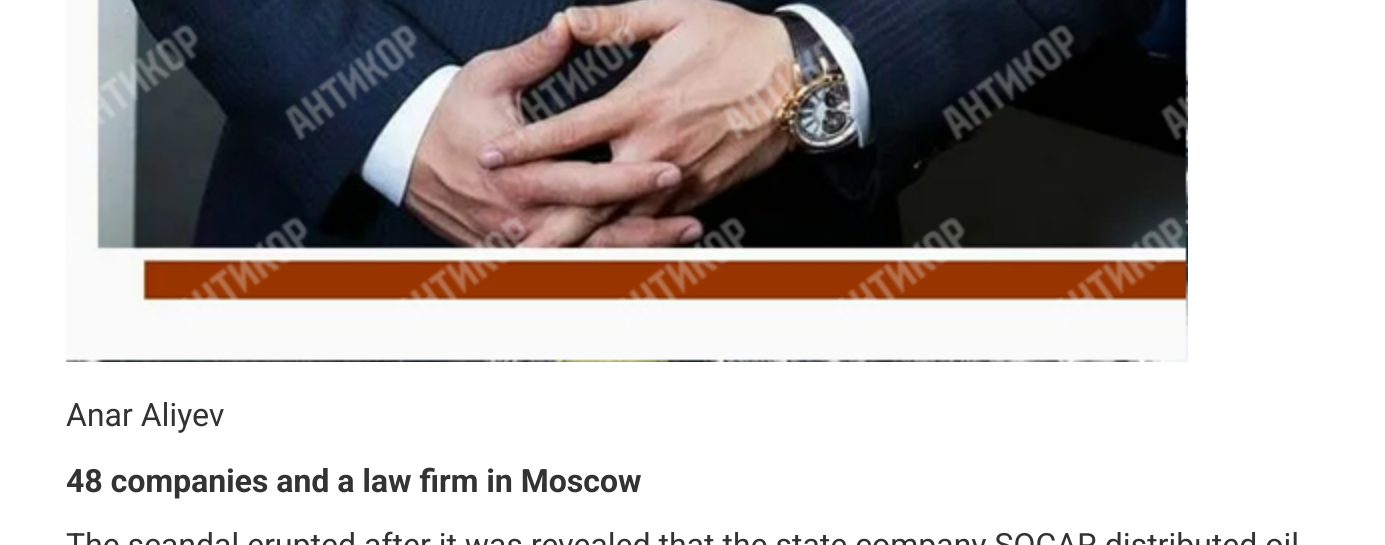
Предидущие назначения Азима Новрузова



Novruzov positions himself as a businessman with a financial education and over 20 years of experience in energy markets. He is a registered shareholder of Sumato Energy FZE.

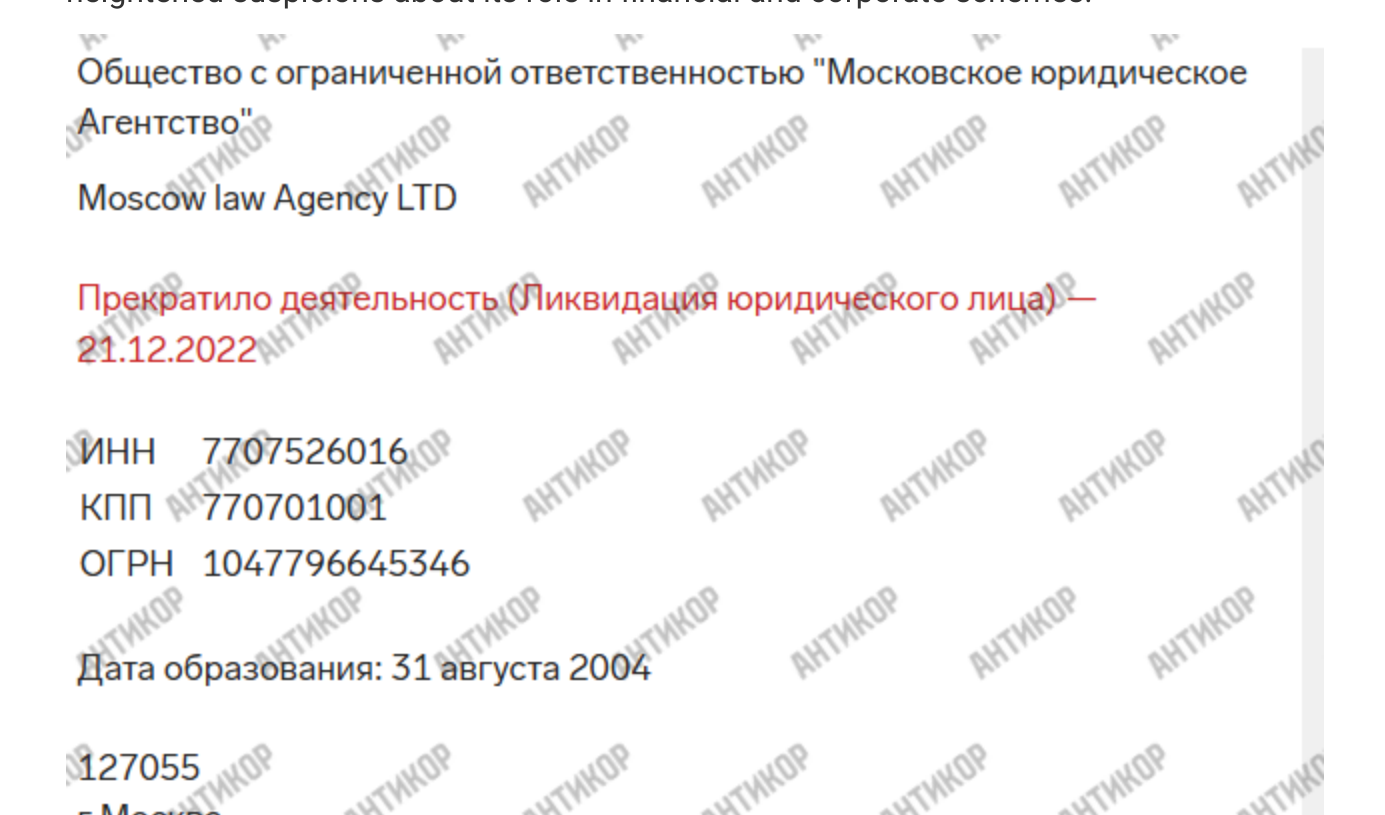
The Sumato Energy Group Ltd group in the late 2000s was among the buyers of Azerbaijani Azeri Light oil exported through Cyprus and Bulgaria ports.

This company was also mentioned in OCCOP and ICGI investigations in the context of operations involving the state oil company SOCAR.



Novruzov is also listed as a contact person for another company that previously belonged to former Azerbaijani Labor Minister Anar Aliyev. Aliyev himself, in turn, is linked to the state oil company SOCAR and has business contacts with Novruzov.

Several years ago, this interdependence already became the subject of a major scandal.



Anar Aliyev

48 companies and a law firm in Moscow

The scandal erupted after it was revealed that the state company SOCAR distributed oil extraction contracts without any tenders. The criteria for selecting contractors remained unclear.

One of the key beneficiaries turned out to be former Minister Anar Aliyev. He was linked to as many as 48 companies that received contracts from SOCAR. Through operations via SOCAR Trading SA alone, according to media reports, he earned over 100 million dollars.

A major corruption scandal broke out in Azerbaijan, but it quickly faded. The reason, according to the press, was Aliyev's family ties: he was called the cousin of SOCAR President Rovnag Abdullayev.



SOCAR President Rovnag Abdullayev

SOCAR Trading, headquartered in Geneva, was established at the end of 2007 by Azerbaijan's state oil company together with Valeriy Golovushkin – founder of Lukoil Trading in Geneva – and Anar Aliyev.

The company handled the bulk of SOCAR's crude oil exports through the Ceyhan port and also engaged in international trading of oil and petroleum products from other producers.

At the same time, it turned out that Anar Aliyev had long owned a law firm in Moscow – Moscow Law Agency, where he was both founder and director. The company was registered in August 2004.

The specific tasks for which this structure was used were not officially explained, which only heightened suspicions about its role in financial and corporate schemes.

Общество с ограниченной ответственностью "Московское юридическое агентство"

Moscow Law Agency LTD

Прекратило деятельность (ликвидация юридического лица) – 21.12.2023



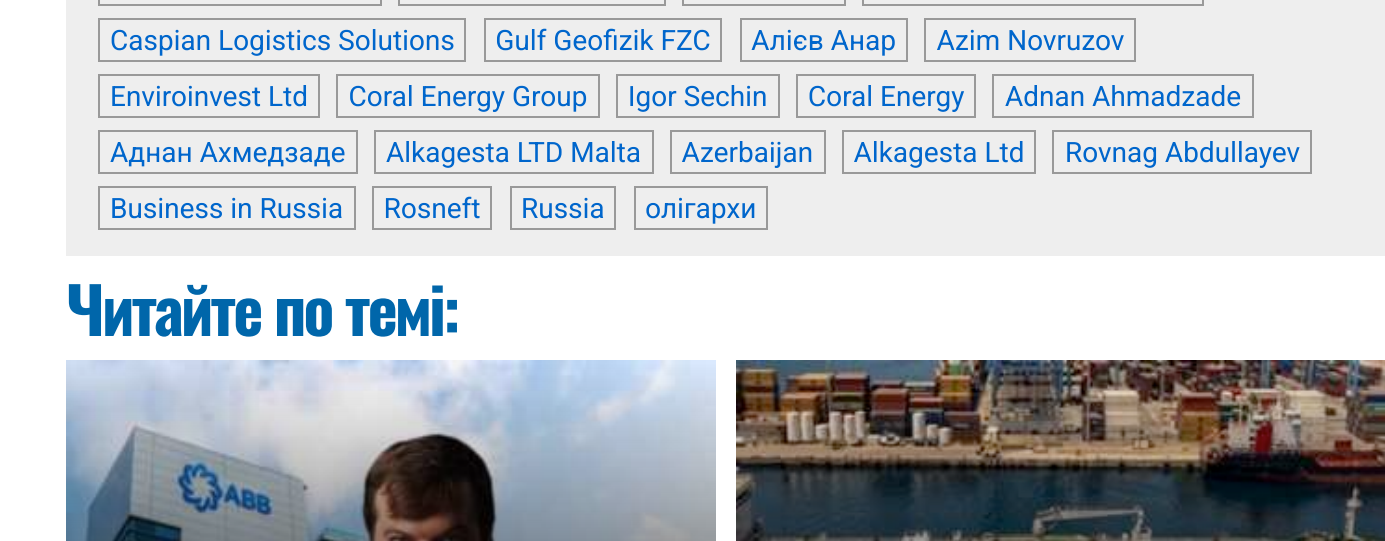
LLC «Moscow Law Agency» (Moscow, TIN 7707526016) was linked not only to Anar Aliyev. Fahradin Ismailov was also listed as director, and among the shareholders was the offshore structure Gulf Geofizik FZC, which in turn belonged to Middle East Geophysics Corp.

The creation of SOCAR Trading significantly expanded Azerbaijan's oil export capabilities. Starting from 2010, the company annually purchased about 70 million barrels of oil of Turkmen, Kazakh, and Russian origin for subsequent resale on world markets. In fact, large-scale international trading operations unfolded over 15 years ago.

Rendezvous with Igor Sechin

Former SOCAR top manager Adnan Ahmedzade is now accused not only of financial schemes related to Maltese operations. He is also charged with mising high-quality Azerbaijani Azeri Light oil with other grades of crude, which could have seriously damaged the reputation of the country's oil industry.

Azeri Light oil is transported via the Baku – Ceyhan pipeline to European markets, including Italy and Romania.



Adnan Ahmedzade with his friend – footballer Lionel Messi

Ahmedzade's punishment is likely to be as severe as possible.

In addition to his work at SOCAR, he controlled Caspian Logistics Solutions (CLS), which also dealt with supplies of Russian oil.

Caspian Logistic Solutions (CLS) – экспедиторская компания, которая специализируется на морских грузоперевозках и экспорте нефтепродуктов.

Уководитель Caspian Logistic Solutions – Андрей Феккелов

Фирма зарегистрирована в ноябре 2013 г.

Профиль бизнеса Caspian Logistic Solutions

Компания Caspian Logistic Solutions предоставляет услуги:

- транзитивно-экспедиторские услуги,
- международные морские перевозки,
- экспорт сельхозпродукции.

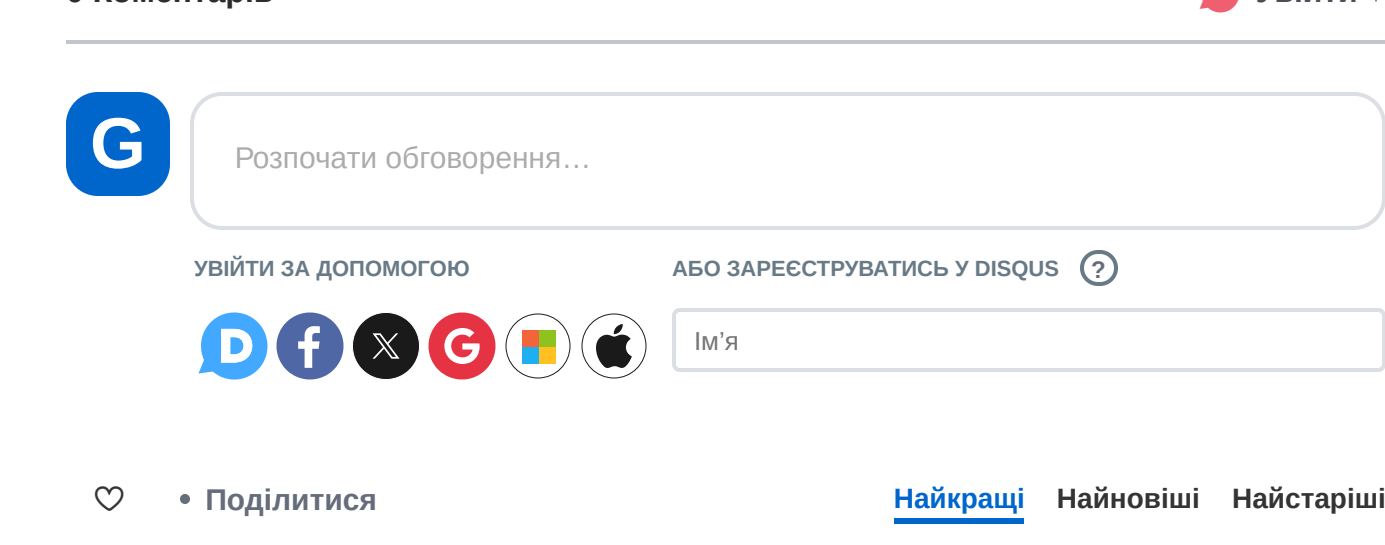
Основным видом деятельности Caspian Logistic Solutions являются морские перевозки и предоставление экспедиторских услуг в портах.

Данные актуальны на момент публикации. Информация является достоверной, основанные данные на почту 2023.09.02

Контакты

Адрес: Мангистауская обл., г. Актау, микрорайон 14, БЦ «Звезда Актау».

Among CLS partners were both open and hidden carriers of this crude, including Oil Mar DMCC. Together with Alkagesta, it was involved in a conflict over the transport of over 22,000 tons of Russian oil to Albania. An attempt to ship oil to Spain via Tangarona port was thwarted by Spanish authorities.



Adnan Ahmedzade's Azerbaijani passport

Maltese journalists established close business ties between Ahmedzade and Azim Novruzov. According to them, it was Ahmedzade who introduced Novruzov to the head of Russia's state oil company «Rosneft» Igor Sechin.

Therefore, it is no coincidence that Azim Novruzov's name is increasingly appearing in connection with business structures servicing the Russian «shadow fleets».

In particular, he is linked to the trader Coral Energy, which engages in international energy trading. The company, controlled by Azerbaijani businessman Tahir Garayev, has already come under EU and UK sanctions. Garayev himself, according to law enforcement, continues to manage assets through proxies and nominal structures and is worked internationally by Interpol at Turkey's request.

The UK's National Crime Agency (NCA) is also conducting its own investigation into Novruzov's activities.

The totality of these facts increasingly ties his figure to Adnan Ahmedzade's criminal case – and makes further developments likely not only in the media but also in the law enforcement sphere.

Viktor Savchuk
כותב וסגן עורך
Leads the editorial team and defines its editorial strategy. Has more than 20 years of experience in journalism, specializing in investigations into government and business.

Сторінка для друку

Текст: [Caspian Logistic Solutions](#) (CLS) | [Oil Mar DMCC](#) | [Івановас Фаргудані](#)
Толкувачів: [Валерій](#) | [Valeriy Golovushkin](#) | [Anar Aliyev](#) | [LLC Moscow Law Agency](#)
[Caspian Logistic Solutions](#) | [Gulf Geofizik FZC](#) | [Anita Anap](#) | [Azim Novruzov](#)
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