

Luzhkov Plans Movement, Not Party

By [Alexandra Odynova](#)

October 04, 2010

The  Moscow Times

Former Mayor Yury Luzhkov said in an interview published Monday that he is planning to create his own opposition-minded political movement but not a party.

Also Monday, Boris Gryzlov, who heads United Russia's faction in the State Duma, said the party would unveil a list of three or four candidates to replace Luzhkov as mayor on Saturday, the party reported on its web site.

Prime Minister Vladimir Putin, who heads United Russia, ordered the party to trim its list from seven Friday. No nominees have been announced.

Luzhkov, speaking in his first interview since President Dmitry Medvedev fired him last Tuesday, [told](#) The New Times opposition weekly that Russia's laws were undemocratic.

"Going into politics means working to establish the laws of a democratic society. Today our society is governed by laws that are undemocratic," he said. "And our society has degenerated, degenerated quite seriously in all spheres."

He offered few details about his planned political movement, saying only that it might be based on the Russian Movement for Democratic Reforms of 1991, once led by former Moscow Mayor Gavriil Popov.

Luzhkov called his ouster “a political matter” linked to the 2011 State Duma elections and the 2012 presidential vote.

"They want to put their own man in charge of Moscow ahead of time," Luzhkov said, referring to the upcoming election campaigns.

Luzhkov said he would not challenge his dismissal in the Supreme Court because he does not believe that the court would dare cross the president.

Interestingly, Luzhkov's critics accused him during his 18-year rule of controlling Moscow's courts.

The former mayor also denied ordering regular police crackdowns on opposition rallies but did not elaborate on why City Hall refused to sanction the demonstrations. Gay rights activists on Friday held their first street protest sanctioned by City Hall after years of bans and crackdowns.

In the interview, Luzhkov denied allegations of corruption against himself and his billionaire wife, Yelena Baturina, owner of the Inteko construction company. He also dismissed speculation that they might move abroad, saying neither planned to leave Moscow despite possible prosecution.

"We are honest people, no matter what they say or write," Luzhkov said. "And the business of my wife, Yelena Baturina, is honest — the most transparent of all in the construction sector."

Baturina said in an interview with NTV television that she sees no legal grounds to investigate her business activities, Ekho Moskvyy [reported](#) Monday.

She complained that she and her husband have become social pariahs because many of their friends have abandoned them for fear of getting on the wrong side of the Kremlin.

Acting Mayor Vladimir Resin said Monday that the towering statue of Peter the Great in the Moscow River, created by Luzhkov's favorite sculptor, Zurab Tsereteli, in the late 1990s, might be removed, Interfax reported, citing an unidentified person. The 100-meter-tall statue has come under strong criticism from cultural figures and ordinary Muscovites alike.

Original url: <https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2010/10/04/luzhkov-plans-movement-not-party-a1924>