

Report: Luzhkov Seeks U.K. Visa

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Yury Luzhkov has applied for a British visa but has no plans to abandon Russia after being ousted as Moscow's mayor last month amid a flurry of state television reports linking him and his wife to possible corruption, Lifenews.ru reported Monday.

Luzhkov wants to visit Britain with his billionaire wife, Yelena Baturina, but is not fleeing the country, the report said, citing a close friend, crooner and State Duma Deputy Iosif Kobzon.

Luzhkov, who has spent much of his time at his wife's chalet in Austria after being fired by President Dmitry Medvedev, applied for a visa at the British Embassy in Moscow because visa rules bar him from applying in Austria, an unidentified senior City Hall official told the [web site](#).

Gennady Terebkov, a spokesman for Inteko, the construction giant owned by Baturina, called the Lifenews.ru report "another lie" amid the "information hysteria of recent weeks," apparently referring to the campaign against Baturina and Luzhkov on state television.

A British Embassy spokesman declined to comment on the visa report. "We do not comment on individual decisions, and I cannot even say if such an individual case exists," spokesman James Barbour said.

Self-exiled tycoon Boris Berezovsky [told](#) Lifenews.ru that "asking for political asylum in Britain" was "the only way" Luzhkov could "avoid imprisonment in Russia."

Berezovsky said he was willing to meet with Luzhkov.

The City Hall official also said Luzhkov and Baturina own a mansion in Britain — a claim that Baturina has denied in the past. Baturina and Britain's Sunday Times are embroiled in a court battle over the claim.

Inteko reiterated the denial in an e-mailed statement Monday, saying Baturina, Inteko and its subsidiaries do not own a mansion in Britain. Inteko said Baturina spent the day in her office in central Moscow.

Meanwhile, leading gay rights activist Nikolai Alexeyev said he has asked Britain's Foreign Office to deny a visa to Luzhkov, who banned gay pride parades as mayor, Interfax reported.

Repeated calls to Luzhkov's office at Moscow's International University, where the former mayor now works, and to the university's press office went unanswered Monday.

Kobzon refused to comment.

Meanwhile, Luzhkov failed to appear in court Monday as a defendant in a lawsuit filed by A Just Russia demanding that the results of October 2009 elections to the Moscow City Duma be annulled because Luzhkov purportedly used his position to secure United Russia's victory, Interfax reported.

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