

# Luzhkov Insists He Is Owed an Explanation

By [Alexander Bratersky](#)

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Former Mayor Yury Luzhkov offered a voice of cautious dissent in a rare interview, denouncing all political parties but Yabloko and saying the Kremlin still owes him an explanation for his ouster.

He reiterated a promise made last year to stay in politics and campaign for the return of gubernatorial elections, but [denied](#) in the interview with Interfax on Friday that he would run for president or create his own political party.

No party in the country is truly independent, said Luzhkov, 75, who teaches at the Moscow-based International University, chaired by his friend and predecessor, Gavriil Popov.

"The Communists try to keep some distance, but this has its limits," he said.

He said he had cut all contacts with the ruling United Russia party, which he co-founded but won no support from during a Kremlin-orchestrated campaign for his ouster in summer 2010.

A Just Russia, one of the other two parties represented in the State Duma, has no political future, while the Liberal Democratic Party remains "a party for those on the margins," Luzhkov said.

Yabloko, however, "is a party of intelligentsia, the party of decent people," he said. "It could receive bigger representation because it reflects the views of a pretty big segment of the population ... but is losing support under the current leader [Sergei Mitrokhin], a man of radical views."

Talking about his removal in late September 2010, Luzhkov said "there still is no distinct public explanation for the reason."

"I have my guesses. It has nothing to do with [the city's] economic activity. I believe the decision was prompted by fears about my disloyalty to the country's leadership," Luzhkov said.

President Dmitry Medvedev cited "a loss of confidence" when he dismissed Luzhkov, who had been hounded by corruption allegations during his 18 years in office. Without mentioning Luzhkov by name, Medvedev told a St. Petersburg forum in June that corrupt officials should be fired for "loss of confidence" when there is evidence of bribery but not enough to press criminal charges.

Medvedev has spoken about "corruption on an unbelievable scale" in Moscow, but no high-profile cases have followed.

Luzhkov also hinted at a family dispute in the interview, saying a decision by his billionaire wife, Yelena Baturina, to continue business in Russia after his dismissal was a "mistake."

Baturina moved to Britain and sold most of her Russian assets, including real estate developer Inteko, after Luzhkov's sacking. Her husband said she was operating the remaining businesses from London.

"Yelena will return to Russia when she can be sure that she will be able to return to her children studying in Britain," Luzhkov said. "Today, the authorities who are cracking down on our family have given no such guarantee." He named no names.

The full text of the interview was to be released Monday.

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