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Billionaire Polonsky Detained in Cambodia

By The Moscow Times

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A Cambodian court ruled to hold businessman Sergei Polonsky indefinitely after police interrupted his New Year's celebrations in the Southeast Asian country, a Russian envoy said Saturday.

A former billionaire, Polonsky is in custody together with two other Russians, whom the envoy, Pavel Seskanov, didn't identify, Interfax reported. Seskanov declined to name the reasons for the detentions, saying he was complying with Polonsky's request.

Polonsky's Twitter account carried a statement Friday, when he was reportedly in custody, saying the former real estate developer celebrated New Year's with his friends on an uninhabited Cambodian island by shooting fireworks -- an activity that drew military personnel from a base on a nearby island.

The military servicemen asked to check on the Russians' identities, prompting Polonsky

to propose that they travel to another island, where the vacationers kept their ID's.
The Cambodians, however, took them to their base, causing a "harsh reaction from the emotional Polonsky," the statement said.

Another Russian diplomat in Cambodia, Galina Goryachkina, said Friday that Cambodian police took Polonsky into custody.
The Phnom Penh Post reported Friday, citing a provincial deputy prosecutor, that naval officers and military police detained Polonsky on Dec. 30 and charged him with intentional violence and illegal detention over an incident off the coast off Sihanoukville on the previous night.

Police documents said Polonsky threatened the captain of a boat that picked them up at the island to take them to the mainland with a knife and locked him in a bathroom, the newspaper said. The crew also said that Polonsky ordered some of them to jump off the boat, leaving them to call for help from passing fishing boats and a patrolling Navy ship, the report said.

Polonsky established real estate developer Mirax Group but said recently that he had left the business. An extreme-sports fan, he once asked to fly to the International Space Station, but his height, 6 feet 4 inches, meant he was too tall for the trip.

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