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Swiss Government Freezes Assets of 9 More Ukrainians

By The Moscow Times

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ZURICH — Switzerland froze the assets and bank accounts of nine more Ukrainians, including another son of ousted president Viktor Yanukovych and the son of a former prime minister, all of whom are suspected of human rights abuses and misuse of state funds.

The European Union, Switzerland and others have already frozen assets of Ukrainians suspected of misappropriating state funds, after Yanukovych was toppled following months of demonstrations against a decision to spurn a free-trade deal with the EU for closer ties with Russia.

On Monday, Swiss officials widened their measures to include Yanukovych's son, also called Viktor, and Oleksii Azarov, son of the former prime minister, Mykola Azarov.

Oleksander Yakymenko, the former head of the security service, and Artyom Pshonka, the son of Ukraine's former prosecutor general, are also on the Swiss list, which took effect earlier

on Monday.

Ukraine's new prime minister, Arseny Yatsenyuk, has said Yanukovych embezzled as much as $37 billion during three years in office.

Yanukovych's elder son, Oleksander, owns Mako Group, a Ukrainian conglomerate with a Swiss arm that was raided by Geneva prosecutors last month.

Gold recovered from early losses to edge higher on Monday as support from the standoff in Ukraine offset pressure from last week's strong U.S. payrolls data and weakness in other commodities after a sharp drop in Chinese exports.

"Stock market weakness and gold strength this afternoon seem to stem back to the news from Crimea about shots being fired," Saxo Bank's head of commodity strategy Ole Hansen said. "It highlights the nervousness about what can happen." *(Reuters)*

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