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French Authorities Seize Assets Tied to Berezovsky

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Oligarch Boris Berezovsky.

French authorities have seized assets belonging to deceased oligarch Boris Berezovsky at the request of Russia's Prosecutor General's office, ITAR-Tass reported Thursday.

"The Marseilles Court has made the decision to seize a mansion situated in the city of Antibes. By doing so, the court satisfied the request of the Prosecutor General of Russia as part of a criminal case under way by Russian law enforcement agencies," ITAR-Tass quoted the prosecutor's office as saying.

The mansion's owner is officially a French legal entity, but "the [French] court took into account arguments from the Russian side that the property was acquired by Berezovsky's instructions and in his interests," the prosecutor's office added.

The move comes as Russian authorities seek to return assets believed to have been acquired illegally in the 1990s from the state-owned airline Aeroflot and carmaker AvtoVAZ— both of which were heavily influenced by Berezovsky, who emigrated to Britain in 2000.

The self-exiled billionaire and former Kremlin insider-turned-government-critic died under mysterious circumstances at his home outside of London in March 2013. He was found by his bodyguard on the bathroom floor with a scarf tied around his neck.

His daughter said at the time that Berezovsky had been complaining of "something strange" happening to him after losing a legal battle with a former business rival, implying he may have been poisoned.

An inquest was held into his death but the coroner recorded an open verdict, saying he could not prove beyond reasonable doubt that Berezovsky had committed suicide, nor that there had been foul play.

See also:

Berezovsky Death Remains Mystery as Coroner Records Open Verdict

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