

London Mayor Backs Away From Tennis Match With Russian Politician

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London Mayor Boris Johnson

The mayor of London has said he could withdraw from a tennis match with the wife of a former deputy minister in President Vladimir Putin's government, Sky News reported.

Lyubov Chernukhina, the wife of Vladimir Chernukhin, Russia's deputy finance minister during Putin's first presidential term, won the right to play tennis against British Prime Minister David Cameron and London Mayor Boris Johnson for a vertiginous £160,000 (\$215,500) at a fundraiser of the British Conservative Party last month.

"They volunteered me to play tennis with some geezer," Johnson told Sky News. "It is very important that full checks are carried out to make sure that this is not somebody who is an intimate of Putin or a crony."

Politicians from both Britain's Conservative and Labour parties have called the donation into question, saying it is incongruous with the United Kingdom's stated desire to adopt a harsh stance on Russia's role in the crisis in Ukraine, The Guardian reported Tuesday.

Chernukhina, who is a banker, was declared an "impermissible donor" by the British Electoral Commission in 2012 but has nonetheless made three donations to the Conservative party totaling £5,500 euros (\$7,400), according to The Guardian.

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