

Russia's Eighth Richest Man Gets FSB to Stop Son From Going to U.S., Ex-Wife Says

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Vladimir Potanin

Russia's eighth richest man, Vladimir Potanin, has enlisted the help of the Federal Security Service (FSB), a successor agency of the Soviet KGB, to stop his 15-year-old son from going to school in the U.S., the billionaire's ex-wife said.

The son, Vasily, who has been living with Potanin's ex-wife Natalya since the couple's divorce earlier this year, was at Moscow's Vnukovo Airport to fly to the U.S. when he was stopped by agents from the FSB's border guard service who told the teenager that he did not have his father's permission to leave the country, Natalya Potanina said in a statement, RIA Novosti reported Monday.

The teenager attended Friends Academy, a Quaker preparatory school, in the state of New

York the previous year, but visited Russia to take state-administered exams at his previous alma mater in Moscow, the statement said. He was scheduled to fly back to the U.S. on Sunday. The billionaire father had chosen Friends Academy for his son a year earlier, the ex-wife's statement said.

An unidentified source close to Potanin told Interfax that the billionaire co-owner of Norilsk Nickel considered the issue of his son's education abroad "moot," given the "current situation." The report said the billionaire had repeatedly asked his ex-wife to reconsider plans for the teenager's education, suggesting that the boy should attend school in Russia.

Forbes Russia quoted the ex-wife's statement as saying that "it looks like Vladimir Potanin is ready to sacrifice his own child's education to get his former spouse to obey him on the issue of [post-divorce] property settlement."

Potanin is Russia's eighth richest man this year, according to a Forbes ranking, with his wealth estimated at \$12.6 billion.

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