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Russian Tycoon Potanin Caught Up in Damages Lawsuit

By The Moscow Times

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Vladimir Potanin

One of Russia's richest men, Vladimir Potanin, has been named a co-defendant in a case in which state development bank Vneshekonombank is seeking damages for losses from the liquidation of a company in which he indirectly owned a stake, the Finance Ministry said.

The case comes as Potanin, who is also a shareholder in world No. 2 nickel producer Norilsk Nickel, is fighting a financial claim from former wife Natalya.

The ministry said on Friday VEB had lodged a claim to Moscow's arbitration court over losses arising from the liquidation of a company called Roskhlebprodukt.

It said Potanin was engaged in the case as a co-defendant due to his role as the owner of a stakeholder in Roskhleboprodukt, a private company importing small amounts of grain.

Anton Muravyev, a spokesman for Potanin's investment vehicle Interros, said he had not seen

the document and couldn't comment on the details of the case.

The ministry did not provide further information. According to local press reports, VEB — which is acting on behalf of the financial ministry — is seeking more than $68 million in damages from Potanin and other defendants.

Potanin is seen as close to Russian President Vladimir Putin. Last week, he took part in an ice hockey match with the Russian leader.

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