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# Russia Hides Data on State Property in Foreign Countries

By Peter Hobson

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The decision to conceal information comes as Russian state property overseas is threatened by a dispute with former shareholders in the defunct Yukos oil firm.

Details of property owned by the Russian government overseas have been made secret due to national security concerns and the "unfriendly" policies of certain foreign countries, the RBC news agency reported Monday.

During an investigation into assets belonging to a Kremlin department, RBC found that it could not access data on Russian state assets abroad, despite laws requiring the information to be made public.

"In the interest of national security, including in connection with the unfriendly policies of some countries, information about federal property located overseas is not published online on the website of [the Federal Agency for State Property Management] Rosimushchestvo," Alexei Chubar, Rosimushchestvo's deputy head, wrote to RBC.

When RBC questioned the legal basis for not publishing the information, Chubar said it was "outside Rosimushchestvo's authority."

The government can only classify information concerning military bases and specifically designated space facilities, according to RBC. However, it can also issue an order to make information secret, which it would not have to publish, Vitaly Mozharovsky, a lawyer at Goltsblat BLP, told the agency.

Russia's Federal Security Service (FSB), and government ministers Alexei Ulyukayev and Igor Shuvalov did not respond to RBC's requests for comment.

The decision to conceal information comes as Russian state property overseas is threatened by a dispute with former shareholders in the defunct Yukos oil firm. The shareholders won a $50 billion damages case last year in a Hague arbitration court against the Russian government, which is accused of bankrupting and dismembering the company in the mid 2000s, when it was one of Russia's largest crude producers.

Following the ruling, authorities in France and Belgium have frozen assets belonging to the government and to Russian state media companies.

The news also comes as the FSB pushes a proposed law that would restrict access to a public database of property ownership, following a series of revelations about opulent mansions belonging to Russian bureaucrats by bloggers using public information.

Contact the author at p.hobson@imedia.ru

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