

Kremlin Denies That France's Fillon Received \$50 Million for Arranging a Meeting With Putin

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Russian President Vladimir Putin (R), former French Prime Minister Francois Fillon (C), and businessman Fouad Makhzoumi (L) pose for photographers during their meeting in St. Petersburg. **Mikhail Klimentyev, Sputnik, Kremlin Pool Photo via AP**

The Kremlin's official spokesman, Dmitry Peskov, denies that center-right French presidential candidate Francois Fillon received \$50 million for arranging a meeting between Vladimir Putin, Lebanese billionaire Fouad Makhzoumi, and Patrick Pouyanné, the CEO of the energy giant Total, during the St. Petersburg International Economic Forum in June 2015.

"Frankly, this seems like the latest fake — what we call 'fake news' in English," Peskov told reporters, insisting that the protocol for arranging the president's meetings allows "no place for intermediaries."

Le Canard Enchaîné, a satirical French newspaper that also publishes investigative

journalism, reported that Fillon's consulting company, [2F Conseil](#), had earned \$50,000 for setting up the meeting, claiming that Fillon had help from Patrick Pouyanné, the CEO of Total.

Le Canard Enchaîné also published part of what it says is a photocopy of an agreement between [2F Conseil](#) and Makhzoumi's Lebanese business conglomerate. Fillon's signature supposedly appears on the document.

Fillon is also fighting other corruption accusations, including allegations that his family members received state salaries for government jobs they never performed.

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