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Russian Workers Desperate to Save Jobs at Sanctions-Hit Rusal

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Oleg Deripaska **Mikhail Metsel / TASS**

Workers at the aluminum firm Rusal have reportedly considered pooling resources to buy out their U.S. sanctions-hit boss in an effort to regain access to the international market and retain their jobs.

The United States imposed sanctions this month against billionaire Oleg Deripaska and the eight companies in which he is a large shareholder, including Rusal, in response to what Washington called "malign activities." After Rusal lost half its share price, the United States said it could remove the company from the sanctions list if Deripaska ceded control.

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"Of course our hopes were raised when the Americans offered to lift sanctions," an

unidentified worker at Rusal's Bogoslovsk aluminum smelter said, the Novaya Gazeta investigative newspaper reported Friday.

Although nationalizing Rusal would be "more reliable," workers say they are willing to "pitch in what we can" to keep the smelter's 3,700 workers and 1,500 support staff employed in the Urals town of Krasnoturinsk.

"The main thing is for us to keep our jobs," Novaya quoted one unidentified Bogoslovsk employee as saying.

Workers at a Rusal smelter in Siberia warned that "people will revolt" if their employer cut staff.

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Workers in Bogoslovsk are hesitant to protest, citing unsuccessful demonstrations in 2012 after some 2,000 staff were laid off in the town of 57,000.

"Now we can only wait for the fat cats to decide, both ours and American. We're sort of their hostages," the unidentified worker was quoted as saying.

Reuters contributed reporting to this article.

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