

Moscow Pop Star Says DNC's Russia Meddling Suit Lacks Proof

By [Bloomberg](#)

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Emin Agalarov (Kirill Zykov / Moskva News Agency)

Moscow pop star Emin Agalarov and his father, billionaire developer Aras Agalarov, asked a U.S. judge to throw out civil claims by the Democratic National Committee accusing them of colluding with Russia and President Donald Trump's campaign to meddle in the 2016 election.

The racketeering suit fails to link the Agalarovs to the alleged conspiracy at the center of the case — the hack of the DNC's computer systems and subsequent release of emails by Wikileaks, they said in a court filing Thursday. The men allegedly helped arrange the infamous June 2016 Trump Tower meeting where the campaign sought dirt on Trump's rival, Hillary Clinton.

The complaint "alleges absolutely no connection of any kind between that conspiracy and any conduct by the Agalarovs, who did not have, and are not alleged to have had, the slightest knowledge or involvement in any conspiracy to hack anyone's computer files," they said in

the filing.

Many of the allegations in the lawsuit reflect conclusions of U.S. intelligence agencies and come from legal filings by Special Counsel Robert Mueller, who is investigating links between Russia and Trump's campaign. The suit, filed in April, also names Russia and Trump associates including Jared Kushner, Roger Stone and Donald Trump Jr. Then-candidate Trump praised the release of the emails before the election.

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George Papadopoulos, a foreign-policy adviser to Trump's campaign, and Richard Gates, an aide to onetime Trump campaign chairman Paul Manafort, also filed requests to dismiss DNC claims against them, although only the Agalarovs have filed a legal brief so far. Gates and Papadopoulos have pleaded guilty in Mueller's probe, but only Gates is cooperating with the Special Counsel.

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The Agalarovs say the DNC is linking them to the alleged conspiracy simply because they're from Russia and have had some contact with Trump and his campaign, including the Trump Tower meeting that became an early focal point of Mueller's probe.

"While plaintiff points to the publicity surrounding the Trump Tower meeting, it is unable to allege that the Trump Tower meeting had any relationship whatsoever to any cyber-hacking or other unlawful activity," according to the filing.

Aras Agalarov is a close ally of Russian President Vladimir Putin and served as a liaison between Trump and Putin to bring Trump's Miss Universe pageant to Moscow in 2013. Emin became close with the Trumps during the pageant.

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The DNC accuses Russian intelligence of hacking into its computers, penetrating its telephone systems and gaining access to tens of thousands of documents and emails. Beginning in mid-2016, WikiLeaks released almost 20,000 emails from inside the DNC that hurt Clinton's campaign. WikiLeaks is also named in the suit.

"What matters here is whether the Agalarovs participated in this conspiracy, and that is indisputable," said Adrienne Watson, DNC's deputy communications director. "The Agalarovs arranged the Trump Tower meeting and delivered the message that Russia could provide damaging information to the Trump campaign about the Democratic nominee."

Gates pleaded guilty to conspiring to defraud the U.S. and lying to federal agents, and testified as a prosecution witness in the successful tax fraud and money laundering case against his former boss. Papadopoulos admitted lying to federal agents about his contacts with a U.K. college professor who claimed to have ties to Russians in possession of Clinton's emails. He's about to complete a two-week prison sentence.

The DNC's case is just one of many legal challenges surrounding Trump and his campaign, family and businesses, including civil suits and investigations by Mueller and Congress. Trump has called Mueller's probe a "witch hunt."

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