

Russian Journalists Quit En Masse as Censorship Scandal Hits Kommersant

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TASS / Donat Sorokin

The entire political department of Russia's Kommersant business publication resigned Monday in solidarity with two veteran journalists at the newspaper who said they had been forced to step down.

In April, Kommersant [reported](#) that Federation Council leader Valentina Matviyenko would be replaced "in the coming months," citing several government sources. The Kremlin [said](#) it was unaware of any reshuffles, while the upper house of Russian parliament [dismissed](#) the news as rumors.

[Ivan Safronov](#) and [Maxim Ivanov](#), two of the five reporters behind the Matviyenko resignation story, were forced to quit Kommersant on Monday after 10 years with the newspaper as a result.

Kommersant's owner, the Kremlin-aligned billionaire Alisher Usmanov, dismissed them for reporting on the Russian senate leader's rumored resignation, Safronov and Ivanov wrote in

separate Facebook posts.

"We parted with the journalists because the editorial standards of Kommersant were violated while writing the article," editor-in-chief Vladimir Zhelonkin, who himself was installed last summer, [told](#) the Vedomosti business daily.

Less than an hour later, Kommersant's entire politics desk announced their resignations in solidarity with Safronov and Ivanov.

"The shareholder has the right to make staffing decisions," deputy editor Gleb Cherkasov [said](#). "The employees have the right to disagree with them in the only way possible: by changing their workplace," he added.

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