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Former Sberbank Senior Executive Flees Russia – Vedomosti

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Vladislav Shatilo / RBC / TASS

Sberbank's former first deputy chairman of the board reportedly fled Russia around the time of Moscow's invasion of Ukraine, ending nine years with the country's largest state-owned lender.

Lev Khasis is at least the fourth publicly known senior Russian executive to make an abrupt exit since late February, when Russia invaded its neighbor. His reported departure comes as observers closely watch for signs of cracks in Russia's elite as the financially draining war enters its eighth week.

Khasis was among the first of Sberbank's top managers to leave the country and was later followed by a number of key senior executives, the Vedomosti business daily reported Monday, citing one of three unnamed sources.

"It simply shocked employees," they said.

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Khasis, a dual Russian-U.S. citizen, left for the United States and is no longer employed at any of Sberbank's businesses, Vedomosti said.

Transparency International Russia director Ilya Shumanov said that Khasis allegedly runs a real estate business in Florida and had a business partner convicted on several counts of tax fraud and theft.

Ten days before Russian troops marched into Ukraine on Feb. 24, Sberbank announced a reshuffle that would move Khasis to preside over its new e-commerce holding company starting June 1.

The change was part of Sberbank's diversification into the non-financial world, including cloud services and technology.

Two of Vedomosti's sources said Khasis left for the U.S. "immediately after the start of the war," while a third said he had departed "a couple of days" beforehand.

The sources' timing coincides with the RBC news website's Feb. 25 report saying Khasis' last day was Feb. 22, possibly scuttling plans for the e-commerce holding.

The U.S. placed Sberbank under full blocking sanctions as part of its response to the Ukraine war. It emerged this week that the European Union is discussing targeting Sberbank in its sixth package of sanctions over Moscow's invasion.

Presidential envoy Anatoly Chubais, Yandex CEO Elena Bunina and Aeroflot deputy CEO Andrei Panov previously announced or were reported to have quit and relocated abroad since the war.

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