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Ex-Yandex Head Takes EU to Court Over Sanctions

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Former Yandex CEO Tigran Khudaverdyan. **Sergei Vedyashkin / Moskva News Agency**

The former head of Russia's top tech firm Yandex Tigran Khudaverdyan has challenged sanctions against him over the Ukraine war in a European Union court.

Khudaverdyan filed a lawsuit on June 7 demanding the European Council lift its "discriminatory and disproportionate" sanctions against him. The lawsuit was first reported by TV channel RTVI on Monday evening.

Khudaverdyan quit as Yandex executive director and deputy CEO in March after being hit with an EU asset freeze and travel ban. At the time, Brussels accused Yandex, often dubbed "Russia's Google," of manipulating search results and "hiding information" from the Russian public.

But, in the court filing, Khudaverdyan argued that he "does not support the actions of the Government of the Russian Federation concerning interventions in Ukraine."

Khudaverdyan was the de facto head of Yandex for a number of years while founder Arkady Volozh officially remained CEO of the company. Volozh quit in June after being targeted by European sanctions following the invasion of Ukraine.

Yandex itself is unaffected by Western sanctions, though its shares have collapsed since the start of the fighting.

In addition to being Russia's largest search engine, Yandex's sprawling business empire covers taxi services, e-commerce, fast food delivery, online education and a host of other high tech businesses.

At least 20 Russian billionaires have launched legal challenges against EU sanctions imposed after the invasion, Bloomberg reported in early June.

More than 1,000 Russian individuals, including President Vladimir Putin, are on the EU sanctions list.

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