The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Russian Oligarch Deripaska's Sochi Hotel Seized After War Criticism – FT

December 20, 2022



The Imeretinskiy hotel and marina complex in Sochi. **im-hotel.ru**

A Russian court ordered the seizure of a luxury hotel complex owned by Russian aluminum magnate Oleg Deripaska after he criticized President Vladimir Putin's war in Ukraine earlier this year, the Financial Times reported on Tuesday.

The court order to seize the $1bn Imeretinskiy hotel and marina complex in Sochi came in September after the Kremlin asked Deripaska to stop publicly criticizing the war, according to two people familiar with the matter, the Financial Times reported.

While the legal dispute started before the Kremlin invaded Ukraine in February and was not, therefore "ostensibly linked" to Deripaska's criticism of the war, the Financial Times report suggests that the oligarch's comments may have influenced the case's outcome.

Deripaska said in March that peace was needed "as soon as possible" and in June stressed that "destroying Ukraine would be a colossal mistake," the Financial Times reported.

“The Kremlin asked him to calm down,” one person close to Deripaska told the Financial Times, while another Deripaska associate said that the Kremlin repeated its request on at least one occasion.

Related article: Russian Oligarch Deripaska Says Destroying Ukraine Would Be 'Colossal Mistake'

Two weeks after Deripaska’s June comments, the Sirius Federal Territory — a science, educational and tourism cluster established under Putin — filed three land dispute lawsuits against Deripaska’s company RogSibAl, which owns the Imeretinskiy complex, the Financial Times said.

Publicly available court documents seen by the FT show that the judge ruled in favor of Sirius in September, evicting RogSibAl, with a separate judgment the same month ruling to seize the company’s real estate.

Deripaska and his aluminum giant Rusal have been under U.S. sanctions since 2018 for malign activity in both Russian-annexed Crimea and Ukraine, despite Deripaska being one of the most prominent Russian oligarchs to have spoken out against the war.

Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov told the FT that the court ruling had “nothing to do with the court cases.”

There was no response to requests for comment made by The Moscow Times to Deripaska’s representatives, Sirius, or Russia’s prosecutor general’s office on Tuesday.

Original url:
https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2022/12/20/russian-oligarch-deripaskas-sochi-hotel-seized-after-war-criticism-ft-a79749