

Wildberries CEO Changes Surname Amid Feud With Estranged Husband

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Tatyana Bakalchuk. **Sergei Shinov / Roscongress Photobank**

The CEO of Russian retail giant Wildberries said Monday that she reverted to her maiden name amid an ongoing business dispute with her estranged husband that escalated in a deadly shootout last week.

Tatyana and Vladislav Bakalchuk, the co-founders of Wildberries, one of Russia's largest online retailers, have been locked in a bitter dispute for months over a merger deal with advertising firm Russ Group.

Last week, Bakalchuk accused her husband and two former executives of leading an armed takeover attempt on the company's Moscow office during which two security guards were killed.

Bakalchuk, Russia's wealthiest woman, wrote on Telegram Monday that her surname "from today is once again Kim," adding that "the best choice is to always remain yourself." Wildberries' press service told RIA Novosti state news agency that "an official procedure of

changing the surname has been launched" by Bakalchuk.

Related article: [Wildberries Founder's Ex-Husband Arrested After Deadly Office Shootout](#)

Wildberries was founded in 2004 by Bakalchuk, a teacher on maternity leave, together with her IT technician husband. With bright pink branding, the Wildberries site initially specialized in clothes and shoes but now offers a wide range of goods including furniture and electronics.

The business made Bakalchuk a billionaire, although her fortune took a hit from a controversial merger in June with Russ Group, according to Forbes.

Vladislav Bakalchuk, who holds a minor stake in the online retailer, described the merger as a hostile takeover and sought the support of Chechen strongman Ramzan Kadyrov. On Wednesday, he led a group of men to the company's headquarters in Moscow to discuss ending "the construction of a warehouse."

Tatiana Bakalchuk denied the claim, and Wildberries said the group of men tried to forcibly enter the building before opening fire on security guards. Police arrested around 30 people following the shootout, including a Chechen mixed martial arts fighter.

On Thursday, Vladislav Bakalchuk's lawyers said he was charged with multiple criminal offenses, including murder, attempted murder, vigilantism and an attempt on the life of a law enforcement officer. But late Friday, he released a cryptic video on Telegram saying that he was at home and would continue to fight for his "family business."

Business news media have [called](#) the Wildberries-Russ Group deal "very strange" for presenting itself as a merger between equal partners. Wildberries is 20 times bigger than Russ Group, with 538.7 billion rubles (\$2.7 billion) in revenues last year compared to Russ Group's 27.9 billion rubles (\$300 million).

The independent business outlet The Bell suggested the merger may be part of Russia's wartime redistribution of assets that has rewarded Kremlin-linked business figures.

AFP contributed reporting.

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