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Vologda Governor Urges Billionaire Mordashov to 'Bury the Hatchet' Amid Ongoing Feud

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Georgy Filimonov and Alexei Mordashov. **gorodche.ru**

The governor of Russia's northwestern Vologda region has called on billionaire Alexei Mordashov to "bury the hatchet" and cooperate for the region's benefit, coming amid ongoing tensions over local investments.

Georgy Filimonov, a political outsider appointed by President Vladimir Putin in 2023, has clashed with Mordashov's industrial conglomerate Severstal over alleged failures to meet investment commitments in Vologda's wood processing industry.

The feud escalated last year when Filimonov publicly challenged Mordashov to a physical fight, prompting the businessman, one of Russia's wealthiest with a net worth of $28.6 billion, to deny any personal conflict with the governor.

Filimonov has since stirred a series of political controversies, including proposals for a full

abortion ban, sparking calls for his resignation from over 120 members of the ruling United Russia party. A Change.org petition demanding his removal has more than 30,000 signatures.

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In an interview published Tuesday by the RBC news outlet, Filimonov insisted he was not feuding with anyone and said his focus remains on economic development.

"It's time [for Severstal and Mordashov] to bury the hatchet and work for the benefit of the people of Vologda — not just for profit," he said. "Alexei Mordashov and I shouldn't be like Beavis and Butt-Head. Remember those two MTV characters, always blaming each other?"

However, the governor appeared to accuse Mordashov of lacking patriotism and opposing the Kremlin's conservative ideological agenda.

"Before we arrived, this ideology [of patriotism and support for Russia's war in Ukraine] was de facto banned," Filimonov said, claiming Severstal's leadership had a "quasi-liberal orientation" favoring "Western beneficiaries."

"Even though the company is under sanctions, perhaps this is shaped by the personal worldview and attitudes of the company's owner," he added.

In March, Filimonov issued a decree barring migrants from working in the Vologda region's construction sector for all of 2025. He later backtracked on the ban after Severstal warned that the decision would jeopardize its investments in the region.

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