The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Investigative Report Alleges Links Between Billionaire Deripaska and Prostitution Ring Involving Minors

June 19, 2025



Oleg Deripaska. **Pyotr Kovalev / TASS**

A criminal investigation into a Russian prostitution ring involving underage girls uncovered allegations that billionaire tycoon Oleg Deripaska was a client, according to a new investigative report by the exiled news outlets Vyorstka and IStories.

The alleged sex ring operated from at least 2018 to 2019 and masqueraded as regional teen beauty pageants, modeling agencies, as well as dating websites, journalists said, citing law enforcement records provided to them by an anonymous source.

Russian police investigators identified at least four underage victims and pressed criminal charges against five individuals in 2019. One of the victims testified that Deripaska had been a client of the ring, according to the report, which was published on Thursday.

Three defendants were sentenced to up to six years in prison between 2022 and 2024. Of the

remaining two, one is still wanted by the Russian authorities while the other has avoided extradition from Austria.

The only male defendant in the criminal case reportedly joined the Wagner mercenary group to fight in the war against Ukraine and was later awarded a medal for bravery.

Russia's Investigative Committee, which probes major crimes, did not respond to Vyorstka's and IStories' requests for comment.

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An anonymous police investigator told the two outlets that prosecutors ordered them to drop an investigation into Deripaska over the alleged sex ring. "Our superiors, on orders of the prosecutors, told us not to meddle," the investigator was quoted as saying.

Deripaska's assistant and his aluminum company Rusal did not respond to requests for comment.

Another alleged client, businessman Alexander Usov, fled to Austria, which denied Moscow's request to have him extradited. The report describes Usov as a business partner of the family of former Defense Minister Anatoly Serdyukov and as having held major construction contracts in St. Petersburg.

Following publication of the investigative report on Thursday, both Vyorstka and IStories said their websites and social media channels came under coordinated cyberattacks.

In 2018, the late opposition activist Alexei Navalny accused Deripaska of having ties to a young Belarusian escort between 2016 and 2017. Deripaska denied those allegations at the time, dismissing Navalny's video investigation as slander.

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