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Air Defenses Surround Putin Residence Where Rumored Girlfriend, Sons Live – Reports

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Russian Defense Ministry

Russian authorities have deployed an unusually dense network of air defense systems around President Vladimir Putin's secluded Valdai residence where his alleged girlfriend and their children live, according to a new investigation by RFE/RL affiliate Radio Svoboda.

Satellite images and photos from the Yandex.Zerkala mapping service show at least 12 Pantsir-S1 surface-to-air missile systems, many mounted on elevated towers, encircling the compound known as Uzhin.

Until now, only two such units had been publicly identified in the area.

By comparison, in the Moscow metropolitan region, home to more than 20 million people, authorities have positioned around 60 such systems since the start of the war in Ukraine — just five times more than the number protecting the Valdai site.

The Kremlin has not commented on the reported deployment.

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The investigative outlet Dossier Center has reported that the residence is used by Alina Kabaeva, the former Olympic gymnast who leads the National Media Group and is widely reported to be Putin’s long-term partner.

She is said to spend much of the year there with her two young sons, identified by the outlet as Ivan and Vladimir.

In February 2023, the investigative site Proekt reported that a dedicated home for Kabaeva had been built next to the Valdai residence, complete with its own private railway spur.

The Kremlin has long denied any relationship between Putin, 72, and Kabaeva, 42, though the two have been romantically linked in the media for over a decade.

According to the Telegram channel VChK-OGPU, the first Pantsir systems at Valdai were brought in from St. Petersburg.

That redeployment, the channel claimed, left the northern city more vulnerable and may have allowed Ukrainian forces to carry out successful drone strikes on local energy infrastructure.

The Valdai retreat has long been known as a favored getaway for Putin, who has hosted private gatherings there with pop stars and VIP guests, according to the late Kremlin critic Alexei Navalny's Anti-Corruption Foundation.

Air defense systems have been installed around several other presidential residences since late 2022, when Ukrainian drones struck the Engels and Dyagilevo air bases in the Saratov and Ryazan regions.

Pantsir systems have since appeared on buildings near the Kremlin, at Putin’s Novo-Ogaryovo residence outside Moscow, and near his Black Sea retreat Bocharov Ruchey in Sochi, as well as in the Krasnaya Polyana ski resort.

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