

UK sanctions the shady network funding Putin's lavish lifestyle

- today sanctions hit Putin's financial network, including ex-wife and cousins – tightening the vice on the President and his inner circle
- Putin's official assets are modest, with his lifestyle funded by a cabal of family, friends and elites
- the UK has now sanctioned more than 1,000 individuals and 100 entities, including oligarchs worth £117 billion

Foreign Secretary Liz Truss is today (Friday 13 May) announcing fresh sanctions on Putin's 'wallet' of family and friends— those whom he rewards with state positions and wealth in return for their undying loyalty.

Official records list modest assets for President Putin including: a small flat in St Petersburg, 2 Soviet-era cars from the 1950s, a trailer, and a small garage.

In reality, Putin relies on his network of family, childhood friends, and selected elite who have benefited from his rule and in turn support his lifestyle. Their reward is influence over the affairs of the Russian state that goes far beyond their formal positions.

Today's sanctions will hit this cabal who owe Putin their wealth and power, and in turn support Putin and his war machine.

Foreign Secretary Liz Truss said:

We are exposing and targeting the shady network propping up Putin's luxury lifestyle and tightening the vice on his inner circle. We will keep going with sanctions on all those aiding and abetting Putin's aggression until Ukraine prevails.

Putin's lavish lifestyle has regularly been on display, with reports exposing links to a £566 million yacht and the \$1 billion 'Putin's Palace' – officially owned by close associate, Arkady Rotenberg, who was sanctioned in December 2020.

His family members form a core contingent of his inner circle – receiving positions of power due to their affiliation to the regime. The individuals sanctioned today include:

- Alina Kabaeva, a retired Olympic gymnast. Kabaeva has risen to become Chair of the Board of the National Media Group, reportedly the largest private Russian media company. She is alleged to have a close personal relationship with Putin, and previously sat as a Deputy in the Duma for Putin's United Russia

- Anna Zatseplina, grandmother of Alina Kabaeva and associate of Gennady Timchenko – a longstanding Putin associate, sanctioned by the UK on 22 February 2022, from whom she has reportedly received a luxury flat in Moscow
- Lyudmila Ocheretnaya, former First Lady of the Russian Federation and ex-wife of Putin. Since her divorce from Putin in 2014, Ocheretnaya has benefited from preferential business relationships with state-owned entities
- Igor Putin, first cousin of President Vladimir Putin, and a Russian businessman. Igor Putin is Director of Pechenga International Sea Port
- Mikhail Putin, a Russian businessman and relative of President Vladimir Putin. Mikhail Putin is Deputy Chairman of the Management Board of SOGAZ Insurance and Deputy Chairman of the Management Board of Gazprom
- Roman Putin, first cousin once removed of President Vladimir Putin. Roman Putin is publicly open about his relation to Putin and emphasises how this family connection enabled his company, Putin Consulting, to help foreign investors in Russia
- Mikhail Shelomov, a Russian business owner and Putin's first cousin, once removed. Shelomov's company Akcept LLC has allegedly shared employees with Binom JSC, the firm registered as owning 'Putin's Palace'. Shelomov, through his firm Akcept LLC, is also a shareholder in Bank Rossiya, a bank with close Kremlin links, and run by key Putin lieutenants, sanctioned by the UK on 22 February 2022

Putin has also routinely placed his confidants and loyal supporters into strategic positions within the State, expanding his personal reach into all corners of the Russian economy. Those sanctioned today are:

- Alexander Plekhov, a close friend of Putin. He has benefited from his relationship with Putin and his company Vital Development Corporation has benefited from significant state patronage
- Mikhail Klishin, an Executive in Bank Rossiya, and a member of the Board of Directors at SOGAZ
- Vladimir Kolbin, the son of Putin's childhood friend and alleged business associate, Peter Kolbin. Vladimir has benefited from and supported the Government of Russia acting as General Director of Gelendzhik Seaport LLC

- Yuri Shamalov, son of Nikolai Shamalov (sanctioned by the UK in 2014), and brother of Putin's former son-in-law, Kirill (sanctioned by the UK on 24 February 2022). Yuri is a member of the new elite of children of Putin's closest associates, and has risen rapidly to become President of Gazfond, and Member of the Board of Directors of Gazprombank
- Viktor Khmarin is a Russian lawyer and businessman, who is a friend and relative-by-marriage of Putin. Khmarin has owned a number of businesses including LLC NefteProduktServis, which operated in the Russian energy sector

Today's sanctions isolate the family members and financiers deep within Putin's inner circle, compounding the pressure on Putin as he continues his senseless invasion into Ukraine.

Since the invasion, the UK has sanctioned over 1,000 individuals and 100 entities, including hitting oligarchs with a net global worth of over £117 billion.

Asset freeze

An asset freeze prevents any UK citizen, or any business in the UK, from dealing with any funds or economic resources which are owned, held or controlled by the designated person. UK financial sanctions apply to all persons within the territory and territorial sea of the UK and to all UK persons, wherever they are in the world. It also prevents funds or economic resources being provided to or for the benefit of the designated person.

Travel ban

A travel ban means that the designated person must be refused leave to enter or to remain in the United Kingdom, providing the individual is an excluded person under section 8B of the Immigration Act 1971.

Transport sanctions

Recently introduced powers make it a criminal offence for any Russian aircraft to fly or land in the UK, and give the government powers to remove aircraft belonging to designated Russian individuals and entities from the UK aircraft register, even if the sanctioned individual is not on board. Russian ships are also banned from UK ports.