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Feb 7 · 20 tweets · [P\\_Kallioniemi/status/1622917840536801280](#)

In today's [#vatnik](#) soup I'll introduce a Ukrainian billionaire, philanthropist and the richest man in Ukraine, Rinat Akhmetov. He's the founder, sole proprietor and president of System Capital Management (SCM). Allegedly he also has ties to organized crime.

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Akhmetov was born in Donetsk Oblast and he is an ethnic Volga Tatar. Details about Akhmetov's past are controversial and there are contradictory stories on how he gained his wealth after the fall of USSR.

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Rinat himself has said that he made his fortune by "trading coal and coke" and investing on assets that "no one wanted to buy". Ukrainian author Serhiy Kuzin has claimed that Akhmetov was a "mafia thug" in the 80s.

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Um dos homens mais ricos da Ucrânia, o deputado e empresário Rinat Akhmetov, de 42 anos, tem uma fortuna estimada em 1,8 bilhão de dólares e duas paixões: é louco por futebol e fanático pelo estilo brasileiro de jogar. Nos últimos quatro anos, importou nove atletas do Brasil para atuar no seu time, o Shakhtar Donetsk, um dos mais populares da Ucrânia. Além de dono do clube, Akhmetov é seu presidente. Foi o bilionário quem o elevou à categoria dos grandes de seu país. Ele sucedeu no cargo a Akhat Bragin, assassinado num misterioso atentado no estádio do Shakhtar, em 1995. Bragin era acusado de ser um dos chefes da máfia ucraniana.

O passado de Akhmetov também é um tanto obscuro. Segundo seus funcionários, ele "ganhou muito dinheiro jogando pôquer" nos anos que precederam o colapso da União Soviética. Já o jornalista Serhiy Kuzin, autor do livro Donetsk Mafia, afirma que o bilionário teria trabalhado como capanga da organização mafiosa, a mando da qual executara várias pessoas. Akhmetov só se desloca acompanhado de pelo menos cinco seguranças, em um comboio de três Mercedes-Benz S550 pretos e blindados. Quando seu time vence, costuma dar prodigiosas demonstrações de generosidade – distribui até 200 000 dólares para cada jogador.

Dono de um conglomerado de setenta empresas dos ramos de metalurgia, extração mineral e telecomunicações, ele mora em uma casa que ocupa praticamente três quarteirões, quase na divisa de Donetsk com Makeevka. Só na cozinha da mansão trabalham onze empregados, sem contar os treze garçons que se revezam para servir o empresário e sua família – a mulher e os dois filhos raramente são vistos em público. Vaidoso, Akhmetov tem personal stylist e maquiador.

Até o fim deste ano, ele deverá concluir mais um grande investimento: vai inaugurar um portentoso estádio em Donetsk, o Donbass Arena, orçado em 450 milhões de dólares (apenas 50 milhões de dólares mais barato que o Ninho de Pássaro, o célebre estádio que a China construiu para sediar a Olimpíada do ano passado). Não se trata do único investimento previsto para 2009: rumores na cidade dão conta de que a contratação de mais um brasileiro, o atacante Ciro Ferreira e Silva, do Sport Recife, é só uma questão de tempo.

Hans van Zon, a Professor of Central and Eastern European Studies, has suggested that Rinat and his brother Igor were involved in criminal activities already in 1986. During the 80s Akhmetov also worked for Akhat Bragin, an alleged powerful criminal boss who allegedly ...

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... made his money in illegal clothing business. Akhmetov was described as an "enforcer" who used mafia methods against Bragin's enemies. During early 90s, Akhmetov acquired property in the Donetsk Oblast - again allegedly - by means of extortion with the assistance of ...

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... Lieutenant-General Volodymyr Malyshev. Serhiy Kuzin has also suggested that Malyshev helped Akhmetov by wiping any documents regarding his criminal past.

After Bragin was killed in 1995 in a bombing at a football stadium, Akhmetov inherited his financial empire.

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In Sep, 1999, an official Ukrainian Ministry of Internal Affairs report identified Akhmetov as a "leader of an organized crime syndicate". The report claimed that Akhmetov's group is involved in money laundering and financial fraud.

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In June 2005, Serhiy Kornich, then head of the Interior Ministry's economic crimes department, said directly that Rinat Akhmetov was "the head of an organized crime group".

In 2006 WikiLeaks published a diplomatic cable from one of Ukraine's most respected policy ...

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... strategist, Volodymyr Horbulin. In this cable Horbulin told the US Ambassador to Ukraine that the Ukrainian, pro-Russian Party of Regions - best known for their presidential candidate Viktor Yanukovich - was largely financed by Akhmetov.

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Horbulin also added that the party partly composed of "pure criminals" and "anti-democratic figures".

Akhmetov also employed and became close friends with Paul Manafort. Manafort's associate Kilimnik allegedly passed polling data about the 2016 US election to Akhmetov.

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In 2005 Akhmetov was also investigated on murder charges and for his alleged role in organized crime in the Donetsk Oblast. To avoid this prosecution, he promptly fled to Monaco. These charges were dropped in 2006, ending Akhmetov's exile.

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## Akhmetov tagged as suspect in attempted murder case

By Roman Olearchyk. Published July 21, 2005 at 5:40 pm

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Law enforcement seek Ukraine's richest man for involvement in case dating back to 1988  
spect in a shooting that occurred in the east of Ukraine almost 20 years ago.

The development signals apparent attempts by Ukraine's new administration to shift its criminal investigations into higher gear, especially those involving prominent – and once considered untouchable – political opponents who allegedly committed crimes under the nation's previous leadership.

Donetsk tycoon Rinat Akhmetov, who remains outside Ukraine at an unknown location, has denied involvement in the shooting through statements issued by his principle holding company, System Capital Management, and a law firm based in Washington D.C. that represents him.

In an interview published on July 20, one day after Akhmetov failed to show up for questioning at the Interior Ministry, Deputy Interior Minister Hennady Moskal said that a criminal case was likely to be launched soon in connection with an incident in Donetsk dating back to 1988. During the incident, an alleged crime figure nicknamed Botsman was shot, but survived. Botsman, a.k.a. Serhiy Chernyshev, now resides in Moscow.

Citing Moskal, Kyiv-based Internet publication Glavred.info reported that Akhmetov has been fingered as the suspect in the shooting. Moskal's words confirm news reports, spread Ukrainian media in recent days, citing informed sources linking Akhmetov to the crime.

If Akhmetov was a criminal mastermind, he's covered his tracks well - Hennadiy Moskal, who in 2005 acted as the Deputy Minister of Internal Affairs of Ukraine, said in an 2011 interview that concrete evidence was never officially released against him or his company SCM.

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Rinat's SCM group is a multinational corporation and Ukraine's largest financial and industrial group. It employs around 200 000 people, and in 2018 paid 22% of all tax revenues to Ukraine's governmental budget. It's also Ukraine's biggest private wartime taxpayer.

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Self-proclaimed "People's Governor" Pavel Gubarev of the puppet-state DPR said in an 2014 interview that Akhmetov had financed two-thirds of the people of the so-called separatist movement in Donetsk Oblast. Akhmetov denied these accusations, and after this he ...

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... started blaming the "separatists" for the "genocide in Donbas". He also started supplying huge amounts of humanitarian aid to the Donbas region, and in Dec, 2022, Washington Post called Akhmetov the biggest private donor for Ukraine during the war, providing over ...

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... 100 million USD in military and humanitarian aid. In Jan, 2023, the Rinat Akhmetov Foundation and the Shakhtar football club provided additional 133 million USD for assisting the Ukrainian war effort.

In Nov 2021, president Zelensky has accused Akhmetov of being ...

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... enlisted to help in planning a Russian coup against him. Akhmetov has also been a target of Zelensky's anti-corruption efforts, and Akhmetov has funded Zelensky's opponents. To put it mildly, Akhmetov and Zelensky are not friends.

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Zelensky vs. Akhmetov – a test of strength

*Sławomir Matuszak Tadeusz Iwański*

Text in PDF 353.88 KB



In Jul, 2022, Rinat involuntarily gave up his media activities due to "de-oligarchisation" legislation.

Regarding Russia's invasion of Ukraine, Akhmetov has been clear on his stance: "Russia is an aggressor and Putin is a war criminal".

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## Akhmetov exits media business, says doesn't want to be labeled oligarch.

by The Kyiv Independent news desk · July 11, 2022 5:53 pm

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Rinat Akhmetov, a Ukrainian businessman and oligarch, waits for the arrival of German Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier before their meeting on June 24, 2014 in Kyiv, Ukraine. (Getty Images)

In a public [statement](#), oligarch [Rinat Akhmetov](#) said that his System Capital Management (SCM) group is set to transfer the licenses of the [television channels](#) owned by its Media Group Ukraine to the Ukrainian government. The media holding includes Ukraina and Ukraina 24 TV channels, which before the full-scale war were among the most-watched channels in the country.

In an interview with Forbes Ukraine, he stated that Ukrainian victory consists of "a complete ceasefire, the withdrawal of Russian soldiers from Ukraine and a full restoration of Ukraine's internationally recognized borders. Including Donbass and Crimea."

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EDITORS' PICK

# Ukraine's Richest Man Says He's Doing Everything He Can To Help His Country, And Sparing No Expense

Luisa Kroll Forbes Staff  
*Executive Editor*

Mar 10, 2022, 07:03am EST



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The banner features a blue background with white icons for social media (Twitter, YouTube, music notes) and a circular illustration of a person in a kitchen. The text is in white and black.

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**Pekka Kallioniemi**  
@P\_Kallioniemi · Follow

In today's #vatnik soup, I'll introduce an American lobbyist and political consultant Paul Manafort. Manafort was a long-time Republican Party campaign consultant, but is best known for his connections to Russian oligarch Oleg Deripaska & for leading the 2016 Trump campaign.

1/21



12:41 PM · Feb 5, 2023

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The Twitter post includes a profile picture of Pekka Kallioniemi, a blue bird icon, and a photo of Donald Trump and Paul Manafort. The text is in black on a white background. The photo shows Trump pointing and Manafort standing next to him.