

The Core Companies

Credit: Estonian business daily Äripäev / Andras Kralla

by Sophie Balay and Khadija Ismayilova

4 September 2017

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Above: The four Azerbaijani Laundromat companies moved \$2.9 million through accounts they opened in the Estonian branch of Danske Bank.

Credit: Estonian business daily Äripäev / Andras Kralla

The core companies that power the Azerbaijani Laundromat – through which more than €2.5 billion (US\$ 2.9 billion) passed in just two years – are Polux Management LP, Hilux Services LP, Metastar Invest LLP, and LCM Alliance LLP.

They are part of a larger constellation of companies set up by unscrupulous agents to launder and steal large amounts of money. Reporters for OCCRP previously exposed the Russian Laundromat, a fraudulent scheme that moved more than \$20 billion out of the Russian Federation, and other, smaller, [money laundromats \(/en/azerbaijanilaundromat/what-is-a-laundromat\)](https://www.occrp.org/en/azerbaijanilaundromat/what-is-a-laundromat) operating in Ukraine. (See: [What Is a Laundromat? \(/en/azerbaijanilaundromat/what-is-a-laundromat\)](https://www.occrp.org/en/azerbaijanilaundromat/what-is-a-laundromat))

Two Sets of Documents

Reporters for OCCRP, the Danish newspaper Berlingske, and their partners found two separate sets of documents for each of the four British companies that make up the core of the Azerbaijani Laundromat: Paperwork they filed with the Companies House, where British company registration records are kept; and the filings they made when they opened accounts at Danske Bank in Tallinn, Estonia.

The two sets tell different stories but have one main thing in common: The beneficial owners and directors listed in both cases are not real.

When registering with the United Kingdom's Companies House, each of the four companies lists a British address. On the other hand, their records at Danske Bank list addresses in Baku, the capital of Azerbaijan.

Hilux Services LP and Polux Management LP were both registered in Glasgow, Scotland on West George Street but in different apartments. Their Azerbaijan addresses are listed at 115 S. Vurgun St. in Baku.

Both companies show the same shareholders in the UK records, and their bank accounts were both opened by the same Azerbaijani man, Maharram Ahmadov.

Both transferred more than \$1.7 billion from accounts allegedly handled by Ahmadov. But Ahmadov is unlikely to be the real person in charge – reporters found that he is a working class driver living in a modest home in the outskirts of Baku.

Credit: OCCRP

On paper, Maharram Ahmadov is the owner of companies that sent millions around the world. In reality, he is a modest driver who lives on the outskirts of Baku, Azerbaijan's capital.

Reporters for OCCRP talked with Ahmadov, 51, who admitted being involved with the companies as a director, but said he knew nothing about the financial transactions conducted in his name.

He said he was a driver for a bank in Baku and that people in that bank had made him a director. He added that his documents were held at the bank.

Working for the Aliyevs

The banking and registration documents of the two other core Azerbaijani Laundromat companies, LCM Alliance LLP and Metastar Invest LLP, tell a similar story.

The LCM Alliance LLP bank documents list two individuals – Emil Aliyev as a director and Zamina Zamanova as signatory for the bank account. Reporters could not identify Emil Aliyev based on information provided.

But Zamina Zamanova, a public relations manager in the Baku-based SR Group Co., was surprised to learn from an OCCRP reporter that the bank documents show her as signatory. Although her LinkedIn page showed that Zamanova was an assistant director of Kapital Bank (owned by the family of Azerbaijan's President Ilham Aliyev) between 2011 and 2014, she said it was not her official job.

"I was just helping in Kapital Bank supporting in documentation. Kind of an office manager. Bring this, take that, fill the paper, write this."

Zamanova made an appointment with reporters for a more in-depth interview, but did not show up. She did not respond to additional requests for information.

According to the UK companies registry, LCM Alliance was dissolved in September 2015. When an OCCRP reporter called the company's Azerbaijani number, which was listed in its banking records, a person answering the office phone said that the company had been moved abroad, that it no longer operates, and that its former premises have been rented to a tourism company. However, when the reporter later called incognito seeking documentation for a purchase made in 2013, an employee located the relevant details and said they could make additional transfers if needed.

Metastar, too, appears to have been dissolved in January 2016 – at least according to the UK records. But the Metastar office is still operating at its Azadliq Avenue address, although there are no signs on the doors and cameras monitor traffic inside and out. The leaked documents show Elvin Shirinov as a director and beneficiary of Metastar, while employees of the company say he is the boss only on paper.

Shirinov himself answered the phone at the office and was identified as a Metastar clerk by a businessman who has made transfers with the company in the past. Shirinov denied any affiliation to the company as soon as an OCCRP reporter identified herself as a journalist.





When OCCRP reporter went to the premises to submit an official information request, company employees locked the internal doors of the office.

A businessman who asked to remain anonymous told OCCRP he used to make small transfers through Metastar for buying goods from abroad. He explained that the company he worked for was interested in hiding the real scope of its business to “stay low profile” and to “avoid [having to pay] huge bribes to the government officials.”

He said Metastar didn’t request any documents for his company and that he was able to transfer payments without identifying his business.

Company Details

When opening their bank accounts at Dankse Bank, the four Azerbaijani Laundromat companies filed information about the origin of their money and their beneficial owners.

Click on the thumbnails below to see what each company filed.

POLUX MANAGEMENT LP		
Account opening agreement: 01.05.2013		
Incorporation number: SL 12725	Affiliated partners	Arash Medical Company Aral Ticaret LTD - STI Marchesa Holding LLC - USA
Date of incorporation: 26/03/2013	Banks	ABLV 1,000,000-2,000,000/5-10/Arash Medical Company Garanti Bancasi 100T-200T/30-40/Aral Ticaret LTD - STI Morgan Chierbank 100T-200T/30-40/Marchesa Holding LLC
Foreign address: Suite 1098, 111 West George Street, Glasgow, G2 1QX, Scotland	Representative	The account was opened and used by Maharram Ahmadov (Address: S.Vurguna 115, Baku, Azerbaijan; Phone: +9945 0719 6234; Email: faberlexlp@mail.ru; riverlanellp@mail.ru, Passport No. : P5061725).
Azeri address: S.Vurguna 115, Baku, Azerbaijan	Shareholders	AKRON RESOURCES CORP. (50%); registered address is 177 Main Street Road Town Tortola, British Virgin Islands; represented by Maksims Kaposins. SOLBERG BUSINESS LTD (50%); registered address is
Account number: EE353300333516220009		
Starting date of the account: 27/05/2013		
Closure date of the account: 05/12/2013		

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METASTAR INVEST LP

Account opening agreement: 29.10.2009

Incorporation number:
OC 346224

Date of incorporation:
08/06/2009

Foreign address:
Cornwall Buildings, 45-51 Newhall Street,
Office 330, Birmingham B3 3QR, England, UK

Azeri address:
Azadlig 146, Baku Azerbaijan

Phone:
012 436 04 62

Email:
inmax0232@yandex.ru

Country of origin:
United Kingdom

Affiliated partners

Metpoint Madencilik (Mining) AS - Turkey
Stonex Madencilik (Mining) AS - Turkey
Vatan Madencilik (Mining) AS - Turkey

Banks

Sampo Bank / Danske Bank AS
(Estonia branch) USD 200,000-300,000
FinansBank ArBank (1-2) USD 200,000-300,000 -
Metpoint Madencilik AS, Stonex Madencilik AS,
Vatan Madencilik AS.

Representative

The bank account was opened and used by Shirinov Elvin (Address: M.Miisvig 37B, Absheron R-On Saray, Baku, Azerbaijan and Azadlig 146, Baku, Azerbaijan; Phone: 055 634 4404, 012 436 0462; Email: inmax0232@yandex.ru; Date of birth : 23.06.1988; Passport No. P3343809; Nationality: Azerbaijan).

POA 20.05.2013: Shirinov Elvin appointed as attorney. Najwa Smaili (Cyprus Passport no K00038110) is appointed as authorized representative.

(/assets/azerbaijanilaundromat/METASTAR-INVEST-LARGE.png)

HILUX SERVICES LP

Account opening agreement: 01.05.2013

Incorporation number:
SL 12732

Date of incorporation:
26/03/2013

Foreign address:
Suite 1105, 111 West George Street,
Glasgow, G2 1QX, Scotland.

Azeri address:
S.Vurguna 115, Baku, Azerbaijan

Phone:
+9945 0719 6234

Email:
faberlexlp@mail.ru

Country of origin:
United Kingdom

Affiliated partners

Pary International Inc.
Clipsal Middle East FZE
OOO Henkel RUS

Banks

IBA (Azerbaijan) 1.5-3 / 3-6
UBS Bank 50T-100T / 20- 30 Pary International Inc.
Standard Chartered bank of Dubai 100T-250T / 20-50 /
Clipsal Middle East FZE
Citibank 100T-250T / 20-50 / 000 Henkel RUS

Representative

The bank account was opened and used by Maharram Ahmadov (Address: S.Vurguna 115, Baku, Azerbaijan; Phone: +9945 0719 6234; Email: faberlexlp@mail.ru, riverlanellp@mail.ru; Date of birth : 15.11.1965; Passport No. P5067425; Nationality : Azerbaijan.).

POA 26/03/2013: Maharram Ahmadov appointed as attorney/representative.

POA 05/02/2014: Maharram Ahmadov appointed as attorney/representative.

POA 10/02/2015: Maharram Ahmadov appointed as

(/assets/azerbaijanilaundromat/HILUX-SERVICES-LARGE.png)

LCM ALLIANCE LLP

Account opening agreement: 29.02.2012

Incorporation number:
OC 372263

Date of incorporation:
09/02/2012

Foreign address:
175 Darkes Lane, Suite 13, 2nd Floor,
Potters Bar, Hertfordshire, EN 61BW

Azeri address:
Zogre 13, Baku, Azerbaijan

Phone:
+9941 2598 0215

Email:
emil1999@live.ru

Country of origin:
United Kingdom

Affiliated partners

Brava Metals DMCC UAE
000 Ozon-A
Rai Cheng Trading CO

Banks

Trasta Komerbanka USD 300-500,000 / 1-2
Hellenic Bank Public - Nicosia USD 300-500,000 / 1-2
Emirates NBO Bank USD 300-500,000 / 1-2 /
Brava Metals DMCC
Russky Scaviansky Bank USD 300-500,000 / 1-2 /
OOO Ozon-A
China Construction Bank Corp. USD 300,000-500,000
/ 1-2 / Rai Cheng Trading LSD

Representatives

the bank account was opened and used by
Zamina Zamanova (Address: zogre 13, Baku,
Azerbaijan; Phone: +9945 0550 5772; Email:
zamina19@live.ru; Passport No. P3587011).
And Emil Aliyev (Address: zogre 13, Baku, Azerbaijan;
Phone: +9945 0210 0206, +9941 2598 0215; Email:

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This story is part of the Global Anti-Corruption Consortium, a collaboration started by OCCRP and Transparency International. For more information, [click here \(https://www.occrp.org/en/gacc\)](https://www.occrp.org/en/gacc).

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