

Putin Calls for End to Norilsk Spat

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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The shareholders of Norilsk Nickel must resolve their dispute and ensure that the company continues to function to avoid government intervention, Prime Minister Vladimir Putin said Monday.

"I do not care which of the shareholders has a controlling stake or in what proportion. The main thing is that they solve the problems of the company," Putin said, RIA-Novosti reported.

"If someone does not decide, if someone falls out of this general order, then we will do something," he said.

Putin added that the shareholders "already know [his position] and are preparing."

The prime minister is due to visit the world's largest producer of nickel and palladium in the Arctic town of Norilsk on Tuesday. He put off an earlier trip because of poor weather.

Speculation that the state will take a stake in Norilsk as a way to create a national mining

champion has circulated for years, though such intentions have been denied.

The company became a battleground between two influential Russian tycoons when Oleg Deripaska, the owner of United Company RusAl, bought a 25 percent stake in Norilsk, putting him on equal footing with long-time owner Vladimir Potanin's Interros holding company.

Deripaska is suing Interros International Investments in London in an effort to regain equal representation on the board after winning fewer seats than his rival at a recent extraordinary shareholders meeting.

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