

Putin Secretly Honors Oligarchs for Olympic Investment

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Putin shaking hands with oligarch Oleg Deripaska in a file photo.

President Vladimir Putin secretly awarded medals to billionaire businessmen and heads of state-owned companies who invested in the Sochi Winter Olympics, Vedomosti reported Monday.

Gazprom CEO Alexei Miller, Sberbank president German Gref, as well as oligarchs Vladimir Potanin and Oleg Deripaska were among the recipients of state honors at an awards ceremony in March, Vedomosti said, citing people who attended the event.

This year's Sochi Games were the most expensive in history with a price tag of \$51 billion. After a run-up marred with corruption allegations — which the Kremlin denies — and reports of spiraling costs, Russia pulled off a widely praised Games and topped the medal table. The government poured massive resources into preparations, and leaned on state- and tycoon-owned companies to contribute.

The Kremlin's press service announced in March that it was awarding state distinctions to certain government officials and organizers of the Games in a closed ceremony, but did not reveal that investors in the Olympic mega-project would also be honored, Vedomosti reported.

Putin's press secretary, Dmitry Peskov, declined to comment on the awards ceremony to Vedomosti.

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