

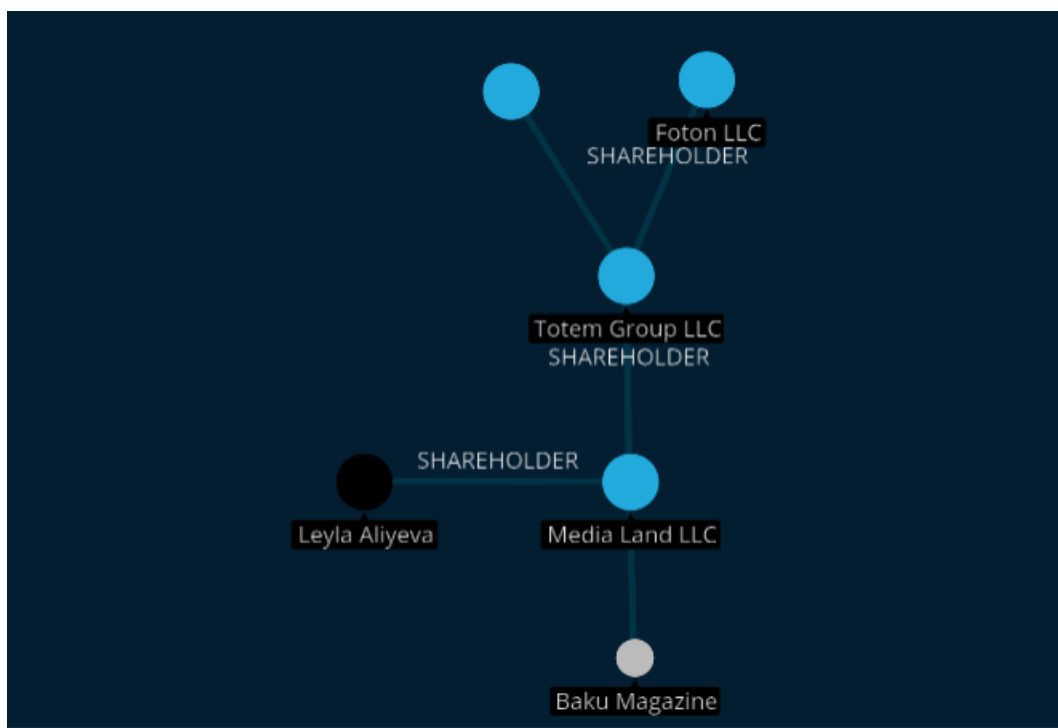
## Network Insight: Media Companies

### Leyla Aliyeva's Russian media ventures and their role in whitewashing Azerbaijan's image overseas

Leyla Aliyeva is linked to several soft power media ventures that portray Azerbaijan in a flattering light, glossing over the regime's poor record for corruption, human rights abuses, and military aggression. These ventures have undergone frequent changes in management and are held via overseas shell companies—techniques that are typically used to hide beneficial owners and obscure where funds have come from.

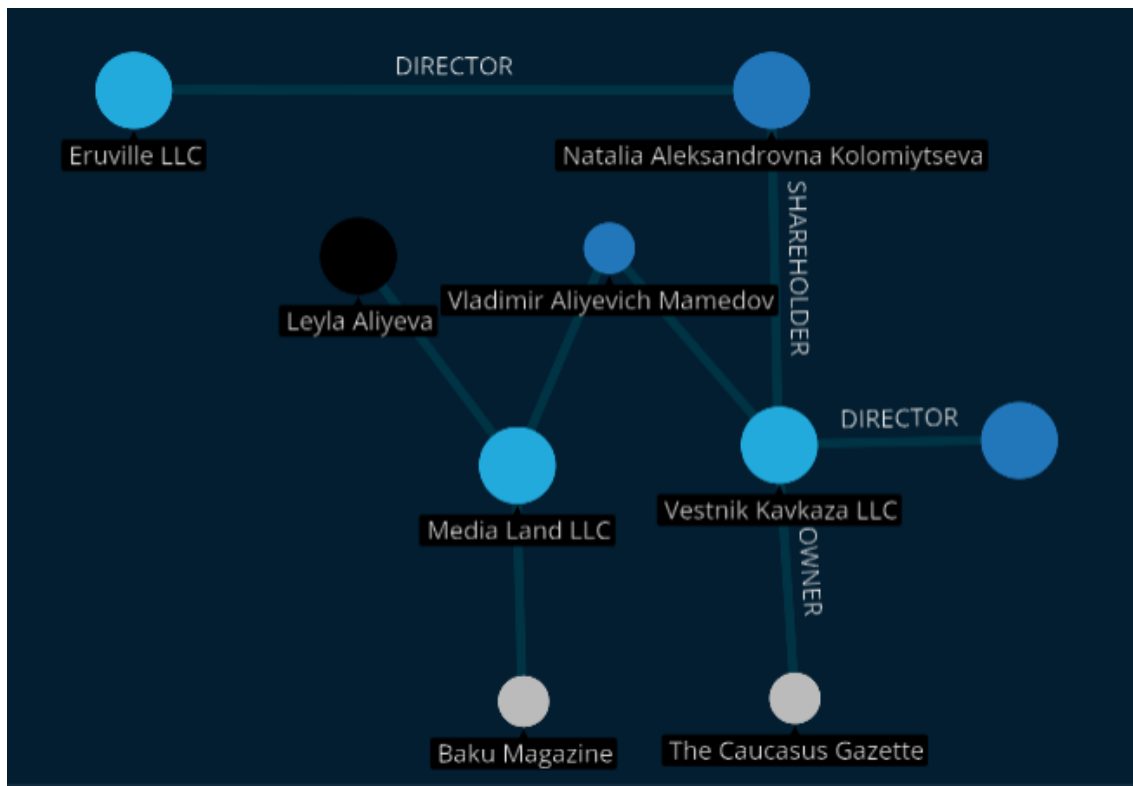
Many of these ventures are centered in Russia, which is a key mediator in Azerbaijan's ongoing border conflict with its neighbor Armenia, so generating a positive perception of Azerbaijan in Russia is a key aspect of its strategy for resolving the conflict in its favor.<sup>[605]</sup>

Chief among Leyla Aliyeva's media ventures is Baku, a culture and lifestyle magazine that projects a chic and cosmopolitan image of Azerbaijan to Russian and English audiences.<sup>[761]</sup> The magazine, which she edits, is published by Media Land LLC, a company registered in Moscow.<sup>[188] [761]</sup> Media Land's sole shareholder is Totem Group LLC, another Russian company.<sup>[188]</sup> Totem Group, in turn, is owned by two Azerbaijani companies: Atlantik Aeronautik Holding LLC, which owns 99%, and Foton LLC, which owns 1%.<sup>[188]</sup> Between 2014 and 2019, Leyla Aliyeva was Media Land's sole shareholder.<sup>[1332] [751] [1368]</sup>



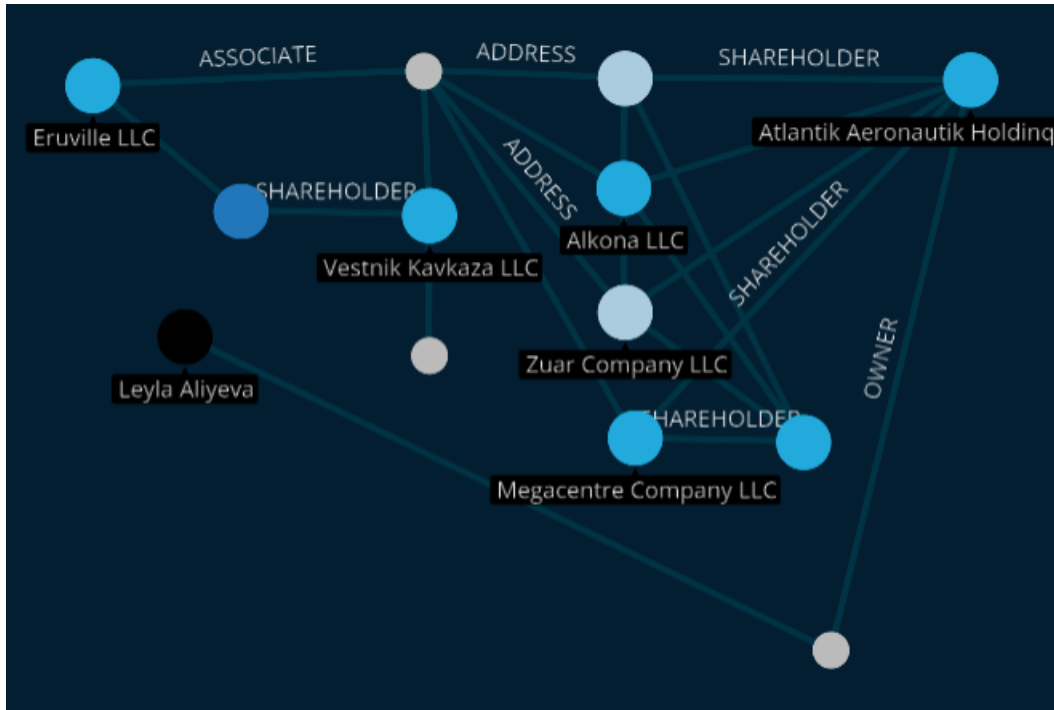
Leyla Aliyeva is also linked to website based in Moscow that publishes anti-Armenian propaganda masquerading as news. Vestnik Kavkaza, which translates as “The Caucasus Gazette,” publishes stories about the Caucasus and surrounding region in Russian and English.<sup>[187] [767]</sup> Its coverage consistently favors the government of Azerbaijan. It supports Baku’s official line on the disputed territory of Nagorno-Karabakh, routinely reporting on what it calls Armenia’s “lies,” “attacks,” “crimes,” and “provocations.”<sup>[787] [788] [789] [790]</sup> It has written hawkish editorials about the historic massacre of Azerbaijanis by Armenians at the Karabakh village of Khojaly,<sup>[791]</sup> an event that Baku commemorates and uses to inflame anti-Armenian sentiment.

Vestnik Kavkaza is published by a Russian company by the same name.<sup>[187]</sup> Leyla Aliyeva does not appear in its records, but there are other traces of her involvement. The company’s sole shareholder is Natalia Aleksandrovna Kolomiytseva,<sup>[187]</sup> a Russian businesswoman whose only other role is as a director of one of Leyla and Arzu’s Russian real estate companies, Eruville LLC.<sup>[341] [350] [135] [1082]</sup> Vestnik Kavkaza’s former owner, businessman Vladimir Aliyevich Mamedov, is a former director of Media Land LLC, the publisher of Leyla Aliyeva’s Baku magazine.<sup>[188]</sup> Meanwhile, Vestnik Kavkaza’s current and sole director is Ismail Alovzat oglu Agakishiyev,<sup>[187]</sup> an Azerbaijani-Russian who was awarded Azerbaijan’s Progress medal by President Ilham Aliyev in 2016.<sup>[768]</sup>



Address information also links Vestnik Kavkaza to Leyla Aliyeva. The website’s editorial offices are in central Moscow,<sup>[350]</sup> in the building next door to the registered office of Eruville LLC.<sup>[795]</sup> Vestnik Kavkaza’s registered office is also shared with four Russian real estate companies associated with Leyla Aliyeva, which are

themselves owned by two Azerbaijani companies: Atlantik Aeronautik Holding Limited LLC and Foton LLC.<sup>[358] [483] [484] [485]</sup>



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