

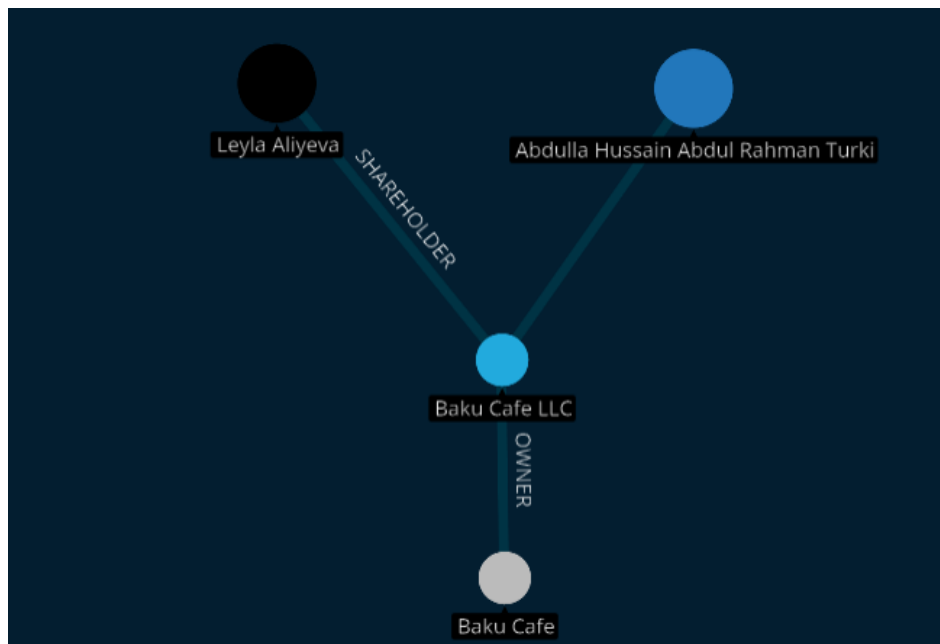
## Network Insight: Restaurants

### Leyla Aliyeva's restaurants in Moscow and Dubai

Leyla Aliyeva is linked to several overseas soft power projects that advance the regime's foreign policy objectives, including by promoting propaganda against Armenia, with whom Azerbaijan has a longstanding territorial feud.<sup>[605]</sup>

These projects include a string of Azerbaijani restaurants, which are an often-overlooked avenue for soft power. As well as promoting Azerbaijan's distinctive cuisine, overseas restaurants owned by Leyla Aliyeva have hosted events in partnership with the Azerbaijani state and serve as meeting places for expats from the former Soviet states.

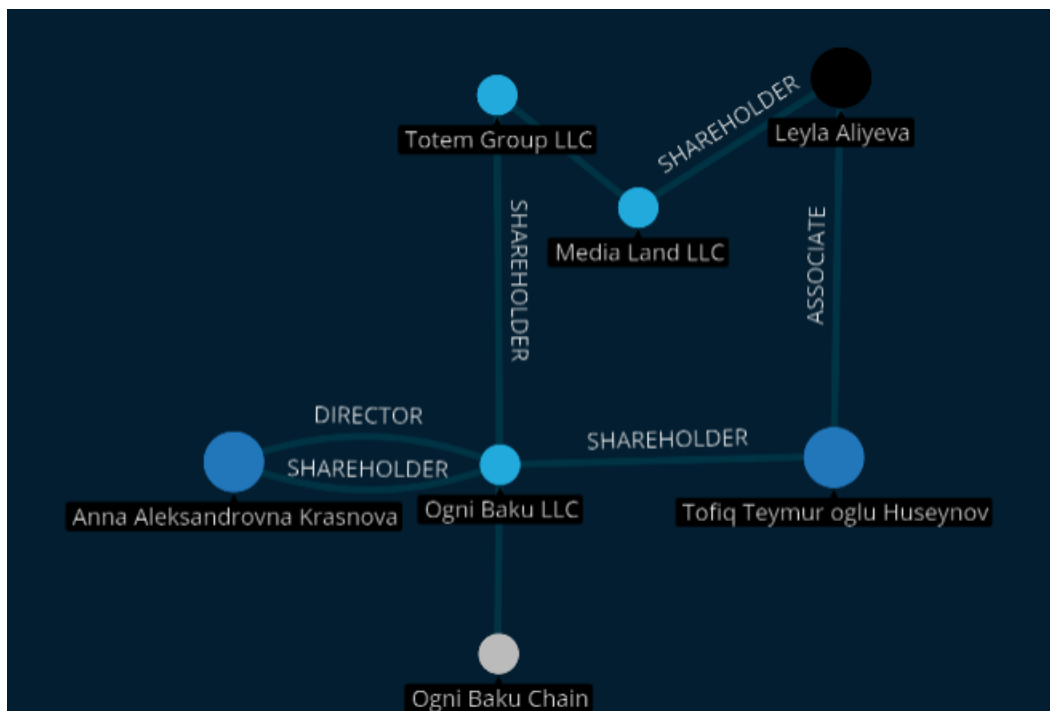
One of these restaurants, Baku Café, is an upmarket Azerbaijani restaurant in central Dubai,<sup>[156][157]</sup> near the Burj Khalifa skyscraper.<sup>[669]</sup> The business trades via a Dubai company by the same name, of which Leyla Aliyeva is a shareholder, owning 49% as of 2020.<sup>[155][213]</sup> The remaining 51% is owned by an individual called Abdulla Hussain Abdul Rahman Turki.<sup>[155][213][988]</sup> The restaurant, which opened in 2017,<sup>[156][157]</sup> has co-organized open-air concerts in Dubai with the Azerbaijani Embassy.<sup>[670]</sup> It uses its social media accounts to post birthday messages to Leyla Aliyeva, Mehriban Aliyeva, and President Ilham Aliyev;<sup>[160][158][159]</sup> it also regularly posts pro-government messages commemorating the anniversaries of alleged war crimes committed by Armenia during the decades-old conflict between Azerbaijan and Armenia.<sup>[161][162]</sup>



Leyla Aliyeva is also linked to a chain of Azerbaijani restaurants in southern Moscow known as Ogni Baku, which means “Lights of Baku.” The chain operates via a Russian company by the same name owned by Tofiq Teymur oglu Huseynov, an Azerbaijani businessman;<sup>[347] [601]</sup> Totem Group LLC, a Russian company; and Anna Aleksandrovna Krasnova, a Russian citizen who is also a director of the company.<sup>[347]</sup> All three are associated with Leyla Aliyeva, being intermediaries who control businesses on her behalf.

In addition, Huseynov was a member—alongside Leyla Aliyeva—of the All-Russian Azerbaijani Congress (WAP),<sup>[780] [763]</sup> a defunct business lobby group for expatriate Azerbaijanis in Russia.<sup>[771]</sup> He has been a director of several other Russian companies with links to Leyla Aliyeva.<sup>[601] [347] [358] [491] [775] [776]</sup>

According to the Financial Action Task Force (FATF), the use of intermediaries or close associates by politically exposed persons (PEPs) from autocratic and corruption-prone regimes is a red flag for suspicious activity.<sup>[1294]</sup> \*



\* The Financial Action Task Force (FATF) is an international body that develops and promotes policies to protect the global financial system and sets standards for money laundering controls.

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