

it paid out:

fictitious."

wrongdoing.

PA MEDIA

those orchestrating the accounts". Seychelles beach

• \$34.8m (£27.8m) to Javanshir Feyziyez

• \$48.8m (£39m) to Javad Marandi

beneficially owned by Mr Marandi

Money flowed into the company from other sources. In total, investigators say

• \$106.9m (£85.4m) to Vynehill Enterprises, a British Virgin Islands company

Ruling on the NCA's application to seize cash from the Feyziyev family, the

business transactions between Baktelekom, Hilux and Polux were entirely

They were produced in order to allow "very significant sums into and out of

their accounts so as to mask the underlying money-laundering activities of

Seychelles: Company registered here, with a bank account in the Baltic, received cash from Glasgow-registered firms

The National Crime Agency told the court it would "neither confirm nor deny"

whether there was an active investigation into Mr Marandi's finances - but the

His lawyers told the court that between 2012-2017, tight currency controls in

Azerbaijan meant he had to use exchange houses in Latvia and Estonia to

"The funds were lawfully earned, and lawfully transferred, and there is no

transfer legitimately-owned dividends from Avromed and other businesses.

well-known businessman has adamantly denied any involvement in

judge concluded: "I am satisfied that there is overwhelming evidence that the

invoices and contracts purporting to support legitimate (and very substantial)

Westminster Magistrates Court

Legal battle: Began in October 2021 at outset of major NCA case

When the NCA's case against the Feyziyev family first went to court, Mr

Marandi's lawyers argued that revealing his identity would breach his privacy

and cause "profound and irremediable" damage to his reputation - not least

question of money laundering," they said.

because no law enforcement body had interviewed or approached him regarding the case. After the court ruled the NCA could seize millions from the Feyziyev family's British bank accounts, the BBC and London Evening Standard argued it was in the public interest to disclose that some of Mr Marandi's overseas interests had been part of the case. Judge Zani ruled, in May 2022, that Mr Marandi - who was referred to as MNL could be named under principles of open justice, saying he had been a "person of importance to the main proceedings". That ruling triggered more than a year of further challenges by Mr Marandi. His lawyers succeeded in getting a costly High Court review of Judge Zani's ruling. By this stage, the London Evening Standard had dropped out of the challenge. Last month, two of the country's most experienced judges ruled the media could name Mr Marandi.

Naming Marandi

of his claim for anonymity. Instead, he chose to rest on a bare denial of wrongdoing. "Moreover in this case, as the [High Court] held, the forfeiture judgment contained no finding that [the applicant] was guilty of an offence." 'Political bombshell' Duncan Hames, director of policy at the anti-corruption research group Transparency International UK, said the Conservative Party had questions to answer. "This is a political bombshell," he said. "We've learned today that someone who's given hundreds of thousands to a British political party has, in the words

about a major money-laundering enterprise.

more careful about who they take money from. "

to rebut these false findings."

A Conservative Party spokesperson said in a statement the party only accepts donations from "permissible sources, namely individuals registered on the UK's electoral roll or UK registered companies". "Donations are properly and transparently declared to the Electoral Commission, openly published by them, and comply fully with the law." In Parliament, SNP MP Alison Thewliss was granted the urgent question on the implications of the NCA's investigation. She asked Home Office minister Chris Philp to confirm whether Mr Marandi had meetings with ministers or received any government contracts. Labour MP Margaret Hodge - the former chair of Parliament's Public Accounts Committee - said: "We should take these allegations very seriously. If true, dirty money has well and truly crept into our politics... Will the government bring forward regulations requiring all parties to do due diligence and checks

on the source of all political donations".

donations' controls".

Money stock photo

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He said the government "does not and cannot comment on investigations being undertaken by law enforcement operations". BBC News has contacted the Royal Foundation and Centrepoint for comment. In an earlier version of this story the BBC reported Mr Marandi's Conservative Party donations as £756,300. That figure included donations from another member of his family. **Related Topics National Crime Agency** More on this story

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They concluded that open justice was a fundamental principle and that anonymity should only be allowed in exceptional circumstances. Mr Justice Mostyn said: "My only surprise is that the anonymity order was granted in the first place. For reasons of procedural unfairness as well as a distinct lack of merit, it should never have been granted." Speaking after losing the case, a spokesman for Mr Marandi said that he not been the subject of the claim against the Feyziyev family, nor a witness. "It is therefore unjust to be named, without having had the fundamental right In its decision on Monday evening to allow the BBC to report the story, the Court of Appeal said: "[Mr Marandi] may not have been a party to or a witness in the forfeiture proceedings, but that did not mean that he had no fair opportunity to address the allegations made against him. "He could have refuted them in detail when he put in his evidence in support

of the judge, been a person of importance in proceedings before the court

"That should be a concern, not just to people who are worried about where that money came from, but about what it says about how easily money can reach political parties without [them] doing proper checks on on its origins." The former Liberal Democrat MP added: "It's not good enough just to check whether someone is on the electoral roll. Our political parties need to be much Mr Philp said the government was "committed to making sure the UK does not have dirty money", and stressed electoral law set out a "stringent regime of

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