Three top Ubisoft execs are leaving the company amid abuse allegations

Paris-based video game company Ubisoft announced Saturday that several high-level company officers are leaving amid allegations of abuse and harassment. The departures of chief creative officer Serge Hascoët, global head of HR Cécile Cornet, and Yannis Mallat, managing director of Ubisoft's Canadian studios, "come following the initiation of a rigorous review that the company initiated in response to recent allegations and accusations of misconduct and inappropriate behavior," Ubisoft said in a statement.

Earlier this week, Ubisoft confirmed the departure of its vice president, Maxime Béland, following assault allegations, making a total of four prominent executives departing. Under Mallat, Ubisoft's Canadian studios produced several of Ubisoft's biggest game franchises. He personally produced the Prince of Persia: The Sands of Time series before going on to manage big brands including Assassin's Creed; Rainbow Six; Far Cry; Watch Dogs; and For Honor.

French news outlet *Libération* reported details of some of the allegations against Hascoët, who oversaw all the company's games, and was considered by many to be close to CEO Yves Guillemot, according to *Bloomberg* reporter Jason Schreier.

> *This is a *huge* deal for Ubisoft. Serge Hascoet was the man in charge of ALL of their games. With one word he could greenlight or cancel a project. Many Ubisoft employees believed he was too powerful and close to the CEO to ever be ousted, no matter how many allegations emerged*

> — Jason Schreier (@jasonschreier) July 11, 2020

Employees of Ubisoft in Toronto had told company leadership they had "grave concerns about ongoing reported harassment and an inability to feel safe or protected within our own studio" in a letter signed by more than 100 employees, *Kotaku* reported earlier this week.

The company said recent allegations against multiple Ubisoft employees in Canada make it "impossible" for Mallat to continue in his position. Mallat was let go just a day after apparently addressing these allegations against the company in general and being the one to reassure employees:

> NEW: CEO of Ubisoft Canada, Yannis Mallat, addressed the recent wave of allegations of misconduct in a presentation to the Montreal office today. According to sources present, Mallat apologized to victims and employees, but also stressed that most at the company are good people.
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> — AmericanTruckSongs8 (@ethangach) July 10, 2020

Guillemot will now oversee "a complete overhaul of the way in which the creative teams collaborate," according to the company's press release.

The company is hiring an international management consulting firm to audit its HR procedures, part of what it calls a "comprehensive set of initiatives" to foster "an environment that its employees, partners and communities can be proud of — one that reflects Ubisoft's values and that is safe for everyone."

Guillemot said in a statement that Ubisoft had "fallen short in its obligation *to* guarantee a safe and inclusive workplace environment for its employees. This is unacceptable, as toxic behaviors are in direct contrast to values on which I have never compromised — and never will. I am committed to

implementing profound changes across the company to improve and strengthen our workplace culture.”

Correction, July 12th, 8:37AM ET: Ubisoft’s Canadian studios in general, not its Toronto office specifically, were responsible for some of Ubisoft’s biggest franchises under Mallat’s supervision.

https://www.theverge.com/2020/7/11/21321423/ubisoft-allegations-abuse-toronto