

Paratroopers Commander Defends Serdyukov

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Paratroopers commander Vladimir Shamanov on Wednesday denied that Defense Minister Anatoly Serdyukov had ordered the demolition of the church for Ryazan region paratroopers.

Serdyukov suggested moving the church to a nearby village to give villagers access because students at the Ryazan paratroopers academy spent little time on the academy's premises, Shamanov said in a [statement](#) carried by Lenta.ru late Tuesday.

Kommersant reported Monday that Serdyukov ordered the academy's Colonel Andrei Krasov to demolish the wooden church during a Sept. 30 visit, saying military funds should not be spent on religious buildings.

Krasov reportedly defended the construction, telling Serdyukov that it was financed by former paratroopers and locals. Serdyukov then ordered his subordinates to "fire the insolent colonel."

Shamanov did not say whether Krasov would be fired.

Paratroopers spokesman Alexander Cherednik was unavailable for comment Wednesday. Repeated calls to the academy went unanswered.

Shamanov himself has come under fire from Serdyukov, who reprimanded him for sending special forces to intervene in a law enforcement raid on his son-in-law's business.

A ministry investigation found that Shamanov sent troops to the Sporttek plant, owned by Anatoly Khramushin, to impede the work of investigators Aug. 18.

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