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Kidney Stones Mar Casino Case

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A simmering turf war between investigators and prosecutors has taken an unusual turn after the Investigative Committee promised to look into a complaint about renal colic that allowed a suspect to bypass the interrogation room for the hospital.

Anatoly Drok, chief prosecutor in the town of Ozyory, 160 kilometers southeast of Moscow, went straight from a banya to the hospital on Monday, two days before he was supposed to appear for an interview with investigators, Kommersant reported Thursday.

Investigators are suspicious that his complaint of kidney stones is more than a coincidence, the report said.

Drok's lawyer Sergei Starovoitov said his client really has kidney stones and is due for an operation later this month.

He said investigators were simply looking for a pretext to crack down on Drok, suspected of ties to an illegal network of casinos in the Moscow region.

Investigators have said the case against the casino network — purportedly patronized by the

Moscow region's prosecutors in exchange for perks — dates back to 2009, when the Investigative Committee was still subordinate to the Prosecutor General's Office.

The committee kept its investigation under wraps until the Kremlin separated it from the prosecutor's office in January. Several prosecutors have been detained in connection with the case, which is seen by many observers as a power struggle between the two agencies.

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