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Court Orders Arrest of Former United Russia Lawmaker

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Interpol has issued an arrest warrant for a former United Russia lawmaker accused of reaping sham mortgages worth 400 million rubles ($14 million) then fleeing the country, media reported Wednesday.

An Omsk district court on Monday authorized the arrest in absentia of Alexander Dmitriyev, who faces up to six years in prison on charges of fraud and abuse of office.

Dmitriyev, who used to head the Omsk branch of Ak-Bars Bank, is alleged to have persuaded more than 100 people to sign mortgage contacts at the bank between 2007 and 2009 then pocketed the money, paying the phony borrowers 1,000 to 10,000 rubles for the deed, Interfax reported, citing the local branch of the Investigative Committee.

Omsk news site Taiga.info cited investigators as saying Dmitriyev is currently in Europe, but did not elaborate.

Dmitriyev, 38, had been a United Russia member since 2005 and was elected to the Omsk city

council in 2007. But he was expelled last year, United Russia said on its web site Wednesday, without elaborating whether the decision had to do with fraud allegations.

“We don't see what the party has to do with him now, and we believe it's a mistake to link his activities to those of United Russia,” Alexander Artyomov, head of the party's Omsk region branch, was quoted as saying.

Dmitriyev remained a member of the city council's budget committee, but was expelled in April for not attending its meetings, the legislature reported on its web site.

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