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Russian Police Accountant Eyed in $3 Million Embezzlement

By Peter Spinella

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A chief accountant for the Krasnoyarsk police is suspected of participating in an embezzlement of more than 100 million rubles ($3 million) in bonuses for local cops, officials said Tuesday.

Nadezhda Nikolayeva, 39, is alleged to have stolen more than 6 million rubles, while the whereabouts of another 100 million rubles is being investigated, government newspaper Rossiiskaya Gazeta reported.

Nikolayeva abused her position as chief accountant to defraud police officers of "monetary allowances" throughout 2011, the Investigative Committee said in a statement.

Authorities grew suspicious of Nikolayeva because she "lived extravagantly, visiting expensive restaurants," RIA-Novosti reported. They noted that while she and her husband owned two apartments, she lived in a high-end home registered in the names of relatives.

Nikolayeva confessed to misappropriating funds because she wanted to buy an apartment in Moscow's luxurious Rublyovka neighborhood, Rossiiskaya Gazeta reported. She faces up to a decade in prison.

She has been suspended while the investigation, which began last year, continues, the Krasnoyarsk police department said in a statement. She has not been arrested.

Nikolayeva had held the position of chief accountant in Krasnoyarsk's intermunicipal division of the Interior Ministry since July 2009, and investigators are reviewing bookkeeping records for that period.

Nikolayeva had worked for the Interior Ministry since 1996.

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