

War Hero Caught Flushing Bribe Down Toilet

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Yury Sabanin

Police detained a hero of the first Chechen war Wednesday after catching him trying to flush a 2.5 million ruble bribe down the toilet.

In a sting operation also organized by the Federal Security Service, police stormed into the office of Yury Sabanin, head of the army's medical division with the rank of major general, just as he was counting a hefty kickback worth \$76,000.

Sabanin had received the bribe for delivering mobile hospitals, Kommersant reported.

But Sabanin showed lightning quick feet, racing to a nearby toilet and locking himself in with the money. By the time law enforcement officers had broken down the door, Sabanin was attempting to flush away the evidence.

The major general then denied any knowledge of the incident.

"This is all a provocation, I am an honest man," he said, according to Kommersant.

"The bag is mine, but they [police officers] must have thrown the money in there."

Law enforcement officers orchestrated the setup after receiving a tipoff from the director of a research center who said Sabanin had extorted several million rubles from him a year ago.

Sabanin's detention comes as recently installed Interior Minister Vladimir Kolokoltsev has publicly backed efforts to clean up his ministry.

"We must decisively break with those who discredit the work of the Interior Ministry," Kolokoltsev said in comments published on the Interior Ministry website Monday.

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