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Police Detain TNK-BP Executive Offering to Sell Kremlin Posts

By The Moscow Times

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Prior to his work at TNK-BP, Korneyev worked as the Irkutsk region's top economy official and deputy head of the regional legislature.

Police said Friday that they had detained a senior executive at British-Russian oil company TNK-BP on suspicion of trying to sell sought-after positions in the presidential administration.

According to police, the executive offered to sell two businessmen the positions of head of the presidential administration's internal affairs department and deputy chief of staff for the presidential envoy to the Central Administrative District.

The executive made the offer in September and sought $3 million for each Kremlin post, the Interior Ministry said in a statement on its website.

Police detained the TNK-BP executive as he accepted more than 3 million rubles ($97,000) as

a down payment for the positions. Unconfirmed media reports said that the detention took place up to two weeks ago in Moscow.

Investigators have opened a criminal case against the executive on charges of large-scale corruption, which carry a maximum sentence of 10 years' imprisonment.

While police did not name the detained executive, TNK-BP later identified him in an e-mailed statement as Igor Korneyev.

Police said Korneyev headed the oil company's government relations department, which TNK-BP confirmed by e-mail, although his name was not listed on the department's website Friday morning.

TNK-BP stressed that Korneyev had only worked with them for three months "during which period he was learning the business and getting acquainted with the industry."

"Igor Korneyev's arrest is not linked to his work at TNK-BP," a company representative said, without elaborating on whether TNK-BP planned to fire Korneyev over the allegations.

Prior to his work at TNK-BP, which BP has said it will exit due to strained relations with Russian consortium AAR, Korneyev worked as the Irkutsk region's top economy official and deputy head of the regional legislature.

He only left his post in Irkutsk's regional government in June.

Korneyev's former postings "allowed him to market himself as an influential person with extensive connections," police said.

But in fact, Korneyev "possessed no means of influencing personnel appointments in government structures, according to police.

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