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Director of Glonass Contractor Sacked Over Corruption Scandal

By The Moscow Times

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A top space official said Monday that the general director of Russian Space Systems, the contractor behind the costly Glonass satellite-navigation network, would be fired over major corruption allegations at the state-run corporation.

Vladimir Popovkin, director of the Federal Space Agency, told a news conference in Korolyov that Yury Urlichich was being dismissed due to improper use of state funds on his watch, Interfax reported.

"All the necessary documents have been sent to the Economic Development Ministry in order to dismiss Urlichich from his post. I think that all the decisions will be made this week," Popovkin said.

Urlichich's sacking comes after investigators announced in early November that managers at Russian Space Systems had used schemes including fly-by-night companies to embezzle

about 6.5 billion rubles ($200 million) meant for maintaining and upgrading Glonass, Russia's answer to the U.S.-designed GPS network.

Urlichich has been general director of the Russian Space Systems since 2001. In 2006 he was also appointed general director of Glonass but was relieved of his duties there on Nov. 11.

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