

Director of Glonass Contractor Resigns Due to 'Illness'

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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The chief of Russian Space Systems, the contractor in charge of the Glonass satellite navigation project from which billions of rubles were defrauded, has resigned, Federal Space Agency head Vladimir Popovkin said Friday.

Popovkin told reporters at the State Duma that Yury Urlichich had quit as Russian Space Systems general director because of poor health and that the resignation would be approved "this week, maybe on Saturday."

Ullich headed Russian Space Systems, the space agency contractor behind the ill-fated Glonass satellite navigation system.

He was fired as chief engineer of Glonass earlier this month after police said they had discovered a 6.5 billion ruble (\$208 million) fraud at the project.

Russian Space Systems deputy general director for economy Andrei Chimiris has been nominated to take over as acting executive director, RIA-Novosti reported.

Popovkin said Urlichich could continue working in the space industry if investigators cleared him of wrongdoing.

"It all depends on how involved he was. If it turns out he was not involved [in the fraud], then based on his experience he could be called on to continue his space-related work," Popovkin said.

On Nov. 9, police announced that managers at Russian Space Systems had used various schemes to embezzle money meant for maintaining and upgrading Glonass, Russia's GPS-like network.

The announcement came three days after President Vladimir Putin fired Anatoly Serdyukov from his post as defense minister amid a corruption scandal at a defense agency.

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