

Just Russia Deputy Faces Fraud Charges

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Oleg Mikheyev

Investigators have opened a criminal case against State Duma deputy Oleg Mikheyev on charges of attempted fraud and obstructing justice with the use of his official position, the Investigative Committee said in a statement on its official website Thursday.

The Just Russia deputy is accused of being part of a criminal scheme to seize 14 pieces of real estate belonging to the Volgograd Engine-Building Plant with a combined value of 500 million rubles (\$16.7 million), attempting a theft of over 2 billion rubles from Promsvyazbank and obstructing justice, the statement said.

The fraud charges carry a maximum punishment of 10 years in prison, and the obstructing justice charge up to four years in prison.

Mikheyev denies the accusations, citing "some 40 court rulings concerning the Volgograd Engine-Building Plant's [property] that prove the legality of those deals," Gazeta.ru reported.

He also denies any liability to the bank, claiming instead that the latter owes him 2 billion rubles, the report said.

Mikheyev said he is willing to provide any documents required to prove his innocence.

Mikheyev was stripped of his parliamentary immunity by the Duma late last year at the request of the Prosecutor General's office.

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