

Interior Ministry Pays \$16M for Counterfeit Protective Gear

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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The Interior Ministry has said it is terminating a procurement contract with its equipment supplier and demanding compensation after receiving low-quality equipment from China.

The Zashchita Corporation, with whom the ministry signed a contract in June 2012 for the purchase of helmets, body armor and defensive equipment worth over 500 million rubles (\$16 million), provided low-quality gear from China and forged documents, the ministry said in a statement late Tuesday.

The equipment, including safety helmets intended for use in the steel industry, had forged labels and documentation. Protective gear that included bulletproof vests was later found to be of subpar quality.

"During an equipment audit, it was established that the helmets and body armor did not provide the level of protection called for in the procurement contracts. The audit materials

will be sent to investigators for further action," the statement said.

In comments to RIA-Novosti, the Zashchita Corporation's general director denied that the products were of poor quality and said that the equipment hadn't even been supplied yet.

He said that the company "wasn't even able to submit the equipment yet, it's located in a warehouse."

According to him the corporation signed nine contracts last summer, but the products never left the warehouses because the ministry was taking too long to approve them.

The company filed a lawsuit with an arbitration court in response to the Interior Ministry's allegations, he said.

The Zashchita Corporation was founded in 1993 and is a top producer of specialized and armored vehicles in Russia, the company's website says. It also counts the Defense Ministry among its customers.

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