The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Opposition Mayor Arrested in Corruption Case

By The Moscow Times

July 07, 2013



A court in the city of Yaroslavl ruled early Friday to arrest an opposition politician who won a rare landslide victory against the ruling United Russia party in a mayoral election last year.

Yaroslavl Mayor Yevgeny Urlashov was charged along with four of his colleagues Thursday with extorting a 14 million ruble ($420,000) bribe, investigators said. The official, who was detained early Wednesday morning, denies the charges, describing them as "political games."

Speaking on Thursday at a court hearing to determine immediate legal measures against him, Urlashov maintained his innocence.

"The court decided to arrest Urlashov until September 2 as a measure of pretrial restraint," Judge Lyudmila Kolygina said.

The judge earlier ruled to arrest Deputy Mayor Dmitry Donskov, also charged with extorting

a large bribe, and local resident Andrei Zakharov, charged with attempting to act as a middleman for a corruption scheme.

The defense teams of Urlashov and Donskov said they would appeal the arrest.

Later on Friday, the court will decide on whether to arrest the head of municipal contracts, Maxim Poikalainen, and mayoral adviser Alexei Lopatin.

The five men are alleged to have attempted to force the director of a company to pay a series of kickbacks after his firm was hired by the city to provide cleaning services. Urlashov, Donskov, Lopatin and Poikalainen each face sentences of up to 15 years in prison.

Investigators, who said that in ongoing property searches they had confiscated 35 million rubles ($1 million) apparently belonging to Urlashov, also warned that more criminal charges were likely to emerge.

Original url:
https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2013/07/07/opposition-mayor-arrested-in-corruption-case-a25589