

Suspected Urlashov Accomplice Resigns in Yaroslavl

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A suspected accomplice of Yaroslavl Mayor Yevgeny Urlashov, who was arrested last Friday on charges of large-scale bribery, has resigned from the local government.

Maxim Poikalainen, who left his post as the head of the city's agency for municipal contracts, has admitted his guilt and is actively cooperating with investigators, his lawyer Alexander Tolyanin said, RIA Novosti reported Thursday.

Poikalainen saw and knew about the crime but did not take part in it, Tolyanin said.

Urlashov and his four alleged accomplices are suspected of extorting 14 million rubles (\$480,000) from an unidentified private firm. Urlashov's accomplices have confessed to colluding with the Yaroslavl mayor to commit the crime and have implicated him as the organizer.

Investigators also confiscated a total of 35 million rubles (\$1.1 million) in searches conducted as part of the inquiry. All the money allegedly belongs to Urlashov, investigators said.

Urlashov and his supporters say his case has been fabricated by his political enemies in an attempt to ruin his party's chances in regional legislative elections set for Sept. 8, when he was slated to head the electoral list of billionaire Mikhail Prokhorov's Civil Platform.

Urlashov became a nationally known figure after winning the Yaroslavl mayoral race last year against a member of United Russia, the party he quit in 2011 in a high-profile move.

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