

Investigators Won't Charge Serdyukov With Graft, Report Says

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Military investigators have decided not to open criminal a case that could have seen former Defense Minister Anatoly Serdyukov charged with abusing his position to misappropriate government funds, a news report said Monday

The allegations have only deepened the haze of suspicion surrounding Serdyukov, who was fired by President Vladimir Putin in November when evidence of fraudulent land sales by the Defense Ministry began to surface, but who not yet been prosecuted.

Military prosecutors started examining the case in April when equipment supply company Dikon reported irregularities in a furniture tender put out by the Defense Ministry for the Krasnodar Presidential Cadet School, Kommersant reported.

Prosecutors said that Yekaterina Priyezzheva, former director of the defense ministry's department of education, told her subordinates to adapt the tender so that it could only be

won by Isku furniture company, whose sales director was her acquaintance. As a result, no other companies were able to compete for the contract, even though Isku's offer was more than \$1.2 million higher than Dikon's.

In August, the Federal Anti-Monopoly Service declared the Defense Ministry and auction committee's conduct illegal and announced Dikon the winner of the contract. But in the end, no contract was ever signed by Dikon and the ministry.

Realizing that it was now impossible to sign a government contract with Isku, Priyezzheva allegedly asked then-Defense Minister Anatoly Serdyukov to pay for the furniture with funds from Help and Mercy, whose board of trustees he heads, claiming that it was necessary to prevent a disruption in students' education.

Prosecutors said that Priyezzheva didn't tell Serdyukov about Dikon's lower offer, but they nonetheless accused him of abusing his authority to contravene laws protecting competition on government tenders.

Prosecutors sent their case materials to the Main Military Investigative Department, but investigators disagreed with the findings of the examination and have opted against opening a criminal case, Kommersant reported.

Roman Fedosov, deputy general director of Dikon, thinks that there is no basis for the investigators' decision, saying that the case materials provided concrete evidence against those suspected of involvement. Fedosov has appealed to President Vladimir Putin, Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu, and Prosecutor General Yuri Chaika to look into the matter.

Both the Investigative Committee and the Serdyukov have declined to comment on the matter.

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