

3 Charged in Glonass Embezzlement

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Three senior managers were charged with embezzling \$3.2 million allocated for the Glonass satellite navigation program, a spokesman for the Russian Investigative Committee said, according to the legal website RAPSI.

Glonass, or Global Navigation Satellite System, which was officially launched in 1993, is Russia's answer to the U.S. Global Positioning System. It provides real-time positioning and speed data for surface, sea and airborne objects with an accuracy of one meter.

According to Vladimir Markin, the charges have been brought against George Kovkov, deputy general director of TsNIImash, the head research company of the Federal Space Agency; Alexander Chernov, chief of the company's Capital Projects Department; and Alexander Belov, general director of one of the Federal Special Construction Agency's departments.

Investigators claim that the total sum embezzled by the three suspects from the state budget totals 107 million ruble (\$3.2 million), and they face up to 10 years in prison if found guilty, Markin said.

The managers were involved in the construction of the Glonass satellite navigation system control and support center in Korolyov, a town outside Moscow. The construction began in June of 2010 on the site used by TsNIImash. The center was supposed to hold equipment for collecting and processing the data supplied by the Glonass global network.

The construction was financed by a federal program, with 1.05 billion rubles (\$31.6 million) allocated for the project.

Izvestia daily reported earlier it turned out that by the end of 2010 the estimates of the construction costs had been overstated. An expert appraisal also revealed that the contractor had rigged the costs. The government did not allocate any additional funds, and the construction was suspended in December 2011 when the Federal Glonass Program for 2002-11 ended. The construction of the building was never completed.

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