

Police Search Premises of 3 City Officials Suspected of Fraud

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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A SWAT team officer enters one of the residences being investigated in the operation.

Yekaterinburg police on Thursday scoured the residences of three high-level officials who are suspected of fraud and corruption.

The officials were implicated during the questioning of two men arrested earlier for participating in a criminal conspiracy. Investigators believe that the group defrauded businessmen by offering them city property which they fraudulently claimed had been privatized, Interfax reported.

Investigators from the Sverdlovsk regional police department have initiated criminal proceedings against the two men.

The court granted the police search warrants for the three officials' residences after hearing the defendants' testimonies and other incriminating evidence.

Officers from the organized crime unit began searching the three residences simultaneously on Thursday morning with the physical assistance of rapid response forces.

A police spokesman named two of the suspects as Vladimir Tungusov, deputy head of the Yekaterinburg administration, and Vadim Dudarenko, deputy head of the city administration and head of the municipal property management department.

The third suspect was not named.

Opposition politician Yevgeny Roizman became mayor of Yekaterinburg following Sunday's election, and the pro-Kremlin city administration has not ruled out the possibility that the searches are connected with the new appointment, Denis Sukhorukov, a spokesperson for City Hall told Itar-Tass Thursday.

Corruption is a persistent thorn in Russia's side, costing the country \$300 billion in 2012, according to Transparency International.

The international anti-corruption advocate placed Russia as 133rd out of 174 countries in its Corruption Perceptions Index, RIA Novosti reported.

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