

France Mulls Extradition of Embezzlement Suspect Kuznetsov

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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French authorities will begin reviewing Russia's request for the extradition of Alexei Kuznetsov, the Moscow region's former finance minister, on October 17.

French lawyers said Kuznetsov will still have the right to appeal if the court decides to extradite him, and estimated that the process will take "no less than half a year," Itar-Tass reported.

The former official is currently in pretrial detention in Aix-en-Provence.

In August he applied to be released for the duration of the court proceedings, but the motion was denied on the grounds that he could be a flight risk. The ex-politician spent more than seven months on Interpol's most wanted list before being arrested near Saint-Tropez on June 5.

Kuznetsov is accused of embezzling 3.5 billion rubles (\$110 million) from the Moscow regional budget before retiring from his post in 2008. He faces up to 10 years if convicted.

He insists that the accusations against him are part of a "political game" that made him evade law enforcement.

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