

Police Detain Con Men Attempting to Sell United Russia Council Seat

By [The Moscow Times](#)

January 23, 2014

The  Moscow Times

Police have detained two suspected con artists who had tried to sell appointments to the top leadership of the pro-Kremlin United Russia party for 60 million rubles (\$1.8 million) a pop, the Interior Ministry said.

The suspects — identified as Moscow residents, one of whom had a prior criminal record for fraud — posed as confidential aides to high-ranking United Russia officials when they met with their prospective victim and offered him to buy an appointment to the party's Supreme Council, "bypassing the established procedure," the Interior Ministry said in a statement on its website Wednesday.

The intended victim reported the incident to the police, who staged an "investigative experiment" and detained the two supposed con men after they received an initial installment of 5 million rubles, the statement said.

During a search at one of the suspect's home and office, investigators found about three dozen fake IDs of various law enforcement and security agencies.

Top Russian officials and senior lawmakers have expressed concerns in recent years that corrupt bureaucrats routinely sell appointments to government positions to their cronies.

Last spring, a Moscow city court sentenced a con man to three years in prison for supposedly colluding with several State Duma lawmakers in an attempt to sell a seat in the legislature for several million euros, news reports said.

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