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Charges Dropped Against Officers Suspected of Covering Up Gambling Ring

By The Moscow Times

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The Investigative Committee has dropped all charges against two former police officers who spent more than a year in pre-trial detention on suspicion of covering up an illegal gambling ring, a news report said.

Former Interior Ministry officials Farit Temirgaliyev and Mikhail Kulikov will seek reinstatement to their jobs and compensation for 18 months' worth of lost wages as soon as they receive the official paperwork showing that the case against them has been closed, Kulikov's lawyer Yelena Vasilyeva said, Kommersant reported on Thursday.

The two men were arrested in June 2011 on suspicion of taking more than $225,000 in bribes from illegal casinos in the Moscow region in exchange for warning them about upcoming police raids.

The Supreme Court ruled last year that the arrests were unlawful in a case that is widely seen

as a key battleground in the turf war between the Investigative Committee and the Prosecutor General's Office, which began in 2010, after then-President Dmitry Medvedev split the two agencies into independent bodies.

Ivan Nazarov, the supposed owner of an illegal casino chain who paid bribes for police protection, had pleaded guilty to qualify for the amnesty that President Vladimir Putin signed in December, Kommersant reported.

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