

Former Russian Land Forces Chief Commander Convicted for Accepting Bribe

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The Moscow Garrison Military Court sentenced former Chief Commander of the Russian Ground Forces Vladimir Chirkin to five years in a maximum security penal colony for accepting a bribe, TASS news agency reported on Friday.

Chirkin was charged with accepting a \$20,000 bribe for promising his former underling that he could expedite the process of acquiring an apartment he was entitled to, the report said.

He was also stripped of his colonel-general rank and all his state awards, TASS reported.

The court determined that Chirkin, upon receiving the money, gave former officer Vladimir Lopanov an apartment already occupied by the family of another officer.

Consequently, Lopanov filed a complaint with the Chief Military Prosecutor's Office. Chirkin was suspended from his post as a result, and Lopanov was given the apartment.

Chirkin has denied the charges and said he would appeal. "I've been everywhere already, but

not in prison," he was cited by TASS as saying Friday.

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