

Bribery Scandal May Force Moscow Prosecutor to Resign

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Moscow Prosecutor Sergei Kudeneyev

Moscow Prosecutor Sergei Kudeneyev may resign upon his return from vacation on Sept. 7 because of a bribery scandal in which he is allegedly involved, the Kommersant newspaper reported Tuesday, citing unidentified sources familiar with the situation.

Kudeneyev took a vacation unexpectedly at the end of August, the report said, and a presidential decree confirming his voluntary termination is expected to follow. He decided to resign after his informal dealings with Alexei Volkov, a former official arrested for fraud, became public knowledge.

Volkov was allegedly due to present a 500,000 euro (\$560,000) bribe to Kudeneyev in exchange for the prosecutor lightening the three-year prison sentence of a banker convicted of embezzlement. Volkov was arrested in July in possession of the money and charged with large-scale fraud.

According to the police investigation cited by Kommersant, Volkov and Kudeneyev had

reached an agreement earlier this summer. The prosecutor delegated the banker's case to an employee at the prosecutor's office in the central administrative district of Moscow.

In early July during the hearing into the banker's appeal, his lawyers requested that prison time be replaced with a suspended sentence. The prosecution, though not siding fully with the defense, also requested a lighter sentence, but the judge confirmed the initial conviction — at which point allies of the convicted banker apparently complained to the Federal Security Service (FSB) about Volkov, the report said.

Although Kudeneyev's involvement in the bribery attempt has not been proved, and he did not intercede on the banker's behalf, his dealings with Volkov violated prosecutorial ethical code — hence Kudeneyev's anticipated resignation, Kommersant reported.

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