

Court Returns 36 Paintings to Former Defense Official Vasilyeva

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Yevgenia Vasilyeva

A Moscow court ruled on Tuesday to return 36 paintings to former Defense Ministry official Yevgenia Vasilyeva, who was sentenced to five years in a penal colony for mass embezzlement and released on parole last month, the TASS news agency reported.

However, the Presnensky District Court still has possession of her six properties in Moscow and St. Petersburg, a bank account containing 25 million rubles (\$379,000), several bank accounts for the companies she controls containing 300 million rubles, and 1,200 pieces of jewelry worth 119 million rubles, the report said.

Former Defense Ministry property manager Vasilyeva, 36, was charged in May with fraud, embezzlement and exceeding her authority. The prosecution claimed she was responsible for, among other things, selling real estate belonging to the Defense Ministry and taking 5 percent off each deal.

She captured the public's attention after being placed under house arrest in her luxurious

apartment in the center of Moscow with permission to leave the house for several hours each day.

In August she was released on parole after spending a month in the penal colony, eliciting public outrage.

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