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Russian Governor Held On Corruption Charges Refused Bail

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A Moscow court has refused to bail Kirov region governor Nikita Belykh, who was arrested last month on corruption charges, the TASS news agency reported Wednesday.

Belykh's lawyers had appealed to the court for the politician to be placed under house arrest or released on bail of 28 million rubles ($430,000), TASS reported.

"The investigation has no grounds for keeping him under arrest but the court took no notice," said Vadim Prokhorov, Belykh's lawyer. Prokhorov said that his client's health was deteriorating in prison and maintained that Belykh was "not a bribe-taker." He also told journalists that Belykh was prepared to go to the European Court of Human Rights to appeal his detention and to clear his name, TASS reported.

Belykh has been held in pretrial detention since he was arrested in a Moscow restaurant last month and charged with receiving bribes worth 400 thousand euros ($442 thousand). The money was allegedly meant to ensure the governor "promoted the interests" of two

companies in the Kirov region.

Belykh, a former opposition party leader, has publicly said that the case against him was “not politically motivated.” He maintains his innocence, claiming that he received the money legally to spend on services for the Kirov region.

A host of liberal political figures have come out in support of Belykh since his arrest, including the leader of the Yabloko party, Grigory Yavlinsky, the chief editor of radio station Ekho Moskvy and the Duma member Dmitry Gudkov.

Belykh is the third governor of a Russian region to be arrested on corruption charges in the last two years.

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