

Russian Investigator Nikandrov Claims Arrest Result of FSB Row

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The deputy head of Moscow's Investigative Committee has claimed that corruption charges have only been brought against him due to an ongoing conflict with Russia's Federal Security Service (FSB), the RIA Novosti news agency reported Tuesday.

Denis Nikandrov, who is suspected of receiving a bribe worth up to \$1 million, is demanding the court recognize that the case was opened illegally, the RBC news website reported Tuesday.

Nikandrov, who rose rapidly through the ranks of the Investigative Committee after a number of high-profile cases, was [arrested on July 19](#) together with two other senior colleagues: the head of the Committee's Internal Security Department, Mikhail Maksimenko, and his deputy, Alexander Lamonov.

All three are suspected of taking money from notorious Russian mob boss Shakro Molodoi. It is believed that Molodoi made the payments in an attempt to secure the release of accomplice Andrei Kochuikov, nicknamed "The Italian."

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said that the arrests were part of an ongoing “cleansing of the ranks,” as the Russian authorities battle corruption.

Nikandrov claims that the criminal case against him was triggered by a conflict between the Investigative Committee department headed by Maksimenko and the representatives of FSB's M counter-intelligence department .x

Writing in a letter former to Investigative Committee chief Alexander Bastrykin, Nikandrov said he believed that the FSB had been angered by Maksimenko's refusal to listen to security service recommendations when hiring staff, RIA Novosti reported, citing an unnamed source in the law enforcement agencies.

Nikandrov also claims that documents initiating criminal proceedings against Maksimenko and Lamonov were not signed by Bastrykin, RBC reported. Russian criminal law states that all cases against members of the Investigative Committee's central apparatus should be signed by the head of the Committee personally.

The court will consider Nikandrov's complaint on Wednesday.

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