

Russian Arms Trafficker Offered Deal to Testify Against Rosneft Chief

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The  **Moscow Times**

U.S. officials allegedly offered convicted Russian arms trafficker Viktor Bout a reduced sentence in return for testimony against Igor Sechin, the head of state-owned oil company Rosneft, the RIA Novosti news agency reported Tuesday.

Bout's wife Alla said that her husband rejected the deal, claiming that he had never known Sechin. **xxx** "Victor was asked to give evidence against Sechin, who the Americans claimed was his boss. Victor answered honestly that he didn't work for Sechin and did not know him personally. He refused the offer and received 25 years in prison," she told RIA Novosti. **xxx**

Thai police told her that accepting the offer would lead to "a couple of years" jail time before a "very comfortable life in the United States," she claimed.

"They [the United States] made it clear that we could stay in America before and during Viktor's trial 'under certain conditions,'" said Mrs. Bout. "They said that we would have a good life, promised Lisa great things for the future," she told the news agency.

Viktor Bout was arrested in 2008 in Bangkok and then extradited to the US. He was accused of selling of arms to terrorist organizations was sentenced to 25 years in prison in 2012. The case fueled tensions between the White House and the Kremlin, with Moscow claiming that the arrest was politically driven. Bout maintains his innocence.✘

Foreign media earlier suggested that Bout and Sechin had known each other while working in Mozambique in the 1980s, a claim Bout also denies.

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