

Updates: Russian Economy Minister Ulyukayev Appears in Court on Corruption Charge

The longstanding minister has been formally charged on corruption allegations.

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Russian Economic Development Minister Alexei Ulyukayev. **Associated Press**

Russian Economic Development Minister Alexei Ulyukayev has appeared in Moscow's Baumansky court to face corruption allegations.

Ulyukayev was charged with accepting a \$2-million bribe on Tuesday, having been arrested by agents from Russia's Federal Security Service (FSB) late on Monday night.

The minister did not personally receive the money, which was left in a safety deposit box and withdrawn by someone else, the Novaya Gazeta newspaper reported.

Russia's politicians and analysts react to the arrest of Alexei Ulyukaev: ["What the hell is going on?"](#)

Ulyukayev's arrest may be connected to the "opaque scheme" through which the Bashneft oil company was privatized, according to Anton Pominov, director of anti-corruption NGO Transparency International's Russian branch.

"Not long ago, Vladimir Putin stated that he was surprised by the government's position on privatizing Bashneft. And perhaps the security services understood his surprise as a signal for action," he [told](#) The Insider news site.

There was a legitimate reason for surprise, Pominov said: Bashneft's privatization was far from transparent. Rather than putting the company's shares up for auction, Bashneft was privatized through a "confusing system" involving the VTB Capital investment company.

"What's more, only Rosneft received a proposal [to take part in the privatization] from VTB Capital, even though, from the very beginning, there were many interested companies," he said.

Pominov suggested that the arrest could not have taken place without Putin's support. He also noted that the Panama Papers, published earlier this year, listed Ulyukayev's 21-year-old son as the owner of an offshore entity in the British Virgin Islands.

"Coincidence? It can't be," said Pominov. "But the Bashneft story is still more important."

See more on the privatization of Bashneft here: [A Very Public Privatization](#)

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