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Russian Governor Arrested in Kremlin's Latest Anti-Corruption Crackdown

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Alexander Soloviev **Stanislav Krasilnikov / TASS**

A Russian governor has been arrested on suspicion of taking a 140 million ruble ($2.5 million) bribe in the Kremlin's latest high-profile anti-corruption sting operation.

Alexander Soloviev, the head of Russia's central Udmurtia region, faces 15 years in prison if found guilty of large-scale corruption.

Police accuse the governor of taking bribes from local construction firms between 2014 and 2016. In return, Soloviev diverted public money to help the companies build a bridge close to the town of Kambarka, and granted a number of licenses to help them mine the area, Russia's Federal Investigative Committee reported Tuesday.

"Alexander Soloviev has been brought to Moscow for questioning," Committee Spokesperson Svetlana Petrenko said in a statement. "He is expected to be charged shortly."

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Soloviev's case is the latest in a string of high-profile arrests linked to corruption over the past year. The former governor of Russia's Kirov region, Nikita Belykh was arrested in June last year on charges of receiving a 400,000 euro ($426,000) bribe. Former Economic Development Minister Alexei Ulyukayev was also arrested in November 2016 on suspicion of extorting a bribe from Russian oil firm Rosneft.

Anti-corruption rallies rocked Russia last month, with tens of thousands of Russians taking to the streets to demand an investigation into allegations made against Russian Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev. The Kremlin has not formally responded to the claims, but condemned the protests as "illegal."

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