The Moscow Times
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INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Rosneft's Sechin to Appear as Witness in Trial of Ex-Minister Ulyukayev

August 08, 2017



Former Russian Economic Development Minister Alexei Ulyukayev **Lubimov Andrei / Moskva News Agency**

The head of Russian state oil company Rosneft, Igor Sechin, will appear as a witness in the trial of former Economic Development Minister Alexei Ulyukayev, a court official told the state-run TASS news agency on Tuesday.

Ulyukayev is accused of soliciting a $2-million bribe from Rosneft to support its purchase of another oil firm, Bashneft. He denies the charges.

The first serving Russian minister to be arrested since the fall of the Soviet Union, Ulyukayev was sacked and placed under house arrest in November and faces up to 15 years in prison.

On the first day of his trial, Moscow's Zamoskvoretsky Court rejected a request by Ulyukayev's defense to throw out the case for lack of evidence. The court extended his house arrest until January next year, the Interfax news agency reported.

The next hearing will be held on Aug. 16, Interfax said.

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