

Rosneft CEO Sechin to Appear as Witness in Ulyukayev Embezzlement Trial

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Alexei Ulyukayev (Zykov Kirill / Moskva News Agency)

The head of Russian state oil giant Rosneft will appear as a witness in the high-profile embezzlement trial of former Economic Development Minister Alexei Ulyukayev after all.

Ulyukayev faces up to 15 years in prison for allegedly soliciting a \$2-million bribe from Rosneft's CEO Igor Sechin. Prosecutors say Ulyukayev asked for the sum to sign off on Rosneft's acquisition of another oil firm last year.

Sechin was [added](#) to the case's witness list as of day one of the high-profile trial but has failed to appear in court.

During hearings on Wednesday, the judge [upheld](#) the state prosecution's request to summon Sechin as a witness, according to the news website Mediazona.

The prosecution said it would make sure that the Rosneft CEO, President Vladimir Putin's friend who has been [dubbed](#) "Russia's second most powerful man," will take the stand as a witness.

Rosneft's spokesman Mikhail Leontiev was later [cited](#) by the RBC business portal as saying: "We'll talk after we receive a summons."

Sechin and the state prosecution allege that former minister Ulyukayev signaled the \$2 million bribe amount with a two-finger gesture during a game of pool last year.

The first serving Russian cabinet member to be arrested since the fall of the Soviet Union, Ulyukayev denies the charges against him. He accuses Sechin of conspiring with a retired senior FSB official and then-head of security at Rosneft to frame him.

Sechin collaborated with the security service FSB in a sting operation to nab Ulyukayev at Rosneft's office with a bag full of marked bills on Nov. 14.

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