

# Russia's Ministers Wary of New Year's Gifts After Ulyukayev Trial

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**Kirill Zykov / Moskva News Agency**

Russian government officials and state company executives are reportedly refusing New Year's gifts this holiday season after a former government minister was convicted for bribery last week.

Former Economic Development Minister Alexei Ulyukayev was sentenced to 8 years in a high-security prison for accepting a \$2-million bribe in November last year from Igor Sechin, the CEO of state oil company Rosneft.

Ulyukayev, the first serving minister to be arrested since the fall of the Soviet Union, claimed throughout the trial he had thought Sechin's gift consisted of sausages and wine. He later warned fellow civil servants that anyone was "three clicks" away from being charged with corruption.

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“No baskets are [accepted] in any form, not with food, not with wine, not even with flowers,” a ministerial aide was cited as saying by The Bell outlet.

“[Officials] recoil from the sight of them.”

The Bell cited five ministry and state corporation officials as saying that the corruption case had a direct effect on gift-giving among officials.

“Last year we could give books and calendars as gifts, this year, after the arrest of Ulyukayev, we can't give anything,” a corporate official told the news website.

Russian law [bans](#) civil servants from accepting gifts worth more than 3,000 rubles (\$51).

A Rosneft spokesman told The Bell that the oil firm's long-standing tradition was to give postcards.

“Our gifts clearly conform with company and local regulations, we do not let anyone down,” he said.

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