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Russia's Vostochny Cosmodrome Bosses Jailed for Mass Corruption

February 26, 2018



Kremlin Press Service

The former head of a major state contractor tasked with building a new spaceport in Russia's Far East has been sentenced, along with his colleagues, to prison terms of up to 12 years for mass fraud.

Russia's Prosecutor General determined three years ago that 7.5 billion rubles ($126 million) had been embezzled during the construction of the Vostochny Cosmodrome. Russian investigators brought fraud charges against several ex-employees of Dalspetsstroi, a construction firm working at Vostochny: Vladimir Ashikhmin, Yuri Khrizman, his son Mikhail Khrizman and local deputy Viktor Chudov.

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A court has sentenced Khrizman to 12 years behind bars and Ahikhmin to seven years, the

Investigative Committee announced Monday. They were ordered to compensate the Roscosmos Federal Space Agency 5 billion rubles in damages for misappropriating funds in 2007 and 2008.

Khirzman's son Mikhail Khrizman and Khabarovsk regional deputy Viktor Chudov were sentenced to 5.5 and six years each.

Investigators said they would continue to look into other instances of misappropriation by the Dalspetsstroi contractor.

Moscow sees the $5 billion Vostochny Cosmodrome as vital to secure Russia's independent access to space. Eleven Russian and foreign satellites were launched from the site earlier this month.

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