

Former Kremlin Official Charged With Luxury Watches Fraud, Media Reports

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An active Russian security official and former Kremlin staffer has been reportedly charged with embezzling more than 20 million rubles (\$300,000) from a luxury watch pawnbroker.

Mikhail Gorbатов, a Federal Security Service (FSB) colonel and the presidential administration's former chief of monitoring and inspection, faces up to two years in prison, the Kommersant business daily [reported](#).

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Gorbатов and two accomplices are suspected of extorting \$300,000 from a high-end watch pawnshop owner, the report said Monday, citing case materials.

The unnamed victim reportedly [pressed](#) charges after being blackmailed into giving the

suspects four luxury watches — including two Harry Winston and one De Witt and Bovet watches — as collateral.

Unlike accomplices Arno Khodzhoyan and Vladimir Korobkov, Gorbatov did not appeal the charges against him.

Kommersant said Gorbatov was fired from the presidential administration's monitoring and inspection department – where he oversaw the implementation of presidential pardons and political asylum cases – after his arrest. FSB still lists him as an active colonel, the publication reported.

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