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Russian Prosecutors Seek 19.5-Year Prison Sentence for Disgraced Ex-Minister

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Mikhail Abyzov in a court hearing in 2022. **Stanislav Krasilnikov / TASS**

Russian prosecutors have requested a 19.5-year prison sentence for former minister Mikhail Abyzov nearly five years after his arrest in a $62 million fraud case, Interfax reported Monday.

Abyzov, 51, had been a close ally of former President Dmitry Medvedev, serving as his minister of open government affairs from 2012-2018. He was arrested in March 2019 on charges of large-scale fraud and creating a criminal group while serving as an official.

Related article: Ex-Minister Mikhail Abyzov's Shock $62M Fraud Detention, Explained

"The prosecutor asked to find Abyzov guilty of committing the crimes accused of him and to impose a sentence of 19 years and six months in a maximum-security colony, with a ban on

holding public office for five years," Interfax cited Moscow's Preobrazhensky District Court as saying.

Prosecutors also requested a fine of 470 million rubles ($5.14 million) in addition to the prison term and ban on holding public office.

Abyzov had faced a maximum sentence of 20 years behind bars. The ex-minister has denied the charges against him.

Also on Monday, prosecutors requested prison terms ranging from seven to 18.5 years for Abyzov's accomplices.

Abyzov was suspected of founding and running a criminal organization between April 2011 and November 2014 and embezzling money from the Novosibirsk-based Siberian Energy Company and Regional Electric Grid.

By the time he left office in 2018, Abyzov was named the richest member of the 2012-2018 cabinet with a net worth that had grown to $600 million.

He split his time between Italy and the United States after leaving office and was reportedly lured back to Russia for a former colleague's birthday party.

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