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Vologda Region Officials Arrested on Bribery Charges Amid Growing Pressure on Governor

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Deputy Vologda region Governor Denis Alexeyev. **mos.ru**

Russian law enforcement authorities arrested two senior officials from the northwestern Vologda region on bribery charges, the Kommersant business newspaper reported Wednesday, citing anonymous police sources.

Federal Security Service (FSB) agents and Investigative Committee operatives reportedly caught Deputy Governor Denis Alexeyev and Kirill Bocharov, head of Vologda's representative office in Moscow, in the act of receiving part of a 100 million ruble ($1.1 million) bribe.

According to Kommersant, the officials sought the money in exchange for extending a land lease contract and providing "general patronage" to a local timber company. Both Alexeyev and Bocharov denied the charges, the newspaper added.

The arrests add to a growing political storm surrounding Vologda region Governor Georgy

Filimonov, who has been embroiled in a series of controversies in recent weeks. Political analysts and anonymously run Telegram channels say the controversies are connected to an alleged conflict between Filimonov and the industrial giant Severstal.

Related article: Putin Receives Mass Complaint Over 'Bewildering' Vologda Region Governor – Vedomosti

Earlier this month, 120 regional members of the ruling United Russia party submitted a formal complaint to President Vladimir Putin, criticizing Filimonov's leadership. Their grievances included his government reshuffles in the city of Cherepovets and his opposition to the "mass influx" of migrant workers at the Cherepovets Steel Mill, a key Severstal asset.

Filimonov has openly criticized Severstal chairman Alexei Mordashov for what he described as insufficient investment in the region and environmental neglect in Cherepovets, the business newspaper Vedomosti reported last week. Severstal has denied the accusations.

As of Wednesday, more than 20,000 people had signed a Change.org petition urging Putin to dismiss Filimonov over what they called his "ineffective management, injustice and tyranny."

Putin appointed Filimonov as Vologda's governor in 2023, and he was formally elected to a five-year term in September.

Political analyst Dmitry Fetisov said he expects Alexeyev and Bocharov to testify against Filimonov.

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