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Military Court Jails Ex-General Ivan Popov 5 Years Over Fraud Allegations

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Ivan Popov. **Alexei Potitsky / TASS**

A Russian military court on Thursday sentenced former Major General Ivan Popov to five years in prison on fraud charges and rejected his request to return to the front lines in Ukraine.

Popov, who commanded Russia's 58th Combined Arms Army, was arrested in May 2024 for allegedly misappropriating $1.5 million worth of metal intended to reinforce defense structures in Russian-occupied Ukraine.

His arrest had sparked criticism from pro-war bloggers, who accused Russia's top brass of sidelining a respected field commander.

The Tambov Garrison Military Court found Popov guilty of large-scale organized fraud and forgery. In addition to his prison sentence, Popov was stripped of his military rank and fined 800,000 rubles ($9,600).

Popov had denied the charges. Last month, the former general appealed directly to President Vladimir Putin, asking to allow him to return to his post in Ukraine.

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His co-defendant, businessman Sergei Moiseyev, was sentenced to four years in prison and fined 400,000 rubles ($4,800). Proceedings against a third defendant, former Deputy Commander of the Southern Military District, Oleg Tsokov, were suspended due to his death.

Prosecutors had sought a six-year sentence for Popov.

His lawyer, Sergei Buinovsky, told Interfax that the Tambov Garrison Military Court on Thursday denied the general's request to be sent back to combat duty. Under laws passed since Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, Popov could have avoided criminal prosecution by signing a military contract.

Popov first made headlines in 2023 when he accused then-Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu of firing him from his command post after raising concerns about military leadership and battlefield mismanagement. Shoigu was replaced following Putin's re-election last year.

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