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Kursk Deputy Governor Placed in Pre-Trial Detention Over Alleged Border Defense Fraud

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Vladimir Bazarov. **Government of Kursk Region / kursk.ru**

A Moscow court has placed the acting deputy governor of the southwestern Kursk region in pre-trial detention over alleged fraud tied to border fortifications in the neighboring Belgorod region, state media reported on Wednesday.

Acting Kursk Governor Alexander Khinshtein confirmed earlier this week that his deputy, Vladimir Bazarov, had been arrested, saying the case stemmed from Bazarov's earlier tenure as Belgorod's deputy governor for construction.

Police investigators accuse Bazarov of overseeing the embezzlement of around 251 million rubles ($3.1 million) in public funds by lowering technical specifications and inflating costs for anti-tank defense structures along the border with Ukraine.

At least four Belgorod region officials are currently being held in custody as part of an ongoing

investigation. Bazarov and his alleged accomplices face four criminal charges, including bribery, according to the Interior Ministry.

The Meshchansky District Court on Wednesday ordered Bazarov to be placed in pre-trial detention until Oct. 25, according to the TASS news agency. The hearing was held behind closed doors.

It was not immediately clear whether Khinshtein had dismissed Bazarov from his post following the arrest.

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Moscow allocated billions of rubles for fortifications in the Belgorod and Kursk regions amid concerns that Ukrainian forces could launch an attack into Russian territory. Those fears materialized in August 2024, when Ukraine launched a surprise offensive into Kursk, capturing large swaths of territory.

Ukrainian forces did not mount a similar push into Belgorod, but they have carried out frequent small-scale raids there, raising doubts over the effectiveness of the costly defenses.

The Kursk region has also been drawn into border defense investigations. Former Governor Alexei Smirnov and his first deputy, Alexei Dedov, were arrested earlier this year on large-scale fraud charges.

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