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Former Kursk Lawmaker Admits to Paying Bribe in Border Defense Corruption Case

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Maxim Vasiliev. **@moscowcourts**

Former Kursk region lawmaker Maxim Vasilyev has admitted to bribing the jailed ex-deputy governor in a widening corruption scandal over border defense construction, state media reported on Sunday.

Vasilyev allegedly paid 8 million rubles ($95,500) to the Kursk region's former deputy governor Alexei Dedov and embezzled another 5 million rubles earmarked for defense projects, according to law enforcement sources cited by the TASS news agency.

Prosecutors accuse Dedov and former Kursk region Governor Alexei Smirnov of running an "organized group" that embezzled 1 billion rubles ($11.7 million) in public funds and took some 30 million rubles in kickbacks from construction contractors.

At least 11 officials and business executives have been implicated in related cases after

Ukrainian forces launched a surprise offensive into the Kursk region in August 2024. While Moscow had poured billions of rubles into building up defenses along the border, Ukraine still managed to occupy large swaths of territory before Russian troops supported by North Korean forces drove them out earlier this year.

TASS reported that Dedov demanded a 10% kickback from Vasilyev on border contracts in early 2023. Last week, Vasilyev told the agency he had admitted to embezzling 86 million rubles ($1 million) as part of what he described as a plea bargain in a related case.

Vasilyev, who resigned in 2023 after public criticism for taking vacations abroad during the war, has repeatedly asked to be sent to Ukraine as a volunteer fighter.

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