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Urals Businessman Arrested as Prosecutors Move to Seize Utility Companies

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Alexei Bobrov. **Razmik Zakaryan / URA.RU / TASS**

Russian police arrested Urals businessman Alexei Bobrov in Moscow and transferred him to the city of Yekaterinburg for questioning, Russian media reported Tuesday, citing law enforcement sources.

The Prosecutor General's Office earlier this month filed a lawsuit seeking to seize companies tied to Bobrov and his longtime partner Artyom Bikov. Prosecutors accused their holding, Corporation STS, of monopolizing electricity generation and supply, as well as household waste processing across the Urals, according to media reports.

The lawsuit reportedly names around 80 companies and 14 individuals, including current and former regional officials. Bobrov and Bikov, both of whom are said to hold Austrian citizenship, were accused of moving at least 12 billion rubles ($143.5 million) abroad through affiliated firms.

The two businessmen deny wrongdoing. Corporation STS has called the accusations unfounded.

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The Leninsky District Court in Yekaterinburg is scheduled to hear the case next Monday, Interfax reported. Authorities have not publicly confirmed the lawsuit or the arrests.

Separately, the RBC news outlet reported that police searched the Moscow offices of STS subsidiaries, including Oblkommunenergo, one of the largest utility companies in the Sverdlovsk region, and heat and water services provider OTSK.

Corporation STS board chair Tatiana Chernykh was detained in Yekaterinburg, local media reported. She and Bobrov were allegedly held for 48 hours for questioning.

OTSK's current CEO Artyom Noskov and former CEO Anton Bolikov were also reportedly detained.

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