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Kursk Construction Boss Jailed 9 Years in Border Defense Embezzlement Case

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Vladimir Lukin. **Egor Gorozhankin / TASS**

A court in the southwestern Kursk region on Friday sentenced the former chief executive of a local construction company to nine years in prison after he was found guilty of defrauding the government through contracts to build defense fortifications near the border with Ukraine.

Vladimir Lukin had served as CEO of the Kursk Region Development Corporation before his arrest in December 2024, just months after Ukraine launched an offensive into the Kursk region. During the attack, Ukrainian forces breached two defensive lines that reportedly cost 15 billion rubles ($195 million) and took nearly three years to construct.

Prosecutors had accused Lukin of siphoning off 152.8 million rubles ($2 million) intended for the construction of those fortifications.

The Leninsky District Court on Friday found him guilty of large-scale fraud committed by an organized group, according to a statement from the regional court's press service. He was also stripped of his state award, the Order "For Merit to the Fatherland."

Three other defendants were convicted in the same case: Lukin's former deputies, Igor Grabin and Dmitry Spiridonov, as well as Andrey Volovikov, a former top manager at a contracting firm accused of supplying substandard or non-existent building materials.

Volovikov was sentenced to 8.5 years in prison, Grabin to eight years and Spiridonov to seven.

All four men were also fined and said they would appeal.

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The case is part of a broader investigation launched after Ukrainian forces seized large areas of territory in the Kursk region in late 2024.

In December, the Leninsky court sentenced former regional lawmaker Maxim Vasilyev to 5.5 years in prison for embezzling funds earmarked for defense projects.

Former Kursk region Governor Alexei Smirnov and his first deputy Alexei Dedov were arrested last year on fraud charges.

Smirnov's predecessor, Roman Starovoit, who became Russia's transportation minister in May 2024, shot himself last July outside Moscow amid reports that he was also under investigation in the same case

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