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Ex-Deputy Defense Minister Ruslan Tsalikov Arrested on Corruption Charges

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Ruslan Tsalikov. **Russian Defense Ministry**

Former Deputy Defense Minister Ruslan Tsalikov, a close associate of Russian Security Council Secretary Sergei Shoigu, was arrested on several corruption-related charges, investigators said Thursday.

Tsaliko served as first deputy defense minister from 2015 until 2024. He is the fourth former deputy defense minister to face criminal prosecution since Shoigu was ousted as defense minister in May 2024 and replaced with Kremlin economist Andrei Belousov.

The Investigative Committee, Russia's top investigative body, accused Tsalikov of "forming a criminal organization whose members embezzled state funds between 2017 and 2024." It said Tsalikov faces 12 counts of embezzlement.

The 69-year-old was also charged with money laundering and bribery, Investigative Committee spokeswoman Svetlana Petrenko said in a statement. She did not provide further details.

Moscow's Basmanny District Court is reportedly scheduled to hold a hearing on Thursday to decide whether to place Tsalikov in pre-trial detention.

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After Shoigu's dismissal, Tsalikov left the Defense Ministry and went into politics. He was elected to serve in the republic of Tyva's regional assembly as a member from the ruling United Russia party.

Sources previously told The Moscow Times that Shoigu had tried but failed to push the regional assembly to nominate Tsalikov as senator of Russia's upper-house Federation Council.

Several dozen Defense Ministry officials have been arrested since 2024 in what some observers have described as a purge of the military. Among those targeted are Shoigu's former deputies Timur Ivanov, Pavel Popov and Dmitry Bulgakov.

Ivanov was sentenced to 13 years in prison on embezzlement charges last summer. Popov's sentence is expected to be announced this month, while Dmitry Bulgakov remains in pre-trial detention.

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