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# Ex-Deputy Defense Minister Pavel Popov Jailed 19 Years on Corruption Charges

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Pavel Popov. **Sergei Bulkin / TASS**

A Moscow military court on Friday sentenced former Deputy Defense Minister Pavel Popov to 19 years in a maximum-security prison after he was found guilty of a litany of corruption charges, making him the latest former defense official to be sent behind bars following a Kremlin purge of the military.

Popov, 69, served as deputy defense minister from November 2013 to June 2024. His arrest in August 2024 came amid a wider shake-up in the military that saw the dismissal of Sergei Shoigu as Defense Minister and criminal investigations against top brass.

Moscow's 235th Garrison Military Court found Popov guilty of fraud, bribery, abuse of power, forgery and illegal arms possession, according to a statement released by the Investigative Committee, Russia's top investigative body.

Popov reportedly pleaded not guilty to all the charges.

According to investigators, the former deputy minister orchestrated a scheme to use state resources intended for Patriot Park — a sprawling, military-themed park outside Moscow — to develop his own private estate.

Prosecutors said he diverted materials and labor to construct a luxury compound, including a two-story residence and a bathhouse, that mirrored the facilities at Patriot Park.

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The court fined Popov 85 million rubles ($1.1 million), confiscated 45.6 million rubles ($591,300) from his bank accounts and stripped him of state awards and his rank as retired army general.

Popov attended the sentencing hearing remotely via video link due to his poor health. He reportedly suffers from high blood pressure, heart issues and elevated blood sugar.

The court also ordered an additional 32.9 million rubles in civil damages to be paid to the Defense Ministry and Patriot Park.

Popov's lawyer slammed the sentence as "backward" and vowed to appeal it. Prosecutors had requested a 22-year prison sentence and a fine of 130 million rubles ($1.6 million) for Popov.

The former defense official's accomplices in the embezzlement scheme were sentenced to prison last year after pleading guilty and testifying against him.

Since Shoigu's ouster in May 2024, several dozen Defense Ministry officials have been arrested and put on trial for alleged corruption, including his former deputies Timur Ivanov and Dmitry Bulgakov.

Ivanov was sentenced to 13 years in prison last summer on embezzlement charges, while Bulgakov remains in pre-trial detention.

Shoigu, a Putin loyalist who has managed to evade criminal prosecution amid the purge, now serves as secretary of Russia's Security Council.

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