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Russian Police Issue Arrest Warrant for Ex-Deputy Minister Who Reportedly Fled Country

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Denis Butsayev. **Sergei Vedyashkin / Moskva News Agency**

Russian police have issued an arrest warrant for a former high-ranking official at the Natural Resources and Environment Ministry who reportedly fled the country last month, Russian news agencies reported on Wednesday.

Denis Butsayev stepped down as deputy minister on April 22, government documents show, with some reports suggesting that he may have fled to the United States amid a fraud investigation of people close to him.

The exiled news outlet Mediazona first reported on Tuesday evening that Butsayev's name appeared in the Russian Interior Ministry's database for wanted persons, though no charges or accusations against him were mentioned in the listing.

Law enforcement sources told the state-run TASS news agency on Wednesday that Butsayev

is a suspect in a criminal investigation into large-scale fraud.

The case is said to involve the alleged embezzlement of public funds at the Russian Environmental Operator, a government-sponsored enterprise created in 2019 to manage the Kremlin's national waste management reforms.

Butsayev had served as CEO of the Russian Environmental Operator before joining the Natural Resources and Environment Ministry in 2025.

Russian news outlets reported earlier that the company's administrative director and two other senior managers were also being investigated for fraud.

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