

Russian Rocket Engine Executive Arrested in \$59M Defense Contract Case

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Sophia Sandurskaya / Moskva News Agency

A senior executive at a Russian rocket engine maker has been arrested in connection with the alleged theft of more than 5 billion rubles (\$59.5 million) under state defense contracts, the Kommersant newspaper [reported](#), citing two sources familiar with the case.

Vladimir Koltsov, deputy director of the Voronezh-based Chemical Automatics Design Bureau, or KBKhA, faces charges of exceeding his authority over construction contracts and concealing delays from management, the newspaper said.

KBKhA is part of Russia's state space corporation Roscosmos. Koltsov, who oversees infrastructure and capital construction, has been held in pretrial detention since mid-September and faces up to 10 years in prison if convicted.

Investigators allege that KBKhA paid contractors Nagval Stroytekhn and Garant-Stroy more than 5 billion rubles (\$59.5 million) in advances between 2021 and 2024.

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The contracts covered facilities to manufacture spherical pressure vessels for rockets and spacecraft, as well as a consolidated production facility for liquid-fueled engines used in Soyuz launch vehicles.

The contractors completed work worth just 535 million rubles (\$6.4 million) before KBKhA unilaterally terminated the contracts, Kommersant reported. Investigators allege that the companies used the remaining funds at their own discretion.

Koltsov is accused of giving management false information about construction progress and concealing missed deadlines to avoid disciplinary action and make it appear that he was fulfilling his duties.

He declined to answer questions when interrogated as a suspect, invoking his constitutional right not to testify against himself or close relatives, the newspaper said.

Sergei Gutenko, chief executive of Nagval Stroytekh, was previously detained in the same case. He was placed on an international wanted list and ordered held in custody in absentia in November 2025.

Gutenko was detained in Thailand in February and deported to Russia. He has admitted guilt on fraud charges, according to Kommersant.

His case is being heard by Voronezh's Sovetsky District Court, with the next hearing scheduled for Oct. 14.

KBKhA [develops and manufactures](#) liquid-fueled rocket engines for space launch vehicles and ballistic missiles. It merged with the Voronezh Mechanical Plant in 2019 as part of plans to establish a rocket engine manufacturing center in the city.

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