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Ex-Deputy Defense Minister Ruslan Tsalikov Jailed 10 Years for Corruption

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Ruslan Tsalikov. **Moskva News Agency**

A Moscow court has sentenced former First Deputy Defense Minister Ruslan Tsalikov to 10 years in a maximum-security prison on corruption charges, the Kommersant business newspaper reported Thursday.

Tsalikov, 70, is a longtime ally of Security Council Secretary Sergei Shoigu, who was ousted as defense minister in 2024, two years into the full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine. Tsalikov was among several top defense officials arrested in the wake of the reshuffle.

The Zamoskvoretsky District Court found Tsalikov guilty on 12 counts of embezzlement totaling 6.58 billion rubles ($80.2 million), laundering more than 500 million rubles ($6 million) in stolen funds and two counts of accepting bribes from commercial contractors.

The bribes reportedly included 50 million rubles ($610,000) in cash, more than 11 million rubles ($134,100) in the form of home renovations and a motorcycle.

The embezzlement charges stemmed from 12 state contracts signed between the Defense Ministry and the military supplier Voentorg between 2019 and 2023 for army clothing and toiletry kits, whose costs investigators said were inflated by up to 40%.

The court dismissed a separate and more severe charge of organizing a criminal community using his official position.

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Prosecutors had sought an 18-year prison sentence for Tsalikov.

The court ordered Tsalikov, who had previously been under house arrest, remanded into custody in the courtroom. He was stripped of his state rank, honorary titles and state decorations, fined 500 million rubles ($6 million) and banned from holding public office for 15 years after his release.

The trial was held behind closed doors due to what authorities said was the inclusion of state contract details and military personnel data.

Tsalikov has denied the charges.

"Punishment is when there's something to be punished for. What is it called if there's nothing?" he was quoted as saying.

Tsalikov's defense team said it would appeal the ruling and seek his acquittal.

Tsalikov served as Shoigu's deputy at the Emergency Situations Ministry in the 2000s before following him to the Defense Ministry, where he served as first deputy minister from 2015 to 2024.

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