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Ex-Head of Russian Youth Patriotism Center Arrested on Embezzlement Charges

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Yelena Belikova. **VK**

Russia's Federal Security Service (FSB) arrested the former head of a state-run youth patriotism center in Moscow on suspicion of stealing public funds earmarked for its programs, the RBC news outlet reported Friday, citing two people familiar with the case.

Yelena Belikova, who ran the Russian Center for Patriotic Education until September, faces up to 10 years in prison on a charge of large-scale embezzlement. The FSB is investigating the case.

Moscow's Lefortovsky District Court on Thursday barred Belikova from contacting other defendants or witnesses in the case, sending or receiving mail and using the internet.

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Belikova stepped down as director on Sept. 2, according to the SPARK corporate database. Her former deputy, Dmitry Stepyko, is now serving as acting director.

The center, which is overseen by Russia's federal youth agency, runs programs aimed at fostering patriotism among children and young people.

It organizes forums on Russian history and supports youth volunteering and military-themed projects.

One of its programs, "Dialogues With Heroes," brings young people together with recipients of Soviet and Russian state honors for informal conversations.

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