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Murmansk Governor Arrested in Corruption Probe

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Murmansk region Governor Andrei Chibis at a meeting with President Vladimir Putin. **Kremlin.ru**

Murmansk region Governor Andrei Chibis has been arrested on suspicion of fraud, embezzlement and illegal currency transactions, Russia's Interior Ministry said Monday.

Interior Ministry spokeswoman Irina Volk said investigators suspect Chibis and several others of stealing more than 39 million rubles ($476,000) from the regional construction ministry's budget and embezzling more than 1 billion rubles ($12.2 million) earmarked for rebuilding the highway between the Arctic towns of Apatity and Kirovsk.

Volk said investigators were also looking into suspected transfers to foreign bank accounts using falsified documents.

The state-run news agency TASS first reported Chibis' detention, citing law enforcement sources. A source told the Kommersant business daily that investigators were questioning him in Moscow.

Murmansk region Information Policy Minister Irina Brinkova said Chibis had traveled to Moscow on a scheduled work trip and was giving testimony in connection with the recent detentions of several regional officials.

The Telegram news channel Mash reported that he was detained as he stepped off a plane in Moscow.

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Investigators carried out unspecified procedures at the regional government headquarters on Monday, several days after law enforcement officers visited the regional construction ministry.

Sources told the local news outlet SeverPost that Chibis' questioning was linked to corruption cases in some of the region's closed municipalities, where access is restricted. The Murmansk region is home to the main base of Russia's Northern Fleet.

Authorities have opened several criminal investigations involving Murmansk regional officials and company executives in recent weeks.

Andranik Musatyan, the head of the Murmansk water utility, is under investigation, and Arseny Filippov, the deputy head of the Pechenga district, has been detained.

Investigators are also looking into the suspected embezzlement of more than 271 million rubles ($3.3 million) during the construction of a kindergarten in the closed municipality of Alexandrovsk. Former municipal head Ilyas Mazitov is implicated in the case.

Chibis has governed the Murmansk region since 2019. He previously served as Russia's deputy minister of construction, housing and utilities.

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