

Gamblers Linked to Prosecutor

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The  **Moscow Times**

Newly unearthed paperwork confirms that an illegal gambling group sponsored overseas vacations of Moscow region's top prosecutors and their families, the Investigative Committee said Wednesday.

Documents obtained after searches at unidentified travel companies showed that Ivan Nazarov, who is suspected of running an illegal gambling ring, paid travel bills of the Moscow region's Prosecutor General, Alexander Mokhov, as well as his subordinates and family members, the committee said, Interfax reported.

Mokhov denied the accusations, saying he has papers to prove that he paid for his trips out of his own pocket.

He also denied reports that he and his deputy Alexander Ignatenko also requested state protection over unspecified death threats.

The Federal Security Service said earlier this week that Moscow region police were also protecting Nazarov's network of gambling halls. Six people, including Nazarov and three local police officers, were placed under arrest this week.

The case was opened after Nazarov's friend, identified only as Volkov, tipped off the officials, the committee said.

Gambling is banned throughout most of Russia. President Dmitry Medvedev called Mayor Sergei Sobyenin in December to step up the crackdown on illegal gambling, though he did not mention the Moscow region.

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