

Foreign Investor Asked by Fake Officials for a Bribe

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Three people have been arrested for allegedly trying to swindle a major foreign investor out of 43 million rubles (\$1.4 million) while posing as senior state and commercial officials, investigators said Wednesday.

The suspects tried to extort the money from the unidentified investor in exchange for their assistance in buying discounted promissory notes worth 500 billion rubles (\$16.4 billion), the Interior Ministry [said](#) in a statement on its web site.

The statement did not name the suspects or say when they were arrested.

The promissory notes were intended to secure financing for the development of a number of aviation projects in the regions.

The suspects had introduced themselves as an "influential employee of a well-known federal bank" and a "confidant of a senior official," the ministry said. The third was identified as a deputy director of an unspecified firm.

Investigators caught the suspects red-handed in a sting operation as they collected a bribe of 43 million rubles, the statement said.

Police did not explicitly say whether the suspects were actually related to any banks or officials, but said they have opened a large-scale fraud case and are looking for more suspects. Those arrested face charges punishable by up to 10 years in prison.

Of the 43 million ruble bribe, 30 million rubles was purportedly intended to go to the board chairman of the bank one of the suspects claimed to represent.

The other 13 million rubles came from an additional fee the alleged swindlers charged for their role in the deal, the ministry said.

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