

# United Russia Deputy Faces Criminal Charges, Investigators Say

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The Investigative Committee has petitioned the State Duma to strip United Russia deputy Vadim Bulavinov of his Duma seat and approve a criminal investigation into his abuse of office while serving as mayor of Nizhny Novgorod, the committee's official spokesman, Vladimir Markin, said Wednesday.

Investigators say that in June 2005, Bulavinov illegally exempted two contractors building a shopping center in Nizhny Novgorod from paying a mandatory fee to the municipal budget that totaled 600 million rubles (\$20 million).

The funds were meant to be used to relocate residents from dilapidated housing.

Bulavinov, who served as mayor from 2002 to 2010, is also accused of arranging for his son Yevgeny to be made a founding partner and beneficiary of both companies, with a 22.25 percent stake.

There is a special procedure for criminal proceedings involving State Duma deputies, according to which the Investigative Committee must first send all investigation materials

to the Prosecutor General for review. The documents are then sent to the State Duma for examination.

In Bulavinov's case, the documents must still be reviewed by the Prosecutor General and sent to the Duma.

Bulavinov, for his part, said in an interview with Rossiya-1 that he intends to fully cooperate with investigators and is even prepared to take a polygraph test to prove his innocence.

"Three times, three years ago, this case came up, and three times it was closed. I'm ready to go through any check, give any evidence, even take a lie detector test," he said.

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