

Ex-Defense Minister To Be Formally Charged Friday

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Investigators plan to formally charge a former Russian defense minister with negligence on Friday, according to a police source familiar with the situation.

Investigators said last week that they were opening a criminal case on negligence charges against Anatoly Serdyukov over claims he caused 56 million rubles (\$1.7 million) of damage to the state by ordering soldiers to build infrastructure for a holiday resort.

Serdyukov, who was fired by President Vladimir Putin last November amid allegations of high-level corruption, was questioned over the charges this week but refused to give evidence.

The Investigative Committee said it still has enough evidence to prove Serdyukov committed a crime by ordering soldiers to build a private road to the Zhitnoye leisure complex near the Caspian Sea.

The Zhitnoye resort, reportedly worth about \$4.5 million, was owned by Serdyukov's brother-in-law at the time the soldiers were used as construction workers for the site.

Negligence carries a maximum punishment of three months in prison under Russian law.

While he has been repeatedly questioned as a witness in other ongoing corruption scandals involving the Defense Ministry, this is the first time a criminal case has been opened against Serdyukov.

Most of the other cases are focused on embezzlement at Oboronservis, a Defense Ministry company that repaired and maintained military property and equipment. A link to the Oboronservis case was the official reason given for Serdyukov's sacking in 2012.

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