Moscow Court Arrests Ukrainian Minister Avakov In Absentia

By The Moscow Times

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Ukraine's Interior Minister Arsen Avakov speaks as he shows documents with photos showing a damaged section of Urengoy-Pomary-Uzhgorod transit pipeline in Poltava region during a session of the cabinet of ministers in Kiev June 18, 2014

A Moscow court arrested Ukraine's interior minister in absentia Wednesday, the Investigative Committee said in a statement.

Arsen Avakov is suspected of using prohibited means of warfare and killing civilians en masse during the Ukrainian government's campaign against insurgents in the country's east, the committee said.

Earlier the same court — Basmanny District Court — arrested in absentia the governor of Ukraine's Dnipropetrovsk region, Igor Kolomoisky, who is also accused by Russian investigators of organizing the mass killing 0f civilians.

Russia has issued an international warrant request for the arrest of Kolomoisky and Avakov. The court rulings against the Ukrainian officials are widely seen as a political move, as Russia does not have the authority to detain foreign nationals outside Russian territory.

Moscow has repeatedly condemned the military campaign being waged by Ukrainian troops against pro-Russian rebels in the country's conflict-torn east.