

Russian Prosecutors Ask for Suspended Sentences in Oboronservis Corruption Case

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Yevgenia Vasilyeva

Prosecutors have called for ex-businesswoman Yevgeniya Vasilyeva to be given a suspended sentence for her part in fraud schemes that cost the state 3 billion rubles (\$59 million) after earlier demanding an eight-year prison sentence, a news report said.

Vasilyeva stands accused of 12 charges, including fraud, money laundering, and exceeding and abusing her authority while serving as the director of Oboronservis, a company that sells off unrequired Defense Ministry property.

The alleged embezzlement, carried out through Oboronservis, amounted to 3 billion rubles. For her alleged part in the crime, Vasilyeva could theoretically face up to 10 years in prison, the RIA Novosti news agency reported.

But while prosecutors earlier requested an eight-year prison sentence for Vasilyeva

and between four and eight years in prison for her four accomplices, they appeared to make an apparent U-turn in court on Thursday.

Prosecutors instead announced that they were seeking a one-million ruble (\$19,500) fine and an eight-year suspended sentence for Vasilyeva, Interfax reported Thursday. The prosecution also sought fines ranging from 600,000 rubles to 900,000 rubles for her accomplices and suspended sentences of between four and six years, the report said.

The court was also asked to recover one billion rubles (\$19.5 billion) from the defendants, which it held jointly and severally liable, the report added.

The so-called Oboronservis scandal has been rumbling on for the past few years and also led to former Defense Minister Anatoly Serdyukov losing his job in 2012.

Serdyukov was officially charged with negligence a year later after he was accused of using the ministry's resources to build up infrastructure for a holiday home. The government granted him amnesty in March 2014 on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of the Constitution.

Vasilyeva, however, will not be among those pardoned in the latest amnesty, announced Friday in honor of the 70th anniversary of the Soviet victory over Nazi Germany, lawmaker Igor Lebedev was cited as saying by the Moskovsky Komsomolets newspaper.

Vasilyeva denies the allegations against her and insists that all the deals were legitimate, RIA reported.

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