

Second Russian Official in 2 Days Arrested in Crimea Over Corruption

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Nikolai Kochanov

A bribery case has been opened against a high-level federal tax inspector in Crimea, investigators said Tuesday, just a day after another local official was detained on suspicion of large-scale fraud.

Nikolai Kochanov, who heads the federal tax inspectors service for Crimea, was detained Monday after handing over 300,000 rubles (\$5,400) to a police officer, the regional branch of the Investigative Committee said in an online statement.

The money was intended to buy the officer's protection as well as cover up Kochanov's involvement in a previous crime and other violations of the law, the statement added.

Kochanov is now facing a charge of large-scale fraud, which carries up to 10 years in prison, or a fine of up to 80 times the size of the original bribe.

The news of the bribery case came just a day after a top Crimean official was detained for

allegedly embezzling more than \$865,000 in assets from the region that Russia annexed from Ukraine last March.

Andrei Skrynnik, the regional minister in charge of industrial policy on the peninsula, is suspected of helping to misappropriate more than 48 million rubles (\$867,000) tied up in a Crimean-owned cooperative along with two other men.

The investigations into both cases are ongoing.

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