

Russia to Keep Former Minister Abyzov in Jail on Fraud Charges

By [Reuters](#)

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Mikhail Abyzov [Kirill Zykov / Moskva News Agency](#)

A court in Russia on Wednesday ruled that former government minister Mikhail Abyzov, an ally of Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev, be held in pre-trial detention for two months ahead of his trial for fraud and organizing a criminal group.

Abyzov, 46, who was minister for open government affairs in Medvedev's cabinet until last year, was detained at his home in Moscow on Tuesday, his lawyer Alexander Asnis said. Abyzov denies the charges against him.

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The Investigative Committee accuses Abyzov of organizing a criminal group and, together with other individuals, embezzling 4 billion rubles (\$62 million) from two energy companies

supplying electricity to the Novosibirsk region in Siberia.

Abyzov, a power sector executive whose wealth Forbes estimated last year at \$600 million, could face up to 20 years in jail.

The alleged crimes took place between April 2011 and November 2014 while the alleged embezzled sum had been taken out of the country, the Investigative Committee said in a statement on Tuesday. It named five other people as co-conspirators.

Abyzov appealed to the judge not to jail him and offered to post 1 billion rubles in bail or for him to be placed under house arrest.

President Vladimir Putin was informed about the detention of Abyzov before it took place, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said earlier on Wednesday.

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