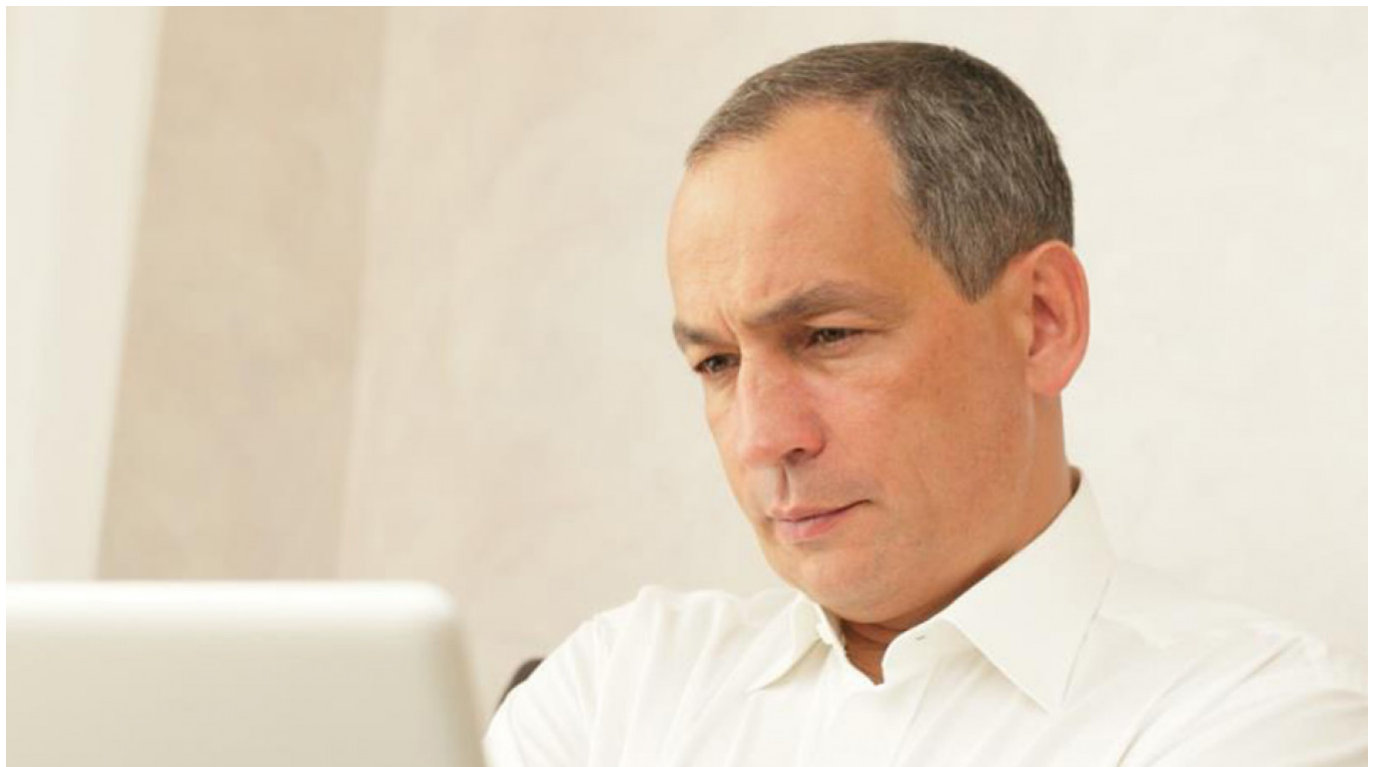


Russian Official Attempts Suicide During Corruption Hearing

June 18, 2019



Alexander Shestun / Facebook

A Moscow region official facing corruption charges has attempted suicide during a court hearing for a case he claims is politically motivated.

Alexander Shestun, the former head of the Serpukhov district, was arrested last summer on abuse-of-office charges. According to investigators, in 2008-2014 Shestun illegally transferred four plots of public land to a private company, costing the local government 62 million rubles (\$965,000). Investigators later charged him with receiving a 9.4 million ruble (\$146,000) bribe.

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Shestun cut his wrist with a disposable razor fragment after telling the court that “he had only one argument left — his life,” the Znak.com news website [cited](#) Shestun’s press secretary Vlad Rucin as saying on Tuesday.

“Shestun told the court that he had been tortured and beaten, that he had been behind bars for a year without any evidence of guilt,” said Rucin, who was present during the hearing. “His family has been persecuted and deprived of their livelihood.”

The hearing was ended and Shestun, who attended the hearing via video conference from the detention center, was hospitalized, Interfax [cited](#) his wife Yulia as saying. The former official's condition is unclear, she added.

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The press office of the Federal Penitentiary Service confirmed to Interfax that Shestun had attempted suicide and was given medical care, but said he did not require hospitalization.

During the hearing, Shestun said that the case against him was revenge from Ivan Tkachev, the head of the Federal Security Service (FSB)'s credit and finance counterintelligence unit.

Shestun, who had been on hunger [strike](#) from February to May this year, resumed his hunger strike on June 14, according to Interfax. He called for an end to the persecution of himself and his family.

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