

Russian Traffic Cop's Golden Toilet Steals the Show in Uncovered Police Bribe Scheme

July 20, 2021



One photo – that of the residence's golden toilet bowl – quickly spread across Russian social media.

Alexander Khinshtein / Telegram

Russian investigators [said](#) Tuesday they have uncovered a multi-million ruble bribery scheme run by dozens of senior traffic police officers, with the top cop's golden toilet bowl stealing the show.

In what looked more like a luxury real estate ad, the Investigative Committee [published](#) footage of police colonel Alexei Safonov's opulent residence in southern Russia's Stavropol region following his detention.

It said in a statement that Safonov and six of his subordinates were detained on allegations of receiving 19 million rubles (\$255,000) in bribes "for several years" in exchange for illicit grain transportation licenses. Safonov faces between 8 and 15 years behind bars if found guilty.

Pro-Kremlin United Russia party lawmaker Alexander Khinshtein said more than 35 members of the Stavropol traffic police department were apprehended as part of a large-scale operation.

Embed:

“A real mafia was operating in the region,” Khinshtein, who shared [photos](#) of the baroque interior of Safonov’s mansion, [said](#) on his social media page.

One photo — that of the residence's golden toilet bowl — quickly went viral and [triggered memories](#) of the “Wild East” opulence of post-Soviet capitalism in the 1990s.

News agencies reported that the Stavropol region police chief was sacked after the high-profile raids ensnared what Khinshtein referred to as “the entire top echelon” of traffic police.

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