

A Timeline of Russia's Defense Ministry Purge

July 25, 2024



The Russian Defense Ministry headquarters in Moscow. **Nikolay Trishin / TASS**

Since at least April, the Russian military has been in upheaval, punctuated by arrests of senior Defense Ministry officials on charges including bribery and abuse of power. This turmoil appears to have peaked in May with the dismissal of longtime Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu, who faced accusations of mishandling the full-scale invasion of Ukraine.

While economist Andrei Belousov now heads the Defense Ministry, and the intensity of the purge has subsided, some arrests continue.

Here is a timeline of the army purge:

April 23, 2024

Deputy Defense Minister Timur Ivanov is charged with bribery.

Ivanov, who oversaw construction and housing projects for the Russian military, is [accused](#) of

accepting a bribe “in the form of services” valued at more than 1 billion rubles (\$12.2 million).

May 7, 2024

President Vladimir Putin is sworn into a fifth term in office.

May 12, 2024

Putin replaces Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu with former First Deputy Prime Minister Andrei Belousov.

May 14, 2024

Lieutenant General Yury Kuznetsov is charged with bribery.

Kuznetsov, who heads the Defense Ministry’s personnel directorate, is [accused](#) of accepting a bribe from companies in exchange for unspecified favors.

Investigators claim that more than 100 million rubles (\$1.1 million) worth of Russian and foreign currency, gold coins, collectible watches and luxury items were discovered and seized during searches at Kuznetsov's residence and registered address.

May 17, 2024

Army General Ivan Popov is charged with bribery.

Popov, who previously served as commander of the 58th Guards Combined Arms Army, is accused of [stealing](#) more than 130 million rubles (\$1.5 million) worth of metal purchased as “humanitarian aid” by Russian occupation authorities in southern Ukraine’s Zaporizhzhia region.

In July 2023, the general [said](#) he was relieved of his role as commander in the Zaporizhzhia region after complaining about systemic mismanagement within the military to former Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu.

May 23, 2024

Lieutenant-General Vadim Shamarin is charged with bribery.

Investigators [accuse](#) Shamarin, who heads Russia’s General Staff’s communications directorate, of accepting 36 million rubles from a phone manufacturing plant for “general patronage” and ensuring higher product supplies through Defense Ministry contracts.

Senior procurement officer Vladimir Verteletsky is charged with abuse of power.

Investigators [accuse](#) Verteletsky of accepting a bribe in relation to “work that was not carried out” under a government contract in 2022. According to law enforcement, the sign-off cost the state “over 70 million rubles” (\$823,000).

July 15, 2024

General Popov is placed under house arrest.

A judge in Moscow [rules](#) to release Army General Ivan Popov from pre-trial detention and place him under house arrest.

July 24, 2024

Defense Ministry construction company chief Andrei Belkov is arrested for abuse of power.

Kommersant reports that Belkov is [accused](#) of awarding a state contract through a fake tender to his acquaintance, who sold an MRI scanner for a military clinic at the cost of 121 million rubles (\$1.4 million). The true cost of the scanner is said to have been 76 million rubles (\$890,000).

Investigators scrutinize Belkov's contracts, personal earnings and other connections during his time as head of the military construction company, which was sanctioned by the United States in 2023 over its involvement in the reconstruction of occupied Mariupol.

Kommersant writes that the former construction chief's job is "under a microscope" because of a high-profile bribery investigation into former Deputy Defense Minister Timur Ivanov.

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