

# A Timeline of Russia's Defense Ministry Purge

July 25, 2024



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

Since April, Russia's Defense Ministry has witnessed a string of arrests of senior officials on various corruption charges. The upheaval would appear to have peaked in May with the ouster of longtime Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu, who faced accusations of mishandling the war in Ukraine.

While Kremlin economist Andrei Belousov now heads the defense ministry, and the intensity of the military purge seems to have subsided, the arrests have continued into the summer.

Here is a timeline of the arrests we know of so far:

**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**

**Vladimir Putin is sworn in as president for 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.

**July 26, 2024**

**Former Deputy Defense Minister Dmitry Bulgakov is arrested on corruption charges.**

Law enforcement authorities [accuse](#) Bulgakov of creating a system to supply low-quality food rations to Russian troops at inflated prices. He is placed in pre-trial detention at the notorious Lefortovo prison in Moscow.

Bulgakov served as deputy defense minister for administrative affairs between 2008 and 2022 and oversaw military logistics before being [replaced](#) in September 2022, the first major military reshuffle since the full-scale invasion of Ukraine.

**Aug. 5, 2024**

**Head of the army's theme park Vyacheslav Akhmedov and Major General Vladimir Shesterov are charged with fraud.**

Investigators accuse Akhmedov and Shesterov of being "involved in the embezzlement of public funds allocated to ensure the activities and functioning of Patriot Park and [its] exhibition center."

Patriot Park, located in the town of Kubinka some 63 kilometers (39 miles) west of Moscow, is a military theme park and exhibition center featuring interactive exhibits and displays of weapons and equipment. In addition to live-firing ranges, the park hosts a grandiose Orthodox cathedral dedicated to the country's armed forces.

Police [questioned](#) Akhmedov earlier in July and carried out searches at Patriot Park as part of an investigation into the alleged theft of more than 40 million rubles (\$471,000) in state contracts.

**Aug. 6, 2024**

**Former head of the military's clothing supply department Colonel Vladimir Demchik is charged with bribery.**

Investigators [accuse](#) Demchik of accepting 4 million rubles (\$46,700) in bribes from the CEO of an unnamed clothing company seeking "to secure his patronage" in the spring of 2017.

According to Russia's Investigative Committee, the clothing company won 26 government contracts to supply the military between 2017 and 2018. The total value of those contracts was said to be 574 million rubles (\$6.7 million).

**Aug. 29, 2024**

**Former Deputy Defense Minister Pavel Popov is charged with fraud.**

Popov is accused of [misusing](#) Patriot Park resources for personal gain, allegedly coercing the park's contract workers into performing unpaid construction work at his private property in the Moscow region between 2021 and 2024. He is also accused of diverting building materials intended for the park to his personal home.

According to the Russian Investigative Committee, Popov continued to use Patriot Park's resources for the maintenance of his personal property even after the construction was complete. Authorities say they uncovered properties valued at 500 million rubles (\$5.4 million) linked to Popov and his family in the Moscow region and southern Russia's Krasnodar region.

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