

Police Summon Navalny Over Logo

May 18, 2011



Alexei Navalny

Investigators have ruled that the logo of Rospil.info, the anti-corruption web site of blogger Alexei Navalny, is a desecration of Russia's double-headed eagle coat of arms, Navalny [said](#) Wednesday on Twitter.

Navalny spoke after visiting a Moscow police station for questioning in connection with a complaint over the logo filed by State Duma Deputy Pavel Zyryanov of United Russia. Instead of an orb and scepter, the golden eagle in the logo on Navalny's web site clutches in its talons two handsaws — a pictorial reference to the embezzlement of state funds, a process described literally in Russian jargon as "sawing."

An unspecified culture studies institute has ruled that the logo is a desecration of a state symbol, Navalny wrote.

He said the police have decided to open a criminal case, although he will be treated as a witness, not a suspect.

Zyryanov said he was offended by the parody of the coat of arms.

"A coat of arms and a flag are the most important state symbols," Zyryanov said. "Why is it that when radicals in Japan burn our flag there is public outcry, but when someone draws a saw on our eagle there is silence?"

Navalny gained popularity after using his shareholdings in state companies to reveal suspected wrongdoing, including allegations that \$4 billion had been embezzled during the construction of a pipeline by oil pipeline monopoly Transneft.

He has called United Russia "a party of crooks and thieves."

The Investigative Committee said earlier this month that it was investigating Navalny in connection with a \$35,000 fraud case involving a state-owned timber company.

He could face up to five years in prison if tried and convicted.

Navalny posted an image of the police summons, dated May 14, on his LiveJournal blog.

"It is a real pity the Prosecutor General's Office does not conduct such powerful investigations based on my declarations about instances of corruption and embezzlement at VTB, Gazprom or Transneft," he wrote.

Zyryanov said Navalny was a vehicle for leaks by business competitors rather than a genuine anti-corruption activist.

Meanwhile, a regional Internet service provider has blocked access to LiveJournal.com following a Federal Security Service complaint about Navalny's blog, Gazeta.ru reported Wednesday.

Representatives of the provider, Ulyanovsk-based Telecom.ru, initially confirmed that the site had been blocked but later blamed technical difficulties for the lack of access to the blogging service, the report said.

Local FSB officials denied complaining about Navalny's blog.

(MT, Reuters)

Original url: <https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2011/05/18/police-summon-navalny-over-logo-a7033>