

Retrial Sought for Jailed Senator

By [Alexander Bratersky](#)

July 07, 2011

The  Moscow Times

The Kremlin human rights council asked the president Thursday to order a review into the case of a former senator sentenced last year to life in prison on charges of terrorism and organizing contract hits.

While the council does not consider Igor Izmestyev blameless, it believes that the case was heavily tampered with, possibly because of the former senator's conflict with a clan that ruled Bashkortostan in the 2000s, said council member Kirill Kabanov.

"We don't confirm that Izmestyev is not guilty, but multiple violations marred the investigation," Kabanov, who also heads the nongovernmental National Anti-Corruption Committee, said by telephone.

President Dmitry Medvedev did not comment immediately on the request, but Kabanov said the president's office would review the plea and then possibly ask the Investigative Committee to reopen the case.

Izmestyev, 45, who represented Bashkortostan in the Federation Council from 2001 to 2006, was convicted of ordering several murders and unsuccessfully targeting Ural Rakhimov, son of former Bashkortostan leader Murtaza Rakhimov, in a bomb plot.

Izmestyev was initially cleared by a jury last year but slapped with a life sentence on a retrial several months later. Prominent rights activists, including Lyudmila Alexeyeva, have repeatedly denounced the case as fraught with violations.

Alexeyeva also [told](#) Moskovsky Komsomolets in March that Izmestyev had supported local human rights groups and even helped publish a book on a 2004 incident in the city of Blagoveshensk in which police beat scores of residents after they protested police brutality.

Izmestyev used to be a business partner of Ural Rakhimov and acknowledged during his tenure as senator that he saw his job as defending the interests of the Rakhimov family.

But he had a falling out with the Rakhimovs amid suspicion that he wanted to govern Bashkortostan. In a statement after his sentencing, Izmestyev explicitly blamed the Rakhimovs for his conviction.

Murtaza Rakhimov was removed from his post by Medvedev last year after more than 10 years in office. He was replaced with Kremlin loyalist Rustem Khamitov.

A retrial and a milder sentence could encourage Izmestyev to expose rampant corruption in Bashkortostan, particularly in the local oil industry still largely controlled by the Rakhimovs, Kabanov said.

"While Izmestyev was found guilty, other people who have enriched themselves are living quite happily," Kabanov said.

Up to \$5 billion is thought to have been embezzled through corruption schemes in Bashkortostan's oil sector, he added, without elaborating.

Independent analyst Stanislav Belkovsky agreed that Izmestyev might be a veritable source of information about corruption in Bashkortostan, but said the information was likely needed by the Rakhimovs' political enemies waging a power struggle against the clan.

"There are many people who want to discredit Rakhimov, and they can use Izmestyev to do this," Belkovsky said by telephone. He named as a potential foe Radi Khabirov, the former head of Rakhimov's administration who assumed a Kremlin post after a conflict with his former boss.

Original url: <https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2011/07/07/retrial-sought-for-jailed-senator-a8126>