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Academic Jailed for Selling Technology to China Set Free

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The headquarters of the Federal Security Service, which opened the case against Reshetin in 2003

Prison authorities on Monday freed an academic convicted of selling sensitive technologies to China, just a few months after opposition activists appealed to the presidential human rights council on his behalf.

Andrei Reshetin, the convicted professor's father, told Radio Free Europe that his son's jail term had been tough and that his sentence was almost up.

"He only had four months left to serve. The sentence was very harsh," he said. "We don't really understand what happened, what sort of world we're living in."

Police originally detained Igor Reshetin, former general director of TSNII MASH-Export, a research company specializing in capsules for the space industry, in 2005 on charges of illegally exporting controlled technologies.

According to Federal Security Service investigators, who opened the case against Reshetin

in 2003, the technologies TSNII MASH-Export sold could be used to create weapons of mass destruction.

Judges sentenced Reshetin to more than 11 years in prison in 2007, although his sentence was subsequently reduced to seven years.

But Reshetin never admitted his guilt, claiming that the Defense Ministry and state arms exporter Rosoboronexport sought his prosecution in order to eliminate competitors in the same export market. China later called on Russia to reverse the sentence and offered to take Reshetin in.

Human rights activists took up Reshetin's case with the presidential human rights council in February, including his name on a list of political prisoners handed to council head Mikhail Fedotov.

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