

Bloggers Mock Udmurtia Head in Watch Scandal

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Bloggers have ridiculed the head of the Udmurtia republic after his pricey golden wristwatch mysteriously disappeared from a billboard at the entrance to the capital's zoo.

Earlier this month, a LiveJournal blogger nicknamed [pravdorub-rus](#) spotted that on the billboard in Izhevsk, Alexander Volkov had his left hand decorated with a luxurious Breguet wristwatch in a picture of him holding a leopard cub.

Bloggers calculated that the value of such a model of Breguet watch, made in Switzerland from 18-carat gold, is approximately the same as Volkov's annual salary and can range between \$100,000 and \$120,000.

But local journalist and opposition activist Andrei Konoval wrote on his blog on Monday that the Breguet watch had mysteriously disappeared from the image and that the republic's head is now pictured wearing an unremarkable, unbranded watch instead.

Upon closer inspection, Konoval learned that an image of the plain watch had merely been glued over the old image.

As proof, the blogger [posted a video](#) online, in which it is clear that the poster has been altered.

In an interview with Russian News Service, a spokesman for the Udmurtia republic's administration, Vladimir Chulkov, said he had never seen Volkov "wearing such a watch [the Breguet]" and that the original image had been painted on by unnamed designers.

He also speculated that opposition forces could be behind the incident. He didn't elaborate.

Bloggers recalled that during his election campaign, Volkov had called on voters, some of whom were experiencing severe financial difficulties, to "tighten their belts."

The Udmurtia scandal recalls a similar wristwatch incident with Patriarch Kirill, Russia's top religious official.

In April, a picture of Kirill meeting with Justice Minister Alexander Konovalov went viral after bloggers spotted a reflection of the Patriarch's Breguet wristwatch in the table they were seated at — but no watch on his wrist.

The Moscow Patriarchate had to apologize, saying that a photo editor had violated the church's internal ethics when photoshopping the image.

According to earlier media reports, Krill has a Breguet wristwatch worth \$30,000.

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