

Investigator Who Closed Navalny Case Fired

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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A regional investigator who was publicly grilled over his decision to close a criminal case against anti-corruption blogger Alexei Navalny was dismissed from his post Tuesday, according to a statement on the Kremlin website.

President Vladimir Putin signed the order firing Major-General Alexander Panov, the [statement](#) said. Putin oversees the hiring and firing of top law enforcement officials in line with the Constitution.

Panov, who headed the Kirov region branch of the Investigative Committee, entered the media spotlight in July after being dressed down by Investigative Committee head Alexander Bastrykin.

"You have a man named Navalny. You had a criminal case against him and you stopped it on the quiet," Bastrykin said while addressing Panov in November.

Bastrykin was referring to a criminal case opened in May 2011 against Navalny, who worked as an unpaid adviser to regional Governor Nikita Belykh in 2009.

Investigators said that Navalny violated his duties by pressuring the heads of the local Kirovles timber-processing plant and causing the state-owned company financial damages.

After an investigation, regional investigators found that Navalny had not committed any violations. A separate branch of the Investigative Committee has declined to open a new investigation on the grounds that no crime was committed.

On Tuesday, Putin fired several other law enforcement officials, including Alexei Velichko, deputy head of the Federal Prison Service. Velichko, who assumed the post in 2010, previously served as deputy justice minister.

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