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Razvozzhayev Hit With 3rd Criminal Case

By The Moscow Times

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The Investigative Committee on Tuesday opened a third criminal case against jailed opposition activist Leonid Razvozzhayev, this time on suspicion of illegally crossing the Russian-Ukrainian border in October.

The charge carries a maximum sentence of two years in prison and follows allegations of plotting mass riots with a Georgian power broker and stealing 500 hats from a Siberian fur trader 15 years ago.

"Hoping to mislead the law enforcement authorities, Razvozzhayev purchased a train ticket to Kiev using his brother's passport and crossed the Russian border without a valid travel document," investigators said in a statement on their official website.

Investigators say Razvozzhayev decided to flee the country on Oct. 15 in light of an investigation into information provided in "Anatomy of a Protest 2," a documentary-style program broadcast on state-controlled NTV that claimed Razvozzhayev and two other activists, Sergei Udaltsov and Konstantin Lebedev, plotted riots to destabilize Russia.

Razvozzhayev's defense lawyer, Dmitry Agranovsky, said Tuesday that "investigators are using these criminal cases to put pressure on him to testify in the main case" and that he would appeal investigators' refusal to review evidence regarding Razvozzhayev's alleged abduction by Russian special services in Ukraine.

“No new testimonies in addition to those that Razvozzhayev has denied will be added into the case, hence investigators may continue to find reasons to make him speak — there are more than 300 articles in Criminal Code,” Agranovsky said.

Since the latest criminal charges do not fall within the Investigative Committee's jurisdiction, the committee has petitioned the Prosecutor General's Office to give it the case.

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