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Jailed Tycoon to Spend $1M on Cambodian Prisons

By The Moscow Times

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Businessman Sergei Polonsky on Thursday promised to spend $1 million to upgrade the prison system in Cambodia, saying he could help carry out the reform after spending weeks in custody.

In a letter to Cambodian King Norodom Sihanouk posted on the businessman's blog, Polonsky complained about unbearable conditions in the local prison and said he and his friends had established a fund that will invest the money.

"The management of the fund made a decision to allocate $1 million for that purpose, given that we know the work of that system from the inside," the letter said.

To indicate the shortcomings of the country's law enforcement system, Polonsky said he and his friends have to remain in prison, although all the issues had been already settled.

"Unfortunately, by force of circumstances, we have to spend the third holiday in prison," Polonsky said, referring to the Old New Year, which Russians celebrate on Jan. 13, when the letter was sent.

The businessman also complained that earlier that week the prison staff had turned off the electricity to his cell to put pressure on him, which caused the inside temperature to exceed the maximum allowed level.

Polonsky has remained in prison since Dec. 30, when he and his friends were detained for shooting off fireworks on an uninhabited island and failing to show identification when asked by the military.

Earlier this month the businessman, who owns Russian real estate group Potok, promised to build a multimillion-dollar resort in Cambodia as a penance for his scandalous behavior.

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