

Kirov Court Sets Navalny Appeal Date

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Alexei Navalny faces five years in prison if his conviction is upheld. **Mitya Aleshkovsky**

Opposition leader Alexei Navalny's appeal of his five-year prison sentence has been scheduled for Oct. 9, the rising politician said on Twitter on Friday.

The Kirov regional court received Navalny's notice of appeal on Tuesday, the same day that the defense accused the courts of a procedural infraction in the appeals process, Interfax reported.

In the accusation, Navalny's lawyer Sergei Kobelev said the district court should not have sent the notice of appeal and other legal documents to the appellate court before having received the defense's remarks.

Last week, the court denied Kobelev's request for an extension until Oct. 1, time which the defense had said it needed to review court transcripts.

In July Navalny and co-defendant Pyotr Ofitserov were found guilty of stealing timber from a state-owned company in 2009, allegedly costing the state budget more than 16 million rubles (\$490,000). Navalny was sentenced to five years imprisonment and Ofitserov to four years,

with both men receiving a 500,000 ruble fine.

International human rights groups have condemned the ruling as politically motivated.

The authorities unexpectedly released Navalny on the evening of the court's decision, allowing to him to run in the Sept. 8 Moscow mayoral election. After an energetic campaign, he garnered 27 percent of the vote to Mayor Sergei Sobyenin's 51 percent and nearly pushed the election to a second round of voting.

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