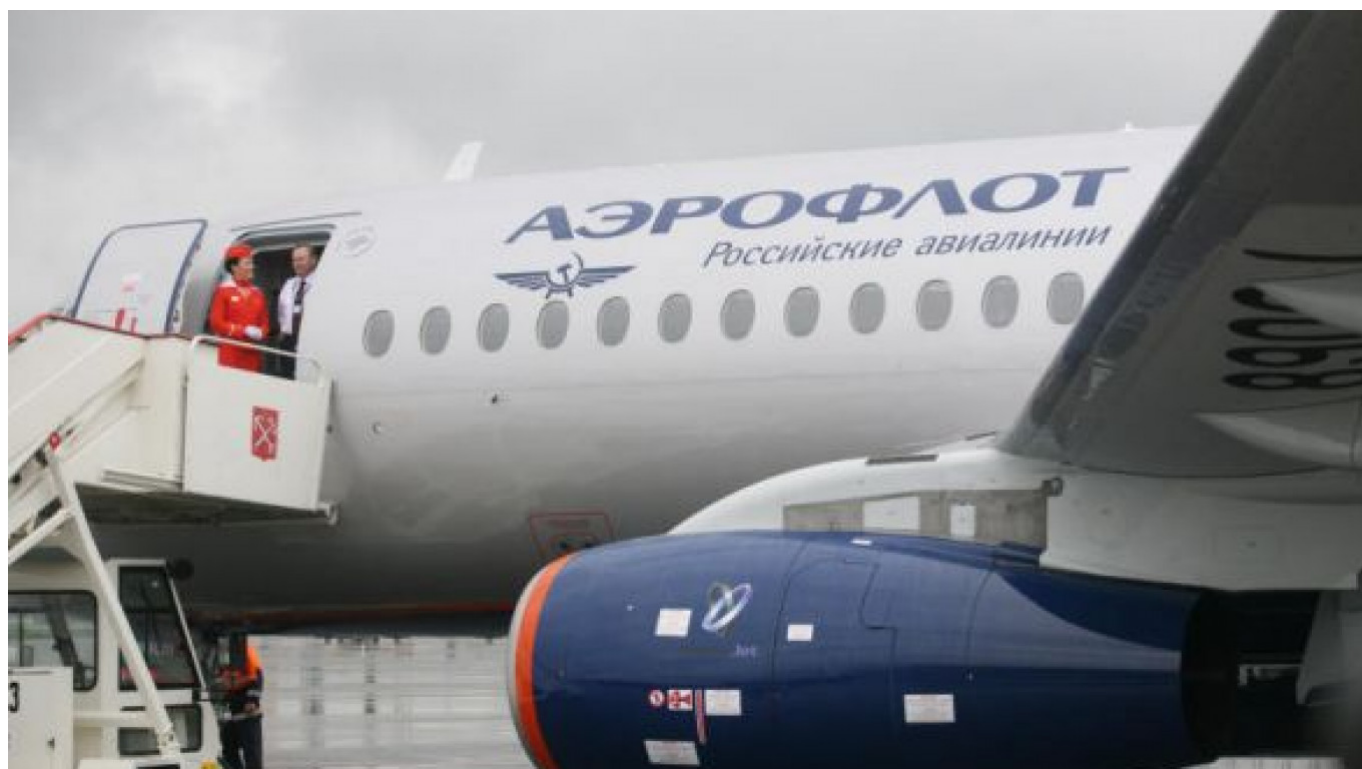


Third Airline Labor Union Activist Detained for Attempted Fraud

By [Alexander Panin](#)

October 21, 2013



Compensation to union members in a pay dispute was found to have been misdirected by other activists. **E. Kuzmina**

A third activist from the Sheremetyevo Cockpit Personnel Association, or SCPA, a labor union representing airline employees, was detained and charged as part of a large-scale fraud case linked to national carrier Aeroflot, Kommersant reported Monday.

Union member and pilot Sergei Knyshev, who also represents the Mozhaisky municipal district in the Moscow region legislative assembly, was arrested Sunday, 100 kilometers from Moscow as he was coming back from a fishing trip with his father, who is also a professional pilot, the report said.

Two SCPA leaders, Valery Pimoshenko and Alexei Shlyapnikov, were arrested Saturday after reportedly receiving the first 10-million-ruble (\$314,000) installment of the 100 million rubles they purportedly requested for mediating in a pay dispute between the airline and its

pilots.

In July, after a series of court hearings and appeals, the Moscow City Court ruled that Aeroflot was obliged to pay a debt it owed its pilots and flight attendants for flying at night and working in hazardous working conditions. The total outstanding debt amounted to more than 1 billion rubles (\$30 million), the SCPA said.

The airline said it would comply with the ruling and start paying out in September.

But in the beginning of September about two dozen members of the labor union gathered in front of Aeroflot's office in the center of Moscow, either claiming that they had not received any money at all, or the sum was not what they had expected.

The case materials about the arrest maintain that since August Pimoshenko and Shlyapnikov had repeatedly contacted Aeroflot executives and offered to help reduce the amount of the pay dispute settlement. A total of 1,000 people were due compensation under a previous court order, but the SCPA leaders reportedly said they could help reduce that to several dozen reputable pilots.

If convicted, the activists could be sentenced to 10 years in prison.

Out of the 1,400 pilots that Aeroflot employs, 900 are SCPA members.

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Original url:

<https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2013/10/21/third-airline-labor-union-activist-detained-for-attempted-fraud-a28783>