

One Charge Against Panova Dropped, 3 More Remain

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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A Yekaterinburg court on Tuesday dismissed one of the four charges facing Aksana Panova, the former editor-in-chief of the Ura.ru news agency, after investigators failed to prove that a crime had taken place.

Panova had been accused of fraud for signing a contract with a trading house but never rendering the contracted services, for which the company claimed to have paid 100,000 rubles (\$3,000), Interfax reported.

Beyond her journalistic work, Panova came to the public eye as campaign manager for Yevgeny Roizman, who won the Yekaterinburg mayoral race in September with more than 30 percent of the vote, an unprecedented victory for an opposition candidate.

Both Roizman and Panova have said that they have been harassed by the regional authorities since Yevgeny Kuivashev was appointed governor of the Sverdlovsk region in 2012.

Panova said Tuesday that the dropped charge had been brought against her by Yevgeny Belonosov, a Yekaterinburg City Duma member who has previously accused Ura.ru of blackmailing him while acting on Kuivashev's orders.

"It was a false denunciation by Yevgeny Belonosov, written at the governor's request," she said. "We have been talking about this for a year. Finally the prosecution admitted that it was straightforward slander," Panova wrote on her Facebook page after the charge was removed.

She still faces three other counts, one of abusing her authority by removing 13 million rubles from her news agency's coffers and two more of extorting 12 million rubles and 1 million rubles through threats of disseminating compromising information, the report said.

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