

Court Orders Navalny to Retract 'Defamatory' Claims Against Deputy

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A Moscow city court has ordered opposition activist Alexei Navalny to retract a statement claiming that State Duma deputy Sergei Neverov failed to declare ownership of three land plots outside Moscow.

Neverov, a deputy speaker for the United Russia party, accused Navalny of defamation after the prominent blogger published aerial photographs of a cottage cooperative in the Moscow region, where several top United Russia officials — including Neverov — were said to have undeclared plots.

The Lyublinsky District Court on Thursday ruled in favor of the lawmaker and gave Navalny 10 days to publish an online retraction of the article, despite the fact that Navalny's blog is currently blocked by the country's media regulator, BBC reported.

It is also not clear if Navalny, who is under house arrest while being investigated for embezzlement, will be in breach of another court order by issuing the retraction. Under the terms of his current detention he is forbidden from communicating with the outside

world over the Internet.

Speaking after the hearing, Nevarov said he had been "forced to resort to the judicial protection of his rights under Article 152 of the Civil Code, which states that every citizen has the right to demand refutation of defamatory information," Interfax reported.

He also noted that in December, a Duma commission set up to monitor deputies' expenses cleared him of any wrongdoing over the land ownership.

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