

Russian Railways Sues Lawmaker Over Sochi Corruption Claims

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Following the publication of a scathing report last year that accused Russian Railways of "flat-out robbery of the country" in connection with the 2014 Olympics in Sochi, the railway giant has turned to the courts to defend its honor.

The lawsuit was announced via Facebook by defendant Boris Nemtsov, an opposition politician who co-authored "Winter Olympics in the Subtropics," a May 2013 report replete with allegations of corruption. The report's second author Leonid Martynyuk was named as a defendant in the lawsuit as well.

The railway company is seeking 3 million rubles in damages for harm done to its business reputation, Russian Railways chief Vladimir Yakunin's press secretary Alexander Pirkov told Kommersant.

The report claimed that preparations for the Games had been plagued by corruption, and accused Russian Railways of having siphoned off money in the process of constructing the 48-kilometer Adler-Krasnaya Polyana combined motor- and railway.

According to a copy of the lawsuit posted by Nemtsov, the claim stated that the report "contains information that does not correspond to reality" and is "aimed at discrediting the company and its management."

The suit also described the report as a "well-aimed attempt to defame the Russian Federation and the president of the Russian Federation."

Nemtsov's Facebook commentary implied a lack of concern about the lawsuit. He vowed, "This will not be boring. I promise!"

"Before this, Luzhkov's wife Baturina filed a lawsuit against me at the arbitration court and lost," he wrote.

The price tag for the Winter Olympics in Sochi — more than \$50 billion — threatened to overshadow the actual games in the lead-up to the event, with allegations of massive corruption dominating media reports about the Sochi Games.

Putin hit back at rumors of corruption, saying that critics of the Games were being misleading by citing a figure that included costs for not only the Olympics, but also construction of infrastructure in Sochi.

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