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Polonsky Sues Radio Station and Journalist for Libel

By The Moscow Times

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Businessman Sergei Polonsky is wanted in Russia on suspicion of stealing $160 million from shareholders of a Moscow housing development project.

Fugitive businessman Sergei Polonsky has filed a libel case against the Vesti FM radio station and radio host Vladimir Solovyov, demanding that they each pay him 100 million rubles ($2.8 million) in damages, Polonsky's lawyer said Tuesday.

Solovyov said in November during the "Full Contact" radio show that Polonsky should be arrested and called him a "schizoid citizen" and a "clown."

The lawsuit says that the Solovyov's comments were false, insulting, and damaging to Polonsky's professional reputation, lawyer Alexander Karabanov told RIA Novosti.

Moreover, the Solovyov's remarks caused Polonsky's mother to become seriously ill, suffering from headaches, insomnia and losing her appetite, he said.

In addition to financial compensation, Polonsky wants the comments to be retracted and demands that Vesti FM removes material containing them from its website.

The preliminary hearing is scheduled for June 9 at Moscow's Savyolovsky District Court.

Polonsky is wanted in Russia on suspicion of stealing 5.7 billion rubles ($160 million) from shareholders of a Moscow housing development project.

Polonsky currently lives in Cambodia, where he was detained for three months amid allegations of kidnapping a group of Cambodian sailors during a party on a yacht on New Year's Eve 2012.

He was released in April 2013, though it is unclear whether the case against him has been formally closed.

Cambodian police detained him again in November 2013, this time at the request of the Russian Prosecutor General's Office, which requested his extradition that same month.

He was released in January and in April Cambodia's supreme court refused to extradite the businessman on the grounds that it doesn't have an extradition treaty with Russia.

Karabanov said in April that the court's decision not to hand over his client to Russian prosecutors showed that the kidnapping case had been closed.

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