

Sakha Court Disqualifies Electoral Candidate for 'Submitting Misleading Documents'

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A Siberian court has disqualified a candidate running to head the Sakha republic after a rival claimed his law degree was in fact earned by his aide.

Valery Maksimov from the Russian Party of Pensioners for Justice was disqualified from the election following a complaint by his rival Ernst Berezin, the Interfax news agency reported Tuesday, citing a spokesperson for the Sakha Supreme Court.

The spokesperson declined to specify the reasons for the ruling until it formally takes effect, but an aide at the rival campaign office said the decision was prompted by supposedly false documents that Maksimov had submitted as part of his application.

"The reason is that he submitted a law diploma to the Central Electoral Commission," the aide was quoted as saying. "During an investigation, the electoral commission found that the diploma belonged to Maksimov's confidante."

Maksimov recalled documents demonstrating his supposed university degree a day before the registration deadline and conceded that he only had lower-level professional training, but the rival campaign office was not inclined to let the incident slide.

"Maksimov is a retired Interior Ministry officer, this is not his first time running for office, and we believe that this was an intentional falsification," a spokesperson for the rival candidate said, according to Interfax.

Plagiarism by public figures and cheating on questionnaires by public-office candidates is something of a problem in Russia.

Forty-seven district votes in the region of Kurgan were canceled recently after dozens of candidates turned out to have lied on their questionnaires over their past criminal records, Russian media reported.

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