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Lawmaker Demands Investigation Into Navalny's Anti-Corruption Group

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Activist Alexei Navalny has already seen his share of legal drama. Now his anti-corruption group is under fire.

A lawmaker who levied charges of fraud against opposition activist Alexei Navalny's anti-corruption group has asked investigators to open a criminal investigation into the matter.

Mikhail Degtyarev, from the Liberal Democratic Party, asked the Prosecutor General's Office and the Justice Ministry to carry out checks on the Anti-Corruption Fund more than a week ago, the TASS news agency reported Thursday.

But after failing to receive a response, Degtyarev was cited as saying in the report that he had appealed directly to the Investigative Committee with a request to instigate proceedings against the fund's managers.

"While there is no response from the authorities, associates of this 21st-century scheme to wean money off the people will continue to take people's hard-earned [cash]," Degtyarev was quoted as saying by TASS.

The lawmaker added that the Anti-Corruption Fund's organizers "had done well for themselves" and that they spent 90 percent of donations on close or favored associates.

Navalny, a prominent Kremlin critic and anti-corruption activist, has been under house arrest since February in connection with a high-profile fraud case that many critics say is politically motivated.

Investigators say Navalny and his brother Oleg defrauded cosmetics company Yves Rocher of 26 million rubles ($457,000) and laundered an additional 21 million rubles.

Degtyarev's accusations against Navalny come as that case against him wraps up, with the closing remarks set to be made on Friday ahead of the verdict.

Navalny has maintained his innocence in that case, as well as in the earlier KirovLes case that got him a five-year suspended sentence in July 2013.

He said the charges were meant to keep him out of the political arena after he announced presidential ambitions.

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