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Ex-Prime Minister Kasyanov Sues Russia's NTV Channel for Defamation

By Allison Quinn

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Mikhail Kasyanov, who served as prime minister during Vladimir Putin's first presidential term, has filed a defamation suit against state-run television channel NTV for a report saying he'd intentionally harmed Russia's economy while serving as finance minister.

Under the heading "NTV Will Answer for Their Lies," Kasyanov wrote on his Facebook page Tuesday that he'd filed the claim with Moscow's Presnensky District Court earlier in the day.

"I demand that the information spread about me in NTV broadcasts and on the Internet be recognized as false and damaging to my honor and dignity," Kasyanov wrote, adding that one of the television channel's reports claimed he had been involved in the theft of 4.5 billion rubles from an International Monetary Fund loan while serving as finance minister.

The Kommersant newspaper cited Kasyanov as saying his lawsuit was based on one NTV broadcast from March 6, 2013, and another from Nov. 15, 2014. He is seeking 1 million rubles

from the channel. He also wants NTV to issue a retraction of the reports.

"It goes without saying that the information spread by the NTV channel is a lie," Kasyanov wrote on Facebook, noting that the channel had broadcast numerous programs that tried to "create a negative opinion" of him among the population.

All the earlier reports used phrases like "they say" or "there are rumors" to soften their claims, Kasyanov said.

But in the most recent cases, "the editors of NTV 'let themselves go,' so to speak, and did not consider it necessary to hold any reservations [when making the claims], declaring a lie to be the truth."

Kasyanov served as prime minister from 2000-2004, and as finance minister from 1999-2000. Although he served under President Vladimir Putin, he has been highly critical of the Kremlin in recent years.

He currently serves as co-chairman of the RPR-Parnas party.

Contact the author at a.quinn@imedia.ru

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