

Sochi Environmental Activist Released from Prison

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Yevgeny Vitishko

A Russian activist who criticized the environmental impact of last year's Olympic Games in Sochi has been released from prison, his associate said Tuesday.

Yevgeny Vitishko has “walked out of prison gates,” fellow activist Suren Gazaryan said via Facebook. “Hooray!”

Vitishko's prison sentence was widely seen as a punishment for his reports exposing the damage from construction for the Sochi Olympics.

Vitishko and Gazaryan were both found guilty in 2012 of “deliberate destruction of property” for spray-painting the fence of what they said was a local governor's property in a national forest where construction is forbidden. Both received a suspended sentence, but Gazaryan was later threatened with additional charges and left the country. He received political asylum in Estonia in 2013.

Ahead of the Winter Olympics in Sochi, Vitishko was planning to go to the city to present an environmental report. He was arrested at a bus stop and convicted of swearing in public.

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