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Moscow Court Pays Compensation to Skyscraper Parachutists

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A Moscow court has awarded four parachutists compensation for wrongly accusing them of vandalizing a Stalin-era skyscraper, the RIA Novosti news agency reported Wednesday.

Moscow's Tagansky District Court will pay 360,000 rubles ($5,620) in compensation for the criminal prosecution.

The four base jumpers — Alexander Pogrebov, Alexei Shirokozhukhova, Yevgenia Korotkova and Anna Lepeshkina — were awarded 90,000 rubles ($1,400) each for moral damages, said lawyer Olga Lukmanova, RIA Novosti reported. They are also seeking compensation for legal expenses.

The group had been implicated with Ukrainian roofer Pavel Ushivets — also known as "Mustang Wanted" — who climbed the spire of a Stalin-era skyscraper on Aug. 20, 2014, to paint it with the colors of the Ukrainian flag. Ushivets publicly claimed responsibility for painting the upper half of an enormous yellow star blue on Moscow's Kotelnicheskaya Naberezhnaya skyscraper.

The four base jumpers, who parachuted from the same skyscraper that morning, were arrested shortly after the stunt and detained under house arrest. They maintained they did not know about Ushivets' painting plans and had jumped from a point significantly lower than the star.

The stunt attracted international attention as it came at a time of heightened tension between Ukraine and Russia and was seen as a protest against Kremlin policies in the neighboring country.

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