The Moscow Times
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Lead Protester in Russia's Anti-Corruption 'Tractor March' Charged With Fraud

January 27, 2017



Project Realnost / YouTube

One of the key members of a Russian protest movement fighting for the rights for provincial farmers has been
charged with fraud.

Nikolai Borodin, a village leader in his hometown of Kazanskaya in the Krasnodar region, took part in a protest which saw tens of farmers march their tractors to the Russian capital in July 2016.

Protest organizers said that they wanted to tell Russian President Vladimir Putin that local businessmen had repeatedly and unlawfully seized farmers' land. They also wished to draw further scrutiny to the Krasnodar justice system, which they accused of favoring large agricultural holdings.

Borodin is accused of fraudulently renting a plot of land controlled by the Droganovo farming collective in 2013.

Related article: Angry Farmers Stage Tractor March on Moscow

Investigators claim that Borodin did not legally gain the approval of stakeholders to take over the land during a formal meeting. They have also charged the wife of another protester, Yelena Petrova, as having taken part in the scheme.

Borodin has since pledged to take part in another farmers' march on the capital in March.

His court hearing is due to take place on Feb. 1, with the farmer already set to appeal.

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