

Russian Activist Navalny Given 5-Year Suspended Sentence in Kirovles Retrial

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Moskva News Agency

Russian opposition activist Alexei Navalny has been given a five-year suspended prison sentence after being found guilty of embezzlement.

The decision jeopardizes his hopes of running for the Russian presidency in 2018, when Vladimir Putin is likely to seek his fourth term in office.

Navalny first stood trial on embezzlement charges in 2013, despite widespread criticism that the case was politically motivated. He was also found guilty and given a five-year suspended sentence.

The Russian Supreme Court overturned the conviction in November 2016, under pressure

from the European Court of Human Rights.

The court ordered a retrial which began in January 2017. Critics described the trial as “a copy of the first,” alleging that the case had been rushed in a bid to stop Navalny's presidential aspirations.

Navalny alleged that the new verdict directly copied comments on witness testimony from his previous trial, despite different testimony being put forward in the second case.

Embed:

Смешно: начали зачитывать показания свидетелей и они тоже дословно взяты из прежнего приговора. Хотя в этот раз свидетели говорили другое.

— Alexey Navalny (@navalny) [February 8, 2017](#)

He later took a selfie from the court room, telling his Twitter followers: "I know this is contempt of court, but I couldn't resist. It's so boring in here. They're just reading out the old sentence."

Embed:

Вообще-то такое – неуважение к суду, но я не удержался. Тут скучно – просто читают старый приговор pic.twitter.com/GCZaCMZAvo

— Alexey Navalny (@navalny) [February 8, 2017](#)

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Under Russian law, anyone found guilty of committing a "high-level crime" such as embezzlement is not eligible to run for office. The ban lasts for 10 years after the defendant completes their sentence.

Navalny has been a key figure in Russia's liberal opposition since 2011, when he worked with other activists to lead anti-Kremlin protests in a number of Russian cities.

The former lawyer announced his intention to run for president in December 2016, focusing on a six-point manifesto dedicated to battling corruption, boosting wages and pensions, and reforming the police and judiciary.

Navalny's campaign manager, Leonid Volkov has already pledged to continue his work despite

the decision. "It's like we've already said: Navalny's campaign will continue despite the guilty verdict," he wrote on Twitter.

Embed:

И как уже говорили: несмотря на обвинительный приговор, кампания за допуск Навального к выборам, конечно, продолжается.
И добьется победы.

— Leonid Volkov (@leonidvolkov) [February 8, 2017](#)

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