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The Moscow Times' Demyan Kudryavtsev in Legal Troubles

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Demyan Kudravstev / Twitter

The Russian Supreme Court has upheld a court ruling that puts under question the Russian citizenship of Demyan Kudryavtsev, board member of The Moscow Times and Vedomosti newspapers. The decision relates to an citizenship application made seven years ago.

The details of the court proceedings have not yet been made public. According to the Russian publication Legal Report, the Russian Federal Migration Service accused Kudryavtsev of providing inaccurate information on a citizenship application form. According to Kudryavtsev, the complaint instead related to information that was not technically included on the form, and which authorities themselves acknowledged they were made aware of.

"The court decision basically says that incomplete information is false information," Mr. Kudryavtsev told the RBC news agency on Tuesday.

Kudryavtsev, a Russian citizen who at one point also held Israeli citizenship, acquired The

Moscow Times and Vedomosti in 2015. The deal was made ahead of a controversial law which limited foreign ownership of Russian media to 20 percent. Prior to this, both publications were owned by foreign media companies.

The ruling now gives authorities the power to cancel Kudryavtsev's Russian citizenship, but they have not begun to do so. He told The Moscow Times that he had “no idea” what their eventual decision would be.

“It appears that I have stepped on someone’s toes,” Kudryavtsev said, when asked why the case was happening. He declined to say how the offense might have been caused and who might have offended.

“I have a good guess since I know when it started, when they started digging, and who is authorized to request migration authorities to investigate seven-year-old paperwork,” he said.

He does not believe the order came from the Kremlin or the presidential administration, he added.

The decision has no legal bearing on the future of either The Moscow Times or Vedomosti, which are legally registered to Kudryavtsev's wife.

“If the aim was a wider campaign against the publications, there are more obvious ways of going about things,” Kudryavtsev said. “That isn’t to say they won’t try do these things later, of course.”

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