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Russian Director Serebrennikov Released on Bail After 1.5 Years of House Arrest

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Kirill Serebrennikov **Anton Kardashov / Moskva News Agency**

Update: On April 9, Serebrennikov took the stage following a Gogol Center performance of "Dead Souls" and was met with applause from the audience.

Embed:

A Moscow court has released theater director Kirill Serebrennikov on bail after a year and a half spent under house arrest on criminal fraud charges, Russian news agencies reported Monday.

Serebrennikov was detained on Aug. 22, 2017, on charges of embezzling 68 million rubles ($1 million) in government funds as part of a theater project, damages that later doubled to 133 million rubles. Supporters of the Gogol Center's artistic director say the charges levied against

him are politically motivated.

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Krill Serebrennikov: "I was allowed two hours of walking a day. And during those two hours people would usually approach me and say the same line: 'We are with you, everything is going to be all right.' This truly meant a lot to me. But again, nothing has ended yet. We still have to prove ourselves innocent in court."

Related article: Serebrennikov's Embezzlement Case, Explained

The Moscow City Court released Serebrennikov and two other suspects on bail, the state-run RIA Novosti news agency reported. The ruling overturns a court order last week extending Serebrennikov's house arrest until July 3.

"It's not yet a victory, but we're almost there," Serebrennikov exclaimed as he hugged supporters, the state-run TASS news agency reported.

The court ruling subjects Serebrennikov, former Seventh Studio general director Yury Itin and former Culture Ministry official Sofia Apfelbaum to travel restrictions. A fourth defendant in the case, former Gogol Center director Alexei Malobrodsky, has been under similar travel restrictions since last April.

While in home confinement, the director has lived through the arrest of his assets in Germany, the premiere of his ballet at the Bolshoi Theater and his film at the Cannes Film Festival, and the loss of his mother.

Russian and foreign cultural figures, including Hollywood actress Cate Blanchett, have called on the authorities to drop the embezzlement charges against Serebrennikov.

Serebrennikov said he intends to return to work soon, including plans to put on four shows, RIA Novosti reported.

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