

Chechen Human Rights Leader Titiyev Granted Early Release

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AP / TASS

A Russian court has granted early release to Oyub Titiyev, a prominent human rights leader in Russia's republic of Chechnya, Interfax reported Monday.

Related article: [Court in Chechnya Sentences Rights Activist to Four Years in Penal Colony](#)

Titiyev, who runs the office of the Memorial Human Rights Center in the southern Russian region, was sentenced to four years in a penal settlement in March after he was found guilty of possessing illegal drugs. His supporters say he was framed, with the drugs planted in his car.

The Shali City Court granted a petition from Titiyev's lawyer, Pyotr Zaikin, which states that the rights leader "has not committed disciplinary offenses for the entire period of his detention" and "strictly abides by the colony's internal regulations," Interfax reported.

Zaikin's petition added that Titiyev "does not need to serve out the punishment imposed on

him any further since he has an active role in society and has consistently proven himself to be a good and law-abiding citizen."

Titiyev will be released in 10 days, according to the court decision.

Human Rights Watch welcomed the court's decision in a statement Monday, calling the case against Titiyev "a disgrace to Russia's justice system."

"It's a huge relief that Oyub Titiyev will be freed and can finally return to his family and human rights work," [said](#) Tanya Lokshina, HRW's associate Europe and Central Asia director.

During his trial, the human rights advocate and his colleagues had argued that police [planted](#) marijuana in his car in retaliation for his work collecting evidence of abuses committed by Chechen authorities.

The majority Muslim republic of Chechnya is governed by Kremlin-backed leader Ramzan Kadyrov. Human rights workers accuse Kadyrov of widespread abuses in the region, allegations he denies.

Kadyrov's supporters credit him with bringing relative calm and stability to a region dogged for years by a simmering insurgency following two wars between Moscow and separatists after the 1991 break-up of the Soviet Union.

Kadyrov, who earlier supported Titiev's arrest, welcomed the court decision about his release.

"If a court found it possible to release Titiev earlier, I am sure that all the circumstances were studied and an objective decision was made," Kadyrov said in a statement.

Reuters contributed reporting to this article.

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