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Navalny Aide Released After Back-to-Back Jailing Over Pension Reform Protests

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Vladimir Smirnov / TASS

Leonid Volkov, an aide to opposition leader Alexei Navalny, has been released after serving a total of 28 days in jail for his role in organizing nationwide protests last year against an unpopular government decision to raise the pension age.

Volkov had been sentenced in mid-May to 20 days in jail for the September 2018 protests, which took place in nine different Russian cities while Volkov was outside Russia. He was re-arrested the day he was set to be released and sentenced to 15 more days for a pension protest in St. Petersburg.

On Monday, the Moscow City Court reduced Volkov's 15-day sentence to eight days. He was subsequently released on Tuesday morning.

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> 6 часов утра и @leonidvolkov (и другие). На свободе!
> pic.twitter.com/FPKfoKBbQW
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> — настоящий Низовцев (@zimbru_khv) June 18, 2019

Police had previously threatened to charge the opposition activist for organizing the pension reform protests in eight other cities last year, a measure that could have left him in jail past this September's municipal elections in Moscow.

Critics have claimed Russian police are increasingly targeting opposition activists with back-to-back arrests on the same charges as a way to quash protests and dissent.

Related article: Arrest of Navalny Aide Highlights Latest Trend in Protest Clampdown in Russia

According to Russia's code on administrative offenses, individuals cannot be sentenced twice for the same violation.

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