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Russian Officers Charged With Framing Investigative Journalist Golunov

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Golunov and his lawyer have accused the authorities of inaction while investigating the fabricated drug charges against him. **Alexander Avilov / Moskva News Agency**

Five former Moscow police officers have been criminally charged with framing anti-corruption journalist Ivan Golunov, Russia's Investigative Committee said Thursday.

Golunov, an investigative journalist for Meduza, was arrested in June on fabricated drug charges and released days later after an unprecedented public outcry. Police dropped all charges against him, fired the officers involved in his arrest and opened a criminal case into the falsified charges.

Related article: Criminal Case Opened Against Cops Who Arrested Russian Journalist Golunov

Moscow's Basmanny district court has charged Denis Konovalov, Akbar Sergaliev, Roman Feofanov, Maxim Umetbayev and Igor Lyakhovets with abuse of power, falsification of evidence and drug trafficking.

As officers for Moscow's anti-drug-trafficking department, the five men had all been directly involved with Golunov's arrest and were fired after the case against him was closed. They did not plead guilty during questioning, Interfax reported.

The Investigative Committee said that the drugs planted on Golunov last June had been illegally acquired, stored and transported by the police.

“The criminal case that I have been seeking for so long with the support of the media and the public has happened, and this is very good. Let's hope that the case will go to court," Golunov had told the RBC news website Wednesday after the five men were detained.

President Vladimir Putin last month announced criminal charges against the five officers who had arrested Golunov but didn’t specify which charges they were.

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