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‘Titov List’ Returnee Handed 4.5-Year Jail Sentence

An exiled businessman who returned to Russia in the hope of having criminal charges against him dropped has been sentenced for a second time in two years.

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Boris Titov (left) and Alexei Kakovkin (right). **Youtube.com**

A wanted Russian businessman who returned home from exile in the hope of avoiding jail time on outstanding fraud charges was sentenced Wednesday to four-and-a-half years in a penal colony, the Kommersant business daily reported.

A court in Russia’s southern city of Rostov-on-Don found businessman Andrei Kakovkin guilty of a $400,000 embezzlement over a land-purchase deal.

Kakovkin was one of the high-profile Russian entrepreneurs featured on the so-called “Titov List” — a handful of wealthy Russians who had fled the country under criminal investigation, who had told Russian authorities they were willing to return home and repatriotize their

wealth, under the promise that the charges would not be pursued.

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The cause was taken up by Presidential Ombudsman Boris Titov in 2018, who compiled a list of businessmen who were seeking a way to return to Russia, and promised to negotiate with authorities on their behalf. The idea of a formal amnesty was never publicly adopted, with Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov pledging only to look at each person on a case-by-case basis.

Some 136 business owners applied to return through the scheme, according to the Kommersant business paper, though only 12 came back to Russia — Kakovkin was the first, returning from Britain in 2018, just days after the "Titov List" was published.

He was temporarily detained upon his return and saw his case initially dropped — only for prosecutors to reopen it months later. He was sentenced to three years in a penal colony in 2019 in a separate legal battle related to the same dispute. That was subsequently downgraded to a suspended sentence.

During the new trial he again professed his innocence and has criticized the court's ruling. Lawyers told Kommersant they plan to appeal the conviction.

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