The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Russia Hands Tajik Opposition Activist 40-Year Ban

September 06, 2021



Saidanvar Sulaimonov said the ban was retaliation for his work on a Kremlin critic's campaign for this fall's parliamentary election. **qropty / twitter**

Russia has banned Tajik-born opposition activist Saidanvar Sulaimonov from the country for 40 years in what he calls retaliation for his work on Kremlin critic Andrei Pivovarov's campaign for this fall's parliamentary election.

"So my romance with Russia has ended. I've been kicked out for 40 years," Sulaimonov, who also goes by Sasha Pechenka, tweeted Saturday.

He said police handed his landlord the notice of his entry ban, which gave him a three-day period to leave the country on his own or else face expulsion to Tajikistan.

Embed:

> Вот и закончился мой роман с Россией. Меня выгнали из неё на 40 лет.

> Привет, я Саша Печенька, по паспорту Саиданвар Сулаймонов. Являюсь гражданином Таджикистана.
> Много лет я живу в России. pic.twitter.com/08GTxvna5g
>
> — печенька ◙ (@qropty) September 4, 2021

Sulaimonov noted that it would be dangerous for him to return to Tajikistan because of his past criticism of Islam and the country's current government.

"Now I am in a safe country. I am a forced emigrant. It turns out that it is so difficult to just take and leave everything in one country and leave for another," he said.

In his series of tweets, Sulaimonov shared that he is heartbroken about leaving Russia and his wife, who is Russian, behind.

"When I found out about it, I cried for three hours, I screamed and howled out of powerlessness. I am separated from my home. I am separated from my wife. I am separated from my friends. The invaders kicked me out of my house," he tweeted.

He claimed that "the Russian authorities took revenge" on him because he had worked at Pivovarov's campaign headquarters in the past month.

Pivovarov, the former head of Open Russia, a pro-democracy movement outlawed in Russia as an "undesirable" organization, is currently in pre-trial detention on criminal charges for his work with the group until at least Oct. 29.

Kremlin critics say the arrests of opposition figures like Pivovarov are part of a clampdown on dissenting voices ahead of the country's Sept. 19 parliamentary elections.

Sulaimonov previously worked as an orderly at a Moscow coronavirus hospital until he said he was fired for posting a photo of himself wearing protective gear and holding up a flashlight as part of a protest in support of jailed Kremlin critic Alexei Navalny.

Original url:
https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2021/09/06/russia-hands-tajik-opposition-activist-40-year-ban-a74973