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Russia Jails Hacking Ringleader for 14 Years

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Konstantin Kozlovsky, the leader of the Lurk hacker group. **Donat Sorokin / TASS**

A Russian court has sentenced the alleged leader of the Lurk hacker group and self-proclaimed hacker behind the 2016 U.S. Democratic National Committee email leak to 14 years in prison, Interfax reported Monday.

Investigators accused Konstantin Kozlovsky and his group of creating the Lurk virus, which allowed them to steal over 1 billion rubles ($13.2 million) from Russian banks and enterprises since 2013.

The Kirovsky District Court in Russia's fourth-largest city Yekaterinburg found Kozlovsky guilty of organizing a criminal group, large-scale fraud and illegal access to computer information.

State prosecutors had requested a sentence of 18 years for Kozlovsky.

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Law enforcement authorities reportedly started investigating Kozlovsky and 20 other members of Lurk following a thwarted 2016 plot to steal 23 million rubles ($300,900) from Kremlin-linked businessman Yevgeny Prighozin's Concord catering company.

The other 20 defendants received prison sentences ranging from five to 13 years.

Kozlovsky claims that he was recruited by Russia's Federal Security Service (FSB) in 2008 to take part in a number of high-profile hacks, including the hacking of the DNC servers and Hillary Clinton's campaign during the 2016 presidential election, as well as the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) and U.S. military enterprises. He alleges that former FSB officer Dmitry Dokuchaev oversaw his work.

However, investigators found no such connection between Lurk and the FSB, nor did they find that Kozlovsky stole data from U.S. government servers using malware, Interfax reported.

Dokuchaev, who was imprisoned on treason charges in 2019, has denied any link between Kozlovsky and the FSB.

"I don't know Kozlovsky and, accordingly, did not have any cooperation with him," Dokuchaev told the RBC news website through his lawyer.

Kozlovsky has maintained that the charges against him and Lurk were fabricated, saying that there were inconsistencies throughout the indictment against him, and that he had simply been carrying out the requests of state officials.

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