Former Gubernatorial Candidate in Russia's Far East Jailed on Fraud Charges

August 14, 2023

Andrei Ishchenko. **Anton Balashov / TASS**

A former candidate for governor who nearly unseated a Kremlin-backed incumbent in Russia's Far East has been sentenced to six years in jail, Russian media reported Monday.

Andrei Ishchenko ran in 2018 as a Communist Party challenger for the governor's post in the Primorye region, where election authorities annulled results after reports of vote-rigging, a rare admission for Russia of ballot interference.

Ishchenko had been leading in the polls with 95% of the ballots counted before the election was scrapped for a re-run.

The Communist Party ended up not nominating him in the new round of voting, allowing a Putin-appointed incumbent from the United Russia party, Oleg Kozhemyako, to secure the governor's seat.

Related article: [Russia's Primorye Election Results Annulled Over Reports of Voter Fraud](#)

The Pervomaiskiy District Court in Vladivostok, Primorye region's capital, found Ishchenko guilty of defrauding investors by 387 million rubles ($3.8 million) as CEO of the construction company Avrora-Stroy, according to the Kommersant business daily.

In addition to the six-year prison sentence, the court fined Ishchenko 400,000 rubles ($4,000). Prosecutors had sought a seven-year prison sentence and a 500,000-ruble ($5,000) fine for the former politician.

Ishchenko, who was detained in April 2022, pleaded guilty to the charges last month.

Last fall, Ishchenko [asked](#) to be sent to the frontline to fight in Russia's "special military operation" in Ukraine, but his request was [denied](#).

A second trial in which Ishchenko is accused of abusing his powers as the CEO of Avrora-Stroy is scheduled for Sept. 19, Kommersant reported.

Original url:
https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2023/08/14/former-gubernatorial-candidate-in-russias-far-east-jailed-on-fraud-charges-a82140