The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Russian Prosecutors Request 5-Year Prison Sentence for Ex-Navalny Lawyers

December 17, 2024



SOTAvision

Russian prosecutors are seeking to sentence three lawyers who used to represent the late opposition activist Alexei Navalny to more than five years in prison each for "extremism," the news outlet Novaya Gazeta reported Tuesday.

Vadim Kobzev, Alexei Liptser and Igor Sergunin were arrested in October 2023 on accusations of helping Navalny continue political activity from behind bars by passing messages between him and his allies.

Sergunin reportedly pleaded guilty while Kobzev and Liptser rejected the charges at a pre-trial hearing. The judge overseeing the trial in the Vladimir region east of Moscow later ruled to close the hearing to the public.

State prosecutors requested that the judge sentence Kobzev to 5 years and 11 months in a medium-security penal colony, according to Novaya Gazeta. He requested a prison sentence of 5 years and 10 months for Liptser and 5 years and 6 months for Sergunin.

Prosecutors also asked the court to ban Kobzev, Lipster and Sergunin from providing legal services for five years. Novaya Gazeta did not indicate when the Petushinsky District Court is scheduled to deliver a verdict.

Related article: Russia's Local Government Reform Will Destroy a Rare Channel for Letting Off Steam

In addition to the three lawyers, four independent Russian journalists are on trial for "extremism" related to their alleged work for Navalny's team.

Russian authorities banned Navalny's activist and political groups including the Anti-Corruption Foundation as "extremist" in 2021, putting employees, volunteers and supporters at risk of criminal prosecution.

Navalny, who was serving a 19-year "extremism" sentence, died under unclear circumstances at age 47 in an Arctic prison in February.

Supporters accused the authorities of murdering Navalny, while investigators claimed there were no signs of foul play in his death. Independent investigative news outlets have since said they obtained documents showing that the report on Navalny's death was heavily redacted.

Original url:
https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2024/12/17/russian-prosecutors-request-5-year-prison-sentence-for-ex-navalny-lawyers-a87365