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Russian Thermophysicist Handed 5-Year Suspended Sentence in FSB-Linked Fraud Case

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Thermophysicist Oleg Kabov. **usd.nsk.sudrf.ru**

A Siberian court on Tuesday handed thermophysicist Oleg Kabov a five-year suspended sentence for allegedly falsifying research results in a case widely criticized by the scientific community.

Kabov, 69, was arrested in October 2022 and accused of defrauding the state of 7 million rubles ($81,000) during a 2014-2016 research project on an experimental cooling unit.

Russia's Ministry of Science and Higher Education approved his research in 2017. However, the following year one of Kabov's former students contacted the Federal Security Service (FSB) and made fraud allegations against him.

The student's complaint was later joined by one of Kabov's co-authors, a former employee of his laboratory who had gone on to work for the FSB following a dispute with Kabov.

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The Sovetsky District Court in Novosibirsk found Kabov guilty of large-scale fraud and imposed a fine of 7.2 million rubles ($83,400), along with a two-year ban on overseeing scientific research. Prosecutors had sought a seven-year prison sentence.

Kabov, a member of the Russian Academy of Sciences and head of the Laboratory for Heat Transfer Intensification at the Kutateladze Institute of Thermophysics, denied any wrongdoing.

“There’s more than enough evidence [to acquit]. We’ll be pursuing justice,” Interfax quoted him as saying.

The case against Kabov has sparked outrage in Russia’s scientific community.

Science news outlet T-invariant called it a “landmark” for the prosecution of researchers “for their creativity.” Its chief editor, Olga Orlova, warned that the prosecution would push Russia’s scientific achievements into a “marginal and backward” period.

Kabov’s defense attorney vowed to appeal Tuesday’s verdict.

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