

Russia Jails Exiled Philanthropist Boris Zimin 9 Years in Absentia

April 22, 2025



Social media

A Moscow court has sentenced exiled philanthropist Boris Zimin to nine years in prison in absentia on fraud charges linked to the sale of shares in the Russian car-sharing company BelkaCar, the court's press service [said](#) Tuesday.

Zimin, 56, was [accused](#) of working with accomplices to sell a majority stake in BelkaCar without the approval of a key shareholder. Last year, two alleged accomplices — investors Ralph Novak and Ilmar Azmukhanov — were [sentenced](#) to five and four years in prison, respectively.

Law enforcement authorities first pressed charges against Zimin in 2021 and [issued](#) an international arrest warrant for him in 2023. The philanthropist has lived abroad since 2004.

Moscow's Preobrazhensky District Court on Tuesday found Zimin guilty of defrauding a foreign investor of 367 million rubles (\$4.5 million) through a series of business deals between 2017 and 2019. He was sentenced to serve his term in a medium-security prison if

extradited or upon return to Russia.

The case centers on a complaint by Swiss-based German investor Benedikt Sobotka, who alleged that Novak and another German businessman sold a 52% stake in BelkaCar at a steep discount without his consent.

Related article: [Zimin's Dynasty Has Made History](#)

Zimin is the son of the late businessman Dmitry Zimin, a telecoms pioneer who founded Russia's first mobile phone service and later dedicated most of his wealth to philanthropy.

Following in his father's footsteps, Boris Zimin has been a major backer of independent media, science, education and opposition causes in Russia. Russian authorities labeled his foundation a "foreign agent" roughly a decade ago, later [applying](#) the designation to Zimin himself.

He has since expanded the family's philanthropic work internationally.

In 2020, Zimin helped fund the emergency evacuation of Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny to a hospital in Germany after he was poisoned during a trip to Siberia.

Original url:

<https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2025/04/22/russia-jails-exiled-philanthropist-boris-zimin-9-years-in-absentia-a88827>