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Novosibirsk Court Jails 2 Hypersonic Researchers for Treason

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Alexander Avilov / Moskva News Agency

A judge in the Novosibirsk region has sentenced two scientists who study hypersonic technology to 12.5 years in prison each after finding them guilty of treason, Russian media reported Tuesday.

Valery Zvegintsev, a researcher at the Khristianovich Institute of Theoretical and Applied Mechanics (ITPM) of the Siberian branch of the Russian Academy of Sciences (RAS) and the founder of an aerogasdynamics laboratory, was arrested in April 2023. Vladislav Galkin, an associate professor at Tomsk Polytechnic University and one of Zvegintsev's regular co-authors, was arrested later that same year.

The Novosibirsk Regional Court's website shows that a verdict on treason charges was handed down on Tuesday, but it does not name the defendants in the case. The exact nature of the allegations against Zvegintsev and Galkin remains unknown.

Following Zvegintsev's arrest in 2023, his colleagues at ITPM claimed the treason charges

were linked to his participation in international research projects, foreign conferences and articles published in popular science journals.

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ITPM published an open letter in support of Zvegintsev, arguing that his research had always undergone peer reviews to ensure that none of the classified information he dealt with in his work would be made public.

The state-run news agency TASS, citing sources in the Siberian branch of the RAS, reported that the treason case against both Zvegintsev and Galkin stemmed from a gas dynamics article published in an Iranian journal.

The jail sentences against the two researchers are the latest in a broader crackdown on the scientific community in Russia. Alexander Shiplyuk, the former head of ITPM, was sentenced in September 2024 to 15 years in a maximum-security prison on similar charges.

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