

Navalny Sues to Learn Case Against Him

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Whistleblowing blogger Alexei Navalny has sued the Investigation Committee for failing to officially notify him of its decision to reopen a fraud case against him.

Navalny, who has stepped on many toes with his corruption exposés, said he took legal action because he has not been presented with details of the charges against him, as required by law. The court has scheduled the first hearing for June 22 to evaluate Navalny's claims against the Investigation Committee.

"A suspect has the right to know what he's being suspected of exactly," Navalny said on his LiveJournal blog Thursday, adding that he can't defend himself without an official charge. "Nevertheless, the only information I got about the case was from the media."

The 2-year-old case alleges that Navalny forced Kirovles, a state-owned timber company in the Kirov region, into a harmful contract in 2009 that cost the company 1.3 million rubles (\$46,000) in monetary damages. It relies solely on the testimony of former Kirovles head Vyacheslav Opalyov.

Navalny, who plans to cancel his trips and conferences abroad until the case is settled, said his

lawyer tried repeatedly to request details about the case but was ignored. He said he did receive a two-sentence letter from the Investigative Committee on Wednesday, but it was hardly the official document he was supposed to receive.

Navalny has suggested that state-owned bank VTB, state pipeline monopoly Transneft or the ruling United Russia party might have fabricated the case against him, allegations they deny.

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