

Court Extends Detention of Drivers' Rights Activist

By [Natalya Krainova](#)

June 02, 2013

The  **Moscow Times**

A Moscow region court on Friday extended the detention of a drivers' rights defender who failed to yield on a packed highway to the car of a senior official reported to be the interior minister or his deputy.

The detainee, Vadim Korovin, coordinator of the Federation of Car Owners of Russia, faces up to 10 years in prison if charged and convicted of intentionally driving into the leg of a police officer.

Odintsovo town court ruled Friday to keep Korovin behind bars for another 72 hours after he had already spent 48 hours in detention, Interfax reported.

Investigators say the incident occurred on May 24, when Korovin was driving his Toyota Camry on the fourth kilometer of Rublyovo-Uspenskoye Shosse in the Odintsovo district of the Moscow region and failed to give way to the police car.

The police car, an Audi A6 with official police emblems on it that moved into his lane with flashing lights and the siren turned on, was on "emergency assignment of escorting" an official, investigators said.

When a police inspector in uniform went towards Korovin's car and gestured at him to stop, Korovin "disregarded the demand of the police officer" and ran into him, injuring the officer's [shin](#).

Korovin denied the accusations in an interview with the liberal television channel Dozhd on May 26, saying there was enough room for the officer to get by without being bumped by his car.

Korovin also told [Dozhd](#) that he would have had to violate traffic rules and endanger the safety of himself and other drivers in order to make way for the official's car.

On May 27, the Investigative Committee's Moscow branch launched a criminal probe against Korovin. On Wednesday night, investigators searched his home, confiscating electronic equipment and leaflets of his organization, and detained Korovin for 48 hours, Kommersant reported.

Police unofficially told Korovin that he was being prosecuted as a result of "offending a high ranker," Deputy Interior Minister Viktor Kiryanov, to whom he refused to make way, the activist told Dozhd.

"On Friday night, a deputy interior minister is driving out into the region ... Can he have something urgent [connected to work] there? Who would believe that?" Korovin told Dozhd.

But a source close to the investigation told [The New Times](#) late last week that the car most likely belonged to Interior Minister Vladimir Kolokoltsev.

The ministry had not commented on the incident by Sunday afternoon.

The New Times reported late last week that the policeman who had allegedly been hit by Korovin's vehicle and his two colleagues failed to mention the shin injury in reports about the incident to their superiors. The policeman also began walking with a limp only after noticing reporters, and he hobbled on his right leg despite having reportedly injured the left one, according to The New Times.

The Odintsovo town court is set to rule Monday on Korovin's arrest. His lawyer, Sergei Badamshin, predicted on [Twitter](#) that his client would be arrested by 4 p.m.

Korovin told Dozhd about his possible arrest that "the sense of shame for the country, for that which it has turned into over the last 14 years, outweighs the sense of fear," he said, apparently referring to President Vladimir Putin's time in power.

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Original url:

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