

## Navalny Ordered to Return to Kirov

June 13, 2013



Alexei Navalny, the opposition blogger, has been ordered to return to Kirov for the next hearing of his trial.

Opposition leader Alexei Navalny is to be forcibly brought back to Kirov at prosecutors' request for the continuation of the embezzlement case against him, a news report said Thursday.

Prosecutors had asked for the defendant to be detained following his failure to attend Thursday's hearing at the provincial city's Leninsky District Court, Interfax reported.

Navalny's lawyer, Sergei Kobelev, told the court that his client had been summoned to give testimony in connection with a criminal inquiry at the Investigative Committee's main office in Moscow on the same day and that he had no choice in the matter.

However, district prosecutor Sergei Bogdanov, speaking after a recess was taken to evaluate the veracity of Kobelev's statement, accused Navalny of disrespecting the court and requested that he be taken into custody, which would prevent him from leaving Kirov for the remainder of the trial.

"Navalny also believes that the court sessions in the KirovLes trial scheduled for June 13 and 14 aim to prevent him from being nominated as a candidate for mayor of Moscow," Kobelev said in court.

Navalny has already notified the court about the meeting of the RPR-PARNAS opposition party in Moscow on Friday, at which he is set to be nominated as the party's mayoral candidate and which requires his presence.

Through his attorney, Navalny asked the court "in the future not to reject his requests for court recesses and not to create artificial reasons for changing the restrictions place on him."

Meanwhile, the judge in the KirovLes case, Sergei Blinov, said the investigators in Moscow had been notified of the on-going trial in Kirov and the need for the defendant to be present at court hearings.

Navalny and his co-defendant Pyotr Ofitserov are accused of embezzling 10,000 cubic meters of timber between May and September 2009 by making KirovLes executives sell timber to Ofitserov's private VLK timber company at below-market prices.

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