

Prosecutor Asks Court to Put Navalny Away for 6 Years

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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The prosecution in the KirovLes embezzlement case has asked the court to sentence the main defendant, opposition activist Alexei Navalny, and his accomplice Petr Ofitserov to six and five years imprisonment respectively.

Prosecutors accuse Navalny, who worked as a volunteer aide to Kirov region governor Nikita Belykh in 2009, and businessman Pyotr Ofitserov of making KirovLes executives sell 16 million rubles (\$500,000) worth of timber to Ofitserov's company VLK at below-market prices.

State prosecutor Sergei Bogdanov said during Friday's court hearing in the provincial city of Kirov that their guilt had been fully established in the course of the trial, Itar-Tass reported Friday.

He also asked the court to take both defendants into police custody in the courtroom, but

appealed to the court not to sentence the defendants to any additional punishment after they serve their main prison term.

However, Bogdanov believes the court should order Navalny to pay a fine of 2 million rubles (\$60,200), while Ofitserov should be fined 1 million rubles.

In his statement the prosecutor stressed that the two men acted intentionally, being fully aware of the criminal nature of their actions when trading the timber "at deflated prices," Interfax reported.

Bogdanov said they formed a criminal conspiracy under Navalny's initiative aimed at embezzling the property of KirovLes company. He said their actions posed a threat to society.

The prosecutor noted that Navalny's public activity has drawn much public attention to the trial.

"Nothing could be worse for justice than public opinion preceding a ruling," Bogdanov was quoted as saying.

Critics of the case believe that authorities initiated it to achieve a criminal conviction of Navalny, which would make him ineligible to run in elections. Navalny has announced plans to compete for the post of Moscow mayor in the Sept. 8 race and has voiced presidential ambitions.

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