

Court Nixes Navalny's Appeal

By [The Moscow Times](#)

October 14, 2013

The  **Moscow Times**

Moscow City Court on Monday confirmed the legality of a criminal case against opposition leader Alexei Navalny and his brother Oleg on charges of defrauding a local branch of cosmetics maker Yves Rocher of 55 million rubles (\$1.8 million) in 2008.

The ruling comes after Navalny, who has denied the charges and called the probe politically motivated, appealed a similar ruling by Moscow's Basmanny District Court, which decided that the criminal probe launched in December 2012 was conducted in line with the law.

In court on Monday, the opposition leader's lawyer, Olga Mikhaylova, argued that there was "no proof" of Navalny's involvement in the crime, while investigators denied any legal violations in the opening of the criminal case, Interfax reported.

The court sided with investigators, however, prompting an announcement from Navalny on [Twitter](#) reading: "We were predictably turned down."

The deadline for the probe was earlier extended to Dec.13.

According to investigators, in 2008, Oleg Navalny, who at the time headed the department for domestic postal items, persuaded Ives Rocher Vostok to sign a contract for cargo deliveries with Glavnoye Podpisnoye Agentstvo, a company founded by Alexei Navalny. After the conclusion of the agreement, investigators say the Navalny brothers embezzled 55 million rubles (\$1.8 million).

A hearing for another appeal filed by Navalny, over his prison sentence in the KirovLes trial, which was issued in July, is set to be heard at a Kirov region court Wednesday.

In that case, Navalny and his business partner Pyotr Ofitserov are appealing their prison terms of five and four years, respectively, for allegedly stealing 16 million rubles worth of timber from state-owned company KirovLes in 2009.

If convicted, Navalny may be barred from running for office indefinitely. However, the Constitutional Court last week urged lawmakers to set a timeframe for how long people convicted of serious crimes are banned from running in elections after serving their prison term, meaning he may be able to run after a certain time period.

Navalny, who came in second in the Moscow mayoral election Sept. 8 after pro-Kremlin candidate Sergei Sobyenin, has voiced plans to run for president in 2018. If he were to follow through on those plans, he may face off against President Vladimir Putin, who said in September that he would consider running in 2018.

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