

Russian Court Orders Navalny to Pay \$35K in Kirovles Fraud Case

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A Moscow district court on Tuesday ordered opposition leader Alexei Navalny and two co-defendants to pay 2.16 million rubles (\$35,500) in damages to a timber company over charges of fraud, the state-run news agency RIA Novosti [reported](#).

The Kirovles company originally asked for 16 million rubles (\$270,400) compensation from Navalny, Petr Ofitserov and Vyacheslav Opalev in the high-profile embezzlement case.

In February, a court in the north Russian city of Kirov upheld Navalny and Ofitserov's criminal conviction dating from July 2013. The opposition leader received a 5-year suspended sentence, while his co-defendant Ofitserov received a 4-year suspended sentence. The men were fined 500,000 rubles (\$8,000) each.

Since 2011, Navalny has been the subject of several investigations and criminal cases. A court in Russia's Kirov region found Navalny embezzling funds from the timber firm in 2013 in a

case the opposition leader claims was politically motivated. The sentence was later dropped on appeal.

When Navalny was reconvicted in February, he said the ruling was an attempt to sabotage his presidential ambitions.

While the fine ordered on Tuesday falls short of the company's initial demand, it remains a setback for the Russian opposition leader who plans to run for the presidency in March 2018, even though Russian law bars anyone with a criminal record from running.

In February 2016, the European Court for Human Rights (ECHR) ruled against Navalny's July 2013 conviction, saying that the defendants' rights to a fair trial had been violated. The ECHR awarded the defendants 80,000 euros in compensation.

An ECHR statement in February 2016 said Russia's courts "had failed to address Mr. Navalny's arguable allegation that the reasons for this prosecution were his political activities."

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