

Thousands Sign Petition Calling for Case to Be Dropped Against Russian Director Serebrennikov

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Director Kirill Serebrennikov after questioning in the Russia's Investigation Committee **Kardashov Anton / Moskva News Agency**

More than 12,000 people have signed an online petition calling for the case against prominent theater director Kirill Serebrennikov to be dropped.

“We demand a stop to the criminal persecution of Serebrennikov and his team for political motives,” the petition, [published](#) on the Change.org platform, reads.

“Artists should have the right to express their opinion freely. That is guaranteed by our country’s Constitution. Law enforcement bodies and investigators should not become a baton with which to intimidate those who disagree with the authorities.”

On Wednesday morning, the petition had been signed by more than 12,400 people.

Serebrennikov, the head of the prominent Gogol Center, was detained by law enforcement on

suspicion of embezzling 68 million rubles (\$1.1 million) in government funds as part of the “Platforma” project connected to his central Moscow Gogol Center.

On Wednesday, the Moscow Basmanny court is set to decide on the form of his arrest.

The Gogol Center is among the most prominent theatres in Russia and it is widely respected for its progressive productions.

The case against the theater and Serebrennikov is widely seen as part of a state crackdown on the arts, or the director personally.

Original url: <https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2017/08/23/petition-a58731>