

Former Employees of Ksenia Sobchak Jailed in Rostec CEO Extortion Case

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Kirill Sukhanov (right) and former Tatler editor-in-chief Arian Romanovskiy. **Sergei Fadeichev / TASS**

Three former employees of Russian media influencer Ksenia Sobchak were [sentenced](#) to at least seven years in prison for trying to extort money from the head of state-owned defense conglomerate Rostec.

Multiple criminal cases were launched in August 2022 after Rostec CEO Sergei Chemezov and his aides accused the managers of several Telegram news channels of demanding money in exchange for burying critical news coverage.

Among those ultimately caught up in the scandal was Kirill Sukhanov, an ex-business manager at Sobchak's media holding Ostorozhno Media, who in October 2022 [was detained](#) at a Moscow restaurant while receiving cash from Chemezov's representative Andrei Baldukhayev.

Arian Romanovskiy, a former editor of fashion magazine Tatler Russia, was detained alongside Sukhanov. Tamerlan Bigayev, a former journalist with the pro-Kremlin tabloid Life.ru, was

arrested on the same charges days later.

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On Monday, Moscow's Khamovniki District Court found all three guilty of extortion and sentenced Sukhanov to 7.5 years in maximum-security prison. Romanovsky and Bigayev were sentenced to seven years in maximum-security prison each.

Prosecutors had requested eight years in prison for Sukhanov and 7.5 years each for Romanovsky and Bigayev.

All three had pleaded not guilty to the extortion charges.

Sukhanov had admitted to receiving 800,000 rubles (\$8,800) at the Moscow restaurant but denied having access to the Telegram channel where incriminating information about Chemezov had been published.

Sobchak, who in November 2022 visited the Rostec office and issued an on-camera apology, [slammed](#) Monday's verdict as "way more than injustice."

"I've done everything we had agreed to get leniency [for Sukhanov, Romanovsky and Bigayev]," she wrote on her personal Telegram channel.

"Why are you ruining people's lives?" she continued. "Why the disproportionality? Just as revenge?"

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