

EXTERNAL

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**Viktor OREKHOV**  
(                                 **in Russian**)

*Russian Federation*

Viktor Orekhov, a former official of the Soviet State Security Committee (KGB) and former dissident, was sentenced to three years in a corrective labour colony on 21 July 1995 by the Simonov Inter-municipal Court in Moscow. Viktor Orekhov was arrested in March 1995 following the discovery of a pistol during a search of his car by police. He was found guilty under Article 218, part 1 of the Russian Federation Criminal Code - "possession of a firearm". On 23 October 1995 his appeal was heard by the Supreme Court and resulted in his sentence being reduced to one year's corrective labour. Amnesty International would not normally take up the case of a person found guilty of such an offence. However, the organization is concerned about allegations that the criminal case against Viktor Orekhov was fabricated to punish him for making statements critical of a senior Russian security official, and in retribution for past political activities in opposition to the KGB. Amnesty International is currently seeking further information about the circumstances of Viktor Orekhov's arrest.

It is alleged that Viktor Orekhov is being punished for public comments he made about the appointment of General Anatoly Trofimov to the post of deputy head of the Russian Federal Security Services (FSK, the successor to the KGB). Viktor Orekhov had previously worked with General Trofimov in the KGB. In 1978 Viktor Orekhov had been sentenced to eight years' in a corrective labour colony for supporting Soviet dissidents and warning people of impending KGB raids while he held his post in the KGB.

Prior to his latest arrest Viktor Orekhov ran a clothing business. He was arrested after he was stopped by police while driving his car, a search of which revealed a pistol in the glove compartment. Viktor Orekhov claims that some days beforehand, a visitor to his home had left a pistol in his flat. Viktor Orekhov claims that he took this pistol with him as he was transporting a large sum of money, but that he was aware that the pistol did not work because its firing pin had been sawn through. Witnesses verify that the pistol did not work. The firearm was confiscated by police and placed in a bag. The parts were labelled with stickers. There are claims that the Russian authorities tampered with the gun and that some of the parts were changed with the result that when produced in court the pistol was in full working order. The labels on individual parts reportedly had been removed.

This case has been taken up by former dissident groups in the Russian Federation, and there have been several reports of people being arrested for holding unsanctioned meetings while protesting on behalf of Viktor Orekhov. On 21 September 1995 the European Parliament passed a resolution expressing its concern about Viktor Orekhov's case. The resolution states that the Council is "aware that the offence for which Mr Orekhov was convicted, namely the illegal possession of arms, bears some signs of having been fabricated by the security services", and continues to "hope that the appropriate authorities will examine the evidence against Mr Orekhov with a view to re-opening the case".