

URGENT ACTION

RUSSIAN COURT WHISTLEBLOWER RELEASED

On 18 July, St Petersburg's Kalininsky District Court sentenced former court secretary and whistleblower Aleksandr Eivazov to one year and ten months in an open penal colony for "interfering with the course of justice". On 21 July he was released, having served his sentence in full in pre-trial detention.

On 18 July St Petersburg Kalininsky District Court found **Aleksandr Eivazov** guilty of "interfering with the course of justice with the use of official position" (Article 294, part 3 of the Russian Criminal Code) and sentenced him to one year and ten months in an open penal colony. The court found that Aleksandr Eivazov was acting on purpose and out of personal animosity to a judge he worked with from October to December 2016, as he did not prepare and sign a protocol of a court hearing. Days before the District Court's judgement, a new law came into force which stipulates that one day in pre-trial detention is equivalent to two days in an open penal colony. This new law meant that the number of days Aleksandr Eivazov was meant to spend in prison as a result of the conviction had already been served while in pre-trial detention. He was released on 21 July. His lawyer is appealing the sentence on the grounds of an initial unjust detention.

The former court secretary was unjustly detained on 22 August 2017 in Sochi, in the southwest of Russia, for "interfering with the course of justice with the use of official position" (Article 294, part 3 of the Russian Criminal Code) and "slander with the use of official position" (Article 128, part 3 of the Russian Criminal Code) after he exposed violations in the judicial system. At a hearing on 28 June, the prosecution dropped the latter 'slander' charges due to a lack of evidence that a crime had been committed.

According to Aleksandr Eivazov's lawyer, the case was 'political, not legal', which he said explained why the sentence was harsh – more than what was asked for by the prosecution and more than a court would normally give to a person convicted on this charge for the first time – but was one that gave concessions to both sides and ultimately allowed Aleksandr Eivazov to be released within a few days while still allowing the authorities, who initiated the unjustified prosecution, to save face.

Thank you to all those who sent appeals. No further action is requested from the UA network.

This is the second update of UA 228/17. Further information <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/eur46/7911/2018/en>

Name: Aleksandr Eivazov
Gender m/f: m

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