

"Memorial" Considers the Resident of St. Petersburg Sergei Akhmetov a Political Prisoner

On July 18, 2013, in Moscow, near Manegnaya Square, there was held people's gathering in support of Alexei Navalny and Petr Ofitserov who on that day had been sentenced to imprisonment under the politically motivated case of "Kirovles". At the gathering the police conducted mass arrests; according to the NGO OVD-info, at least 209 people have been detained. On July 20, 2013, the Investigation Committee of the Russian Federation announced the initiation of criminal cases under Part 1 of Art. 318 of the Criminal Code (violence not dangerous to life or health, against a representative of authorities).

On November 22, 2015, on the border with Finland, Sergei Akhmetov, an architect and designer from St. Petersburg was arrested. He was returning to Russia from his business trip. On the same day, in the Investigations Division of the Tverskoy District under the Chief Investigation Department in Moscow, Akhmetov was charged in accordance with Part 1 of Art. 318 of the Criminal Code. On November 23, 2015, the Judge of the Tverskoy District Court of Moscow Elena Ermakova used a preventive measure in the form of detention in relation to the accused.

Apparently, the persecution of Sergei Akhmetov is a continuation of the campaign against Alexei Navalny and his supporters. In general, it is campaign of pressure on the society aimed at preventing the participation of citizens in mass street actions. In Akhmetov's case, this has resulted in calling to responsibility for participation in public action (in support of Navalny) of an individual, who did participate in this action - he merely expressed in the Internet his readiness to participate in it.

The defense presented compelling evidence of Akhmetov's innocence and of a blatant investigation error, obviously persecuting an innocent person who was not even in Moscow on July 2013. When comparing the photos published on the website of "Open Russia" of Akhmetov and of a man who ripped off a policeman's shoulder boards, it is clear that these are two different people. The investigation was not able to explain how Akhmetov arrived in Moscow on July 18, 2013, and refused to disclose the details of his telephone conversations, which could confirm that he was in St. Petersburg on that day.

Even despite the apparent innocence of Sergei Akhmetov in the offense that he has been charged with, the measures of criminal prosecution and continued detention are inadequate to the public danger of the act of ripping off a policeman's shoulder boards during a rally.

"Memorial" considers Sergei Akhmetov a political prisoner and calls for his immediate and unconditional release.

Recognition of an individual as a political prisoner or person persecuted for political reasons does not imply any consent of the HRC "Memorial" with his/her views and statements, or any approval of his/her words or actions.

Read more about the case of Sergei Akhmetov [here](#) (in Russian).

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