

Sergei Reznikov, member of a district Electoral Commission, is a political prisoner

On 6 April 2017 Sergei Reznikov, general-director of the Demetra-2000 M company and a member of the Vernadsky Prospect district electoral commission in Moscow on behalf of the Communist Party of the Russian Federation (CPRF), was sentenced to three years in a general-regime prison colony and taken into custody on the same day.

Reznikov had been charged with committing a crime under Article 228, Part 2 (illegal possession of narcotic substances, committed on a large scale) of the Russian Criminal Code, namely possessing nine packets containing cocaine that weighed in total 8,06g.

Reznikov asserts that the police planted the narcotic substances and one of the mobile phones (not listed in the official record of the search) in his pocket on the day of his arrest (29 January 2013), while the witnesses to the search who signed the official protocol arrived at the scene after the search had been conducted.

There are grounds to believe that Reznikov has been the victim of a politically-motivated, fabricated criminal case. Reznikov is a well-known opposition activist in his local district who actively combats electoral fraud and took part in civic protests during 2011–2012. It is known that he regularly conflicted with the head of the district municipal administration and with the chair of the district electoral commission in a situation where, at the district level, there is effectively a fusion of political power and business.

The CPRF believes that the criminal prosecution of Reznikov is linked to the fact that his wife, Stella Obodina, an elected CPRF member of the municipal assembly, opposes infill-construction and the illegal conversion of a kindergarten that is being carried out by Kvartal, a construction company owned by former State Duma deputy Oleg Grebenkin.

Reznikov and Obodina tried to challenge the results of the 2012 municipal elections in the multi-mandate constituency of Vernadsky Prospect, in which a former head of the district administration, the general director of Kvartal, Aleksandr Tamgin, was elected a member of the municipal assembly. They assert that violations in support of Tamgin's candidacy were identified in at least two polling stations. Reznikov's wife asserts that her husband was threatened on more than one occasion in connection with his political activity.

The fact that the investigation and trial in a straightforward criminal case lasted four years is evidence of the extremely weak evidential base and the numerous procedural violations that took place during Reznikov's prosecution. No traces of narcotic substances were found on Reznikov's hands and clothes, or in his body; a polygraph test showed that he had not consumed or stored drugs. His fingerprints were not found on the packets containing the drugs that the activist had allegedly stored. The investigators could not explain how Reznikov obtained the drugs, or for what purpose he stored them, in circumstances when there was no evidence that he used them. The investigators could not establish these facts, which are crucial for the prosecution, despite the fact that Reznikov's telephone had been tapped for a long period of time. Reznikov's arrest, the conduct of a number of investigative measures in his regard, and the initially unlawful (given his status as a current member of an electoral commission) opening of a criminal case against him, were accompanied by grave violations.

Memorial Human Rights Centre demands that Sergei Reznikov be immediately released, and the case against him be reviewed.

Recognition of an individual as a political prisoner, or of a prosecution as politically motivated, does not mean that Memorial Human Rights Centre shares or approves the individual's views, statements or actions.

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For more information about this case, see [here](#).