

Search Finance

Search Web

Sign In

Mail

HOME

INVESTING

NEWS

PERSONAL FINANCE

MY PORTFOLIOS

EXCLUSIVES



Enter Symbol

Look Up

Mon, Jul 15, 2013, 7:57 AM EDT - U.S. Markets open in 1 hr 33 mins



Kazakh politician offered rare platform at trial

By PETER LEONARD | Associated Press – Thu, Sep 13, 2012 12:17 PM EDT

Email Recommend Tweet Share +1 Print

RELATED CONTENT



In this undated file photo provided by Alex Darty, Vladimir Kozlov, 52, leader

AKTAU, Kazakhstan (AP) — The trial of an opposition politician accused of whipping up fatal clashes between oil workers and police late last year is offering up a rare window into whether Kazakhstan is shaking off its reputation as an authoritarian backwater and promoting democratic reforms.

Vladimir Kozlov's supporters had expected his trial, which started in mid-August, to last little more than two weeks and consist of the summary justice usually reserved for activists engaged in

TOP STORIES »



Markets Shored Up by China's 7.5% Growth

Associated Press Relief over China's economic growth rate helped shore up the mood in financial markets Monday ahead of a raft of ...

- Why Barnes & Noble Is Good for Amazon New York Times
- Ex-Goldman Sachs Trader Faces NY SEC Civil Trial Associated Press
- GlaxoSmithKline Routed Bribes Through Travel Agencies: China Reuters
- Twinkies Are Back, but Most Jobs Are Not CNNMoney.com

Alga Party, Vladimir Kozlov, 52, leader of Kazakhstan's unregistered political party Alga, speaks in an undisclosed location. The trial of Kozlov, accused of whipping up fatal clashes between oil workers and police late last year, is offering up a rare window into whether Kazakhstan is shaking off its reputation as an authoritarian backwater and promoting democratic reforms. Kozlov and his two fellow defendants, opposition activist Serik Sapargali and trade unionist Akzhanat Aminov, were arrested for their suspected involvement in inciting the violence in mid-December in Zhanaozen between striking oil workers and police. At least 14 people died when police opened fire on rioters. (AP Photo/Alga Party)

Soviet courts.

The 52-year-old opposition politician faces up to 12 years in jail for purportedly fomenting unrest in a remote oil town last year, but it's the ex-Soviet nation's claim to being a flourishing democracy-in-waiting that is facing the real test. In a visit to Kazakhstan before the first hearings, U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Robert Blake said Washington would closely monitor if Kozlov's trial was fair, impartial and open.

Kozlov and his two fellow defendants, opposition activist Serik Sapargali and trade unionist Akzhanat Aminov, were arrested for their suspected involvement in inciting the violence in mid-December in Zhanaozen between striking oil workers and police. At least 14 people died when police opened fire on rioters

unsanctioned anti-government initiatives. But authorities have seemingly wilted under the glare of international scrutiny, and allowed Kozlov a platform to air widely held grievances about political repression and the stagnant living conditions endured by many.

Kazakhstan, a vast and energy-rich Central Asian nation positioned between Russia and China into which U.S. and other international businesses have invested billions of dollars, is eager to be embraced as a modernizing state.

Kozlov addresses the court in his trial on charges of plotting to topple the government with the punctilious patience of a teacher lecturing a university politics class.

"We think that the more people like us there are in a country, the quicker that country will achieve prosperity," Kozlov said from the glass cage typically reserved for defendants in many post-



TRADING CENTER



Tools, Education, & Support for \$8.95 per online equity trade



\$7 Trades. Free Tools & Research. Open An Account.



Low Pricing & Powerful Tools. Open An Account.



Trade Free for 60 Days + Get up to \$600.

[Compare Brokers »](#)

opened me on hotels.

All the three men now in the dock visited and consulted with the workers, who had downed their tools and occupied Zhanaozen central square for more than half a year to demand higher salaries. For the government, this outreach work constituted an incitement to revolt. Kozlov argues he was performing activism common in any nation that aspires to inoculate itself against social unrest.

Although opposition figures have routinely been denied public platforms, Kozlov was over the past week allowed to speak freely for three days in his own defense, interspersing his testimony with wide-ranging criticisms of government mismanagement, corruption, poverty and political repression.

Kozlov argued that his party tried to warn authorities of the dangers of ignoring the unsettled labor dispute.

When President Nursultan Nazarbayev visited Zhanaozen a few days after the rioting, he claimed in a speech to residents to have been misled by local authorities about the real situation on the ground.

"I would have come to Zhanaozen a long time ago, in the summer, if the oil managers had not said: 'Oh, everything is all right,'" said Nazarbayev, who has ruled his country uninterruptedly for more than two decades. "Everybody, including the governor of the region and the head of (state energy company) Kazmunaigas, all of them cheated me by saying that negotiations were under way."

In fact, developments in Zhanaozen had been extensively covered by independent newspaper Respublika, a bitter critic of the [government](#) whose website is blocked in [Kazakhstan](#), and satellite television station K-Plus, whose journalists have routinely faced harassment.


Kozlov said he too repeatedly tried to draw officials' attention to Zhanaozen, including at international conferences attended by top government representatives, but that his words were not heeded.

The text of the often rambling 677-page indictment against Kozlov suggests a deeper political motivation for the trial by referring repeatedly to the role played by businessman Mukhtar Ablyazov, a self-exiled Nazarbayev foe. Prosecutors describe Ablyazov as the head of an extremist, criminal conspiracy bent on "seizing power by inciting civil strife and hatred."




Shocking Spanish Video - If you do not know Spanish, you will want to see this video immediately. » {Pimsleur Approach}


YAHOO! FINANCE ON FACEBOOK



(New Jersey): This 1 weird "loophole" has become the car insurance companies worst nightmare!
Your Insurance Discount



Rare plant may increase muscle growth 700% -- but is it an unfair advantage?
Health Lifestyles



You've seen the headlines...but this is even worse! An even bigger IRS scandal underway right now!
Agora Financial
Advertorials by **SmarterLifestyles™**

Ablyazov is wanted by Kazakhstan authorities on charges of siphoning off billions of dollars from BTA Bank, which is based in the country's business capital, Almaty.

He has been involved in opposition groups for the past decade. Shortly after setting up a reform-oriented party in 2001, he was sentenced to six years in jail for abuse of public office during his earlier stint as energy minister. After being pardoned by Nazarbayev and released from prison in 2003, Ablyazov vowed to stay away from politics — a promise he broke by funneling money to Kozlov's Alga opposition movement.

Political analyst and government critic Petr Svoik said the current trial was actually about the bitter rivalry between Nazarbayev and Ablyazov.

U.S.-based advocacy group Freedom House, which has closely monitored the trial, has noted numerous violations of due process and judicial impartiality. More broadly, there are concerns that Kazakhstan's much-trumpeted democratic reforms are doomed to come to nothing.

Last year's presidential election, which saw Nazarbayev winning with a Soviet-style 95 percent of the vote, was sharply criticized by international observers, who cited numerous cases of ballot box stuffing, voter intimidation and a lack of transparency. A parliamentary election in January distributed seats between Nazarbayev's Nur Otan and two little-known pro-government parties.

If Kozlov is convicted, Alga will likely cease to exist, since most of its assets are registered in his name. With few genuine opposition forces in Kazakhstan, Alga members worry that such an outcome would weaken scrutiny of the government.

"You can smash all your mirrors at home every single day, but if your face is crooked, that will change nothing," Kozlov said at the trial.

1. [Hold These Stocks Forever](#)

www.GlobalDividends.com

Buy 3 stocks for a lifetime of rich cash dividend yields up to 16%.

2. [7 Biblical Money Truths](#)

www.newsmax.com

Pastor reveals a 'Biblical Money Code' - Turns \$40,000 into \$396,000

3. [VA Loans for Veterans](#)

www.VeteransUnited.com/GetStarted

Prequalify For a \$0 Down Home Loan. Get a Quote in Just 2 Minutes!

Ads

WE RECOMMEND

- [This Lottery Winner Is Becoming Our Favorite New Millionaire](#)
- ['Breaking Amish' Star Strips Down For Maxim](#)
- [Indico Appoints New Director and Chief Operating Officer; Ocana...](#)
- [Colo. man pleads guilty to flight attendant grope](#)
- [When to Convert Your Savings Into an Annuity](#)
- [Mortgages shimmy down after a tempestuous rise](#)

FROM AROUND THE WEB

Sponsored

- [How to Turn Old Bottles into Picture Frames](#) (DIY Network)
- [4 Investment "Truths" that Turned Out to Be False](#) (etrade.com)
- [Why RMB will be a global currency by 2015](#) (RBS)
- [No more Social Security at 62?](#) (Bankrate.com)
- [How Will You Afford Health Care in Retirement? We Have Ideas](#) (BlackRock)
- [What you don't know about shale gas may surprise you](#) (ExxonMobil)

BREAKOUT / STOCK ANALYSIS YOU CAN TRUST | **YAHOO! FINANCE** Financial decisions with confidence | [Watch now](#)

Recent Quotes

Portfolios

Symbol	Price	Change	% Cha	Chart	Recent Quotes	New s
--------	-------	--------	-------	-------	---------------	-------

Your most recently viewed tickers will automatically show up here if you type a ticker in the "Enter symbol/company" at the bottom of this module.

Enter Symbol

Look Up



ON THIS SITE

- HOME
- MY PORTFOLIOS
- INVESTING
- EXCLUSIVES
- NEWS
- CNBC
- PERSONAL FINANCE

ALSO ON YAHOO!

- Autos
- Movies
- Travel
- Finance
- Music
- TV
- Games
- omg!
- Y! News RSS
- Groups
- Shine
- Y! News Alert
- Health
- Shopping
- Maps
- Sports

All Yahoo! »

TRENDING NOW

1. Carly Rae Jepsen
2. Kate Middleton
3. Woman gored
4. Trayvon Martin protests
5. Marijuana legalization
6. KTVU apologizes
7. Belfast Riots
8. Oakland Athletics
9. Lionfish
10. MLB All-Star rosters

YAHOO! FINANCE WORLDWIDE



Argentina Australia Brazil Canada China France French Canada Germany Hong Kong
India Italy Japan Korea Mexico New Zealand Singapore Spain Spanish Taiwan UK & Ireland USA



Copyright 2012 The Associated Press. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten or redistributed.

Copyright © 2013 Yahoo! Inc. All rights reserved. [Help / Suggestions](#) [Privacy Policy](#) [About Our Ads](#) [Terms of Service](#) [Copyright/IP Policy](#)

Quotes are real-time for NASDAQ, NYSE, and NYSEAmex when available. See also delay times for **other exchanges**. Quotes and other information supplied by independent providers identified on the Yahoo! Finance **partner page**. Quotes are updated automatically, but will be turned off after 25 minutes of inactivity. Quotes are delayed at least 15 minutes. All information provided "as is" for informational purposes only, not intended for trading purposes or advice. Neither Yahoo! nor any of independent providers is liable for any informational errors, incompleteness, or delays, or for any actions taken in reliance on information contained herein. By accessing the Yahoo! site, you agree not to redistribute the information found therein.

Fundamental company data provided by **Capital IQ**. Historical chart data and daily updates provided by **Commodity Systems, Inc. (CSI)**. International historical chart data and daily updates provided by **Morningstar, Inc.**

Yahoo! - ABC News Network