

Russian cosmonaut wins wages case vs space agency (Update)

October 4 2013



In this Friday, Oct. 24, 2008 file photo Russian cosmonaut Sergei Volkov shortly after landing in a Soyuz space capsule near Arkalyk, in Kazakhstan. A Moscow regional court has upheld a lawsuit filed by the prominent cosmonaut against the Russian space training center complaining about wages. Col. Sergei Volkov, who has logged 199 days in space, was contesting a recent government decision to strip retired military men like himself of extra pay for their space experience.

(AP Photo/Dmitry Kostyukov, file)

A Moscow regional court on Friday upheld a lawsuit filed by a prominent cosmonaut against the Russian space training center complaining about wages.

Col. Sergei Volkov, who has logged 199 days in space, was contesting a recent government decision to strip retired military men like himself of extra pay for their space experience.

The court in the Moscow region where the Russian cosmonauts' training ground is located upheld Volkov's lawsuit, ordering the Gagarin Cosmonaut Training Center to pay cosmonauts with military backgrounds for the spaceflights they have completed. It also awarded him 1.4 million rubles (\$43,500) in back wages.

Extra pay for space experience for veteran cosmonauts like Volkov could be equal to their monthly salary.

The 40-year-old Volkov, who started out as a military pilot and went on long-term missions at the International Space Station in 2008 and 2011, serves as the head of the cosmonauts at the training center that he sued.

Cosmonaut Sergei Zaletin told the RIA Novosti news agency that Volkov was "representing all military cosmonauts."

Instances of Russian officials suing their agencies are extremely rare.

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Citation: Russian cosmonaut wins wages case vs space agency (Update) (2013, October 4)

retrieved 19 April 2024 from

<https://phys.org/news/2013-10-russian-cosmonaut-wages-case-space.html>

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