

URGENT ACTION

ALEKSEI NAVALNY GIVEN PRISON SENTENCE

On 2 February, a court in Russia ruled to imprison prominent anti-corruption and opposition activist Aleksei Navalny for two years and eight months for “violation of probation terms”. Tens of thousands join regular protests in his support, and thousands have been arbitrarily detained and subjected to ill-treatment. Aleksei Navalny must be freed immediately and unconditionally.

TAKE ACTION: WRITE AN APPEAL IN YOUR OWN WORDS OR USE THIS MODEL LETTER

President of the Russian Federation

Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin

Ilyinka St., 23

103132 Moscow

Russian Federation

Online form: <http://en.letters.kremlin.ru/> (in English)

<http://letters.kremlin.ru/letters/send> (in Russian)

Twitter: @KremlinRussia

Dear President,

I am writing to you concerning politician and anti-corruption activist **Aleksei Navalny** who was arrested on 17 January 2021 and sent to prison for two years eight months for purported “violation of [his] probation terms”.

Aleksei Navalny has been arbitrarily deprived of his liberty. His imprisonment for this purported “violation” is politically motivated and seeks to silence him and end his peaceful activism. It relates to a past conviction which the European Court of Human Rights has found to be “arbitrary and manifestly unreasonable” and intended to “suppress political pluralism”. As you are aware, the “violation” consisted in Aleksei Navalny’s failure to report regularly to a probation officer, as part of his non-custodial sentence, which he could not do while he was receiving life-saving treatment abroad following his poisoning in Russia.

Aleksei Navalny is a prominent and very vocal government critic. Like many others in Russia, he has been arbitrarily deprived of his liberty for his peaceful political activism and for exercising his right to freedom of expression. He is a prisoner of conscience and must be released immediately and unconditionally.

I urge you to use your authority as the President of the Russian Federation to take necessary steps to ensure Aleksei Navalny’s immediate and unconditional release, and an end to reprisals against, and persecution of, all other government critics.

Yours sincerely,

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Aleksei Navalny is a Russian politician and anti-corruption activist. He is one of the most prominent critics of the Russian authorities and the founder of the Anti-Corruption Foundation (known as FBK in Russian), which has conducted investigations into corruption among Russia's senior officials and prominent politicians and businesspeople. Aleksei Navalny as well as many FBK employees and associates have faced reprisals for their work including fabricated criminal and administrative charges, police raids and house search, physical violence and selective army conscription.

In 2014, Aleksei Navalny was found guilty under politically motivated charges of fraud and sentenced to three and a half years on probation. The European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) later ruled that the sentence was "arbitrary and manifestly unreasonable" (Navalny v. Russia, no. 101/15, §83, 5 March 2018) and that by keeping Aleksei Navalny under house arrest for 10 months prior to the sentencing Russian authorities pursued an "ulterior purpose", namely "to suppress political pluralism" (Navalny v. Russia (No. 2), §98, no. 43734/14). The Russian Supreme Court ordered a retrial, which failed to address human rights violations pinpointed by the ECtHR and upheld the initial conviction and sentence.

On 20 August 2020, Aleksei Navalny fell seriously ill during a flight from Tomsk (Siberia) to Moscow. On 22 August, on his family's insistence and after a vigorous domestic and international campaign, Aleksei Navalny was transferred for treatment to Berlin, Germany, in a comatose state. Vladimir Putin subsequently claimed that he had personally intervened to authorise his transfer. Aleksei Navalny gradually recovered in Germany and was discharged from the hospital to continue his rehabilitation.

Experts from several countries concluded that Aleksei Navalny had been poisoned with the nerve agent Novichok. In spite of this and of Aleksei Navalny's representatives' relentless attempts to have a criminal investigation into his alleged poisoning opened, the Russian authorities have consistently refused to do so and to recognise this diagnosis. Independent investigative group Bellingcat has published their findings suggesting that Aleksei Navalny could have been poisoned by agents of the Russia's Federal Security Service (FSB).

In December 2020, while Navalny was recovering from the poisoning, a new criminal case was opened accusing him of "embezzling" donations from his supporters. Simultaneously, the Federal Penal Service (FSIN) claimed that Aleksei Navalny was violating the terms by not reporting to the penitentiary authorities. FSIN requested that his probation be replaced with an actual prison term of three and a half years.

On 17 January Aleksei Navalny flew to Moscow where he was arrested at the border control. Massive, overwhelmingly peaceful, protests against his arrest took place across Russia in January and February during which more than 11,000 people were arbitrarily arrested, often violently. Hundreds of peaceful protesters were put under "administrative arrest" following unfair trials and held in conditions that amounted to torture or other ill-treatment. A number of Aleksei Navalny's associates and high-profile supporters, as well as ordinary demonstrators, are also facing trumped-up criminal charges related to the protests.

On 2 February, a court in Moscow granted FSIN's motion and ruled to imprison Aleksei Navalny for 2 years and 8 months (taking into consideration his pre-trial house arrest).

PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET: Russian

PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL: 1 April 2021

Please check with the Amnesty office in your country if you wish to send appeals after the deadline.

NAME AND PREFERRED PRONOUN: Aleksei Navalny (he/his)

LINK TO PREVIOUS UA: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/eur46/3564/2021/en/>

And copies to:

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