

# URGENT ACTION

## ALEKSEI NAVALNY'S HEALTH AND LIFE IN DANGER

Prominent Russian opposition figure and anti-corruption campaigner Aleksei Navalny was arbitrarily arrested on 17 January 2021 after recovering from being poisoned. He was subsequently sentenced to two and a half years in prison for "violating the terms of a suspended sentence". In prison, he is being ill-treated and denied adequate medical assistance despite serious deterioration of his health. In protest, he continues a hunger strike that began on 31 March. Aleksei Navalny's detention is unlawful and politically motivated. He must be immediately released.

**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 the unlawful detention of opposition politician and anti-corruption activist **Aleksei Navalny**, who was arrested on 17 January 2021 and sent to a penal colony for 2 years and 6 months for "violation of terms of a suspended sentence".*

*Aleksei Navalny's detention is arbitrary, unlawful and politically motivated. The European Court of Human Rights has found the original conviction to be "arbitrary and manifestly unreasonable" and subsequently called on the Russian authorities to immediately release Aleksei Navalny. The orders of the Court have been ignored thus far.*

*Aleksei Navalny's health has severely deteriorated while in prison. The prison authorities have reportedly woken him hourly with unnecessary night "checks", depriving him of sleep. Despite numerous demands, he has to date been denied adequate medical assistance, including visits by a medical doctor of his choice and receipt of any medicine or treatment he may require. He has complained of debilitating pain in his back and numbness in his legs, and his condition appears to be worsening each day. In protest of being denied access to a doctor he trusts, Aleksei Navalny began a hunger strike on 31 March. On 5 April, he was transferred to a prison hospital with high fever and coughing.*

*Failure to provide detainees with adequate and unfettered access to medical care and subjecting them to sleep deprivation may amount to torture or other ill-treatment. Torture is a crime under international law, and all those responsible could be prosecuted in other countries they may visit in future that have put in place measures to do so.*

**As the president of the Russian Federation, I urge you to use your authority to ensure:**

- **Aleksei Navalny is immediately released;**
- **Pending his release, his examination by qualified independent medical specialists of his choice; and the provision to him of their prescribed treatment, including at a civil medical institution, as required;**
- **An immediate and effective investigation into Aleksei Navalny's prison conditions- including the alleged practice of sleep deprivation caused by hourly night "checks" and the failure to provide adequate medical treatment, and a commitment to bring to account those responsible.**

Yours sincerely,

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Aleksei Navalny is a Russian opposition 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 searches, 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 conviction was "arbitrary and manifestly unreasonable" (Navalnyy 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" (Navalnyy 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 confirmed the initial sentence.

On 20 August 2020, Aleksei Navalny fell seriously ill during a flight from Tomsk (Siberia) to Moscow. On 22 August 2020, on his family's insistence and after a vigorous domestic and international campaign, Aleksei Navalny was transferred for treatment to Berlin, Germany, in a coma. President 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 with multiple governments, international organisations, and UN Special Rapporteurs (including then-SR on extrajudicial, summary, or arbitrary executions Agnès Callamard) concluded that Aleksei Navalny had been poisoned with military-grade nerve agent Novichok and pointed to the responsibility of the Russian authorities for the poisoning.

On 17 January 2021, Aleksei Navalny returned to Moscow where he was arrested at the border control for allegedly violating the terms of the suspended sentence by not reporting to the penitentiary authorities. Massive, overwhelmingly peaceful protests against his arrest took place across Russia in January and February of this year where more than 11,000 people were arrested, often with excessive force. More than 1,000 peaceful protesters were put under "administrative arrest" following unfair trials and held in inhuman conditions. A number of Aleksei Navalny's associates and high-profile supporters, as well as many other demonstrators, are also facing criminal charges related to the protests.

On 2 February 2021, a court in Moscow ruled to imprison Aleksei Navalny for 2 years and 8 months (subsequently reduced by two months) for "violation of terms of a suspended sentence". He was sent to a penal colony IK-2 in Vladimir Oblast, about 100 km east from Moscow, where he remains held.

**PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET:** Russian

You can also write in your own language.

**PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL: 3 JUNE 2021**

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

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