

America-Eurasia Center



## The Death of Democracy in Russia



Navalny's video from the Arctic Prison is beamed into a Kovrov Courtroom, AP Photo-Antonina Favorskaya

Since Alexei Navalny has returned to Russia he has been arrested, imprisoned, tortured, and shuffled around in various Russian prisons eventually relocating the most dangerous – the Arctic Circle Polar Wolf (IK-3) prison camp in Kharp, where the temperature plummets to -22°F. On February 16, 2024, according to prison authorities, Navalny died shortly after taking a brief walk outside, after which he felt unwell and lost consciousness. Russia has now lost one of symbols of democracy, a John the Baptist, calling for reform against corruption and suffering a similar fate. Navalny will stand as one of the greatest civil society heroes of our times, as he risked his own life on numerous occasions. After being poisoned in Siberia by the Novichok nerve agent by Russian FSB agents on August 20, 2020, Navalny made the difficult decision to return to Moscow.

Navalny was prompted to give a message to the Russian people, during his latest documentary which received an Oscar in 2022. He said, “You are not allowed to give up. If they decide to kill me, that means we are incredibly strong. We need to utilize this

power to not give up, to remember we are a huge power that is being oppressed by these bad dudes. Across Russia, 400 people have been imprisoned for laying flowers as a memorial to Navalny and have received fines and prison sentences of 1-6 days. It remains to be seen, but his death will have an impact on the soul of Russia's hope's for democracy however with Putin's brutal crackdown of any dissent in Russia there is little chance for change. In fact, a Russian priest, Grigory Mikhnov-Vaitenko, was arrested outside his house on his way to the Solovetsky stone, which is a memorial to all of the victims of political repression.



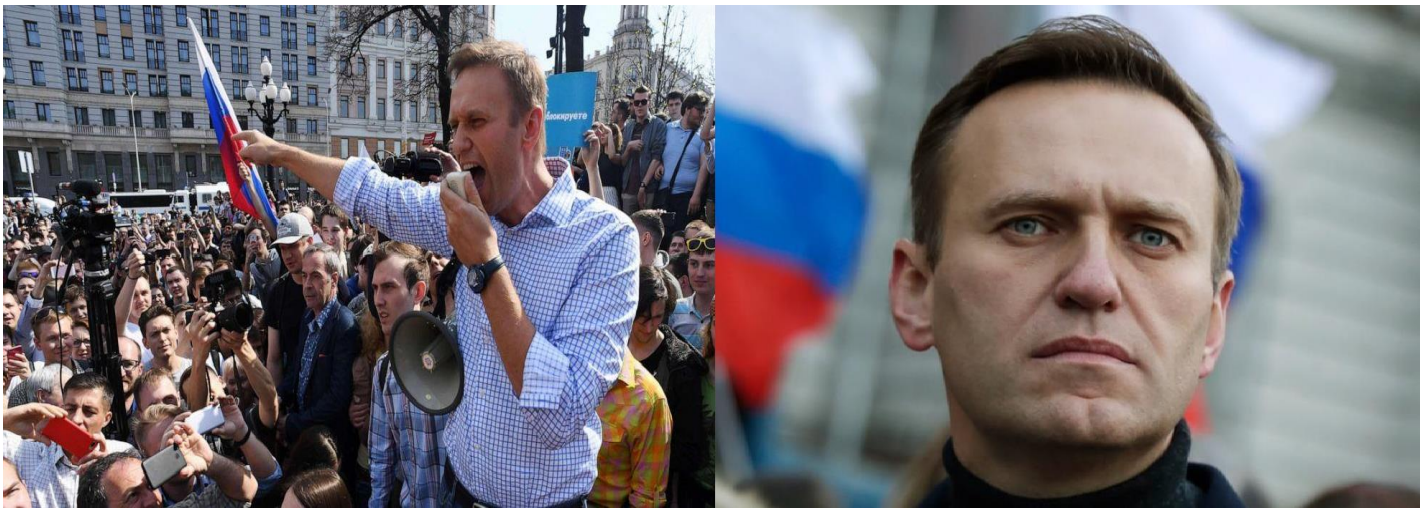
Protests against Putin's Regime for its murder of Russia's democratic hero Navalny  
Russian Embassy, Washington, DC.

After her husband's death, Yulia Navalnaya, vowed to continue his mission against the Putin Regime. She addressed the European Union foreign ministers and posted a YouTube video where she announced:

*I will continue the work of Alexei Navalny. A free, peaceful, happy Russia, a beautiful Russia of the future, which my husband dreamed of so much – that is what we need. I want to live in this Russia. I want our children to live in it. I want to build it with you. Putin did not only murder the person, Alexei Navalny. He wanted, along with him, to kill out hope, our freedom, our future.”*

In an effort to retrieve Alexei Navalny's body, his mother Lyudmila traveled to the Polar Wolf prison in the Arctic Circle. She was denied access as prison officials told her his body was transported to the nearby town of Salekhard. Navalny's team of investigators found out that his body was brought to Salekhard's hospital first, and then to the morgue. However, the morgue was closed and Navalny's lawyers were informed the body was not there either. Regardless, it seems like a Polar Artic cover-up is occurring to hide the circumstances of Navalny's death.

## **Conspiracy to Defeat Democracy in Russia**



## **NAVALNY'S DIFFICULT PATH HOME: CONVICTED AND SENT TO PENAL COLONY**

Alexei Navalny took the bold step of returning to Russia, a land where he was poisoned in Siberia but managed to survive this ordeal by being placed in a coma and being flown to Berlin's Charite Hospital. It has been confirmed from leading global chemical weapons agencies that he was poison from a nerve variant of the Novichok group of toxins that was secretly placed on his underwear while he was not in his hotel room by agents from Russia's Federal Security Service (FSB). It has

been confirmed from leading global chemical weapons agencies that he was poisoned from a nerve variant of the Novichok group of toxins. This is not the first time, critics or former spy-defectors of the Russian government have been targets of assassination attempts. The years of mysterious disappearances and punishment of journalists, oligarchs, and critics of the regime over the years leaves only one answer – that the Russian people have lived in a KGB Democracy for the past twenty years. Navalny has now been arrested and convicted of violating a parole while he was placed in a coma and sent abroad to seek medical treatment to save his life. Navalny's anti-corruption team recently released a video investigation that links a luxury palace to the Russian leader Vladimir Putin and placed it on YouTube where 25% of Russian citizens have viewed it. The video features Putin's secret palace in southern Russia designed by an Italian architect, that features a theatre, ice-hockey stadium, and casino.

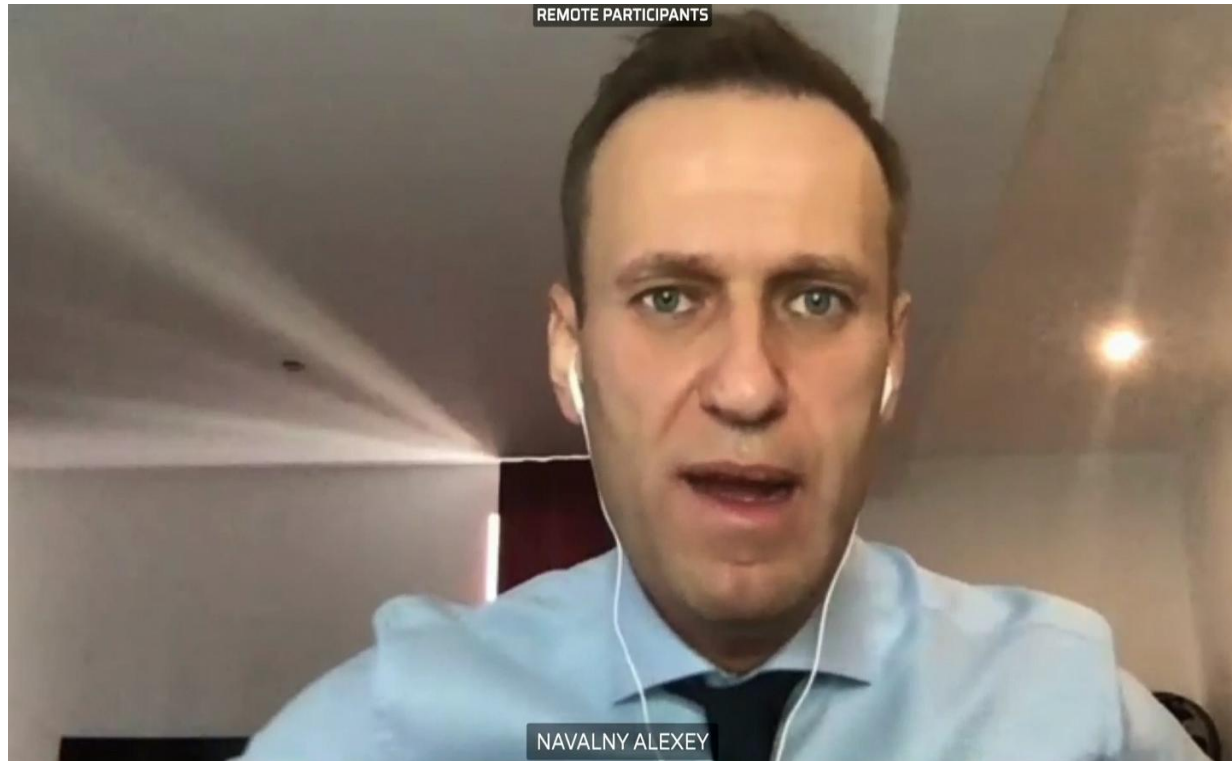


Navalny on Trial, signals heart to his wife. Photo Credit: AP

Slowly but surely, under the Putin regime, like the sheep of Soviet days, Russian citizens have surrendered their freedoms. The state-run television produces the positive cult of personality of Putin, but underlying the regime is one of corruption and mismanagement that has left the countryside and the majority of people living on the edge of poverty, back to the future. The whole focus of the Russian media has shifted to supporting the war in Ukraine and all of its falsehoods as it grinds on to its third year. It is a war that will devastate the nation, as Russians are losing lives and creating a large number of wounded soldiers. State funds that are diverted could have been used to create a real Russian middle class. The rich get richer and the poor get poorer. The gross mismanagement of Russia's domestic policy and in international affairs had left disasters with respect to relations with other nation states. Such erratic behavior has affected the interrelationships between citizens of many nations as each ruler sought to blame other people, other nations to distract from their own ambitions and shortcomings. This dangerous trend is something that the world can ill afford for the future. This

cycle of breaking the norms and customs of civil society, democracy and the rule of law, of sanctions and counter-sanctions, would have been never-ending. There will be a higher justice and a higher court for those who disregard such basic principles of human decency and life.

This is the model that Navalny and other Russians have fiercely protested for, risked their lives and livelihoods for, so that democracy may once again return to Russia. The cards are stacked against them, but their heroism, like when citizens protested in Belarus, became a shining example of what ordinary citizens can achieve against all odds, despite the crackdown that followed.



*Navalny testifying before a hearing of the European Parliament’s Foreign Affairs Committee, Euronews*

Navalny had taken on a call for Europe to sanction pro-Kremlin Russian oligarchs who have supported Vladimir Putin, including Roman Abramovich and Alisher Usmanov. He believes that no one will take the European sanctions seriously until the oligarchs are targeted. He recommended that Europe not recognize Russia’s upcoming parliamentary elections if the opposition parties are not allowed to run. Although initially avoiding European support while in Russia, Navalny has decided to court Europe and is also speaking English during his interviews. He decided to go back to Russia and work for democratic reform from the inside and not to remain sidelined in Europe. Regarding his poisoning, he testified, “I’m definitely not the first one, and unfortunately I will not be the last one who is poisoned or killed, and it is extremely important for the Russian people to know Europe and the European parliament will not keep silent on such events.”

In February 2021, Navalny was convicted and sentenced to 2.5 years to be served in a penal colony because he allegedly violating his parole for a 2014 fraud conviction. He was sent to the I-K2 Penal Colony outside of Moscow. A number of former prisoners have described treatment in the Penal Colony as harsh. Prisoners face severe isolation, harassment and punishment for even the slightest infractions. The White

House has sanctioned senior Kremlin officials, mostly from the FSB and military but including Sergey Kiriyyenko, Deputy Chief of State for President Putin, and General of the Army Pavel Popov. Sanctions have also been placed on the Federal Security Service and the Russian's Military Intelligence Agency. It is doubtful that these sanctions will have much of an affect. Navalny's Anti-Corruption Foundation (FBK) has called for sanctions on Russia's major oil companies and sent the White House a list of 35 individuals to sanction.

## **ABOUT ALEXEI NAVALNY**

- He was a Russian politician and anti-corruption activist.
- He had organized demonstrations advocating reform and against political corruption, Putin and Putin's political allies; he has run for a political office on the same platform.
- Navalny was a Russian Opposition Coordination Council member and the leader of the political party Progress Party
- Navalny came to prominence via his blog hosted by LiveJournal, but later switched to YouTube where he has 3.79 million subscribers and Twitter where he has more than 2.1 million followers.
- 2011-2012: emerged as an opposition leader, critics call him a nationalist.
- 2017 – Jailed 3 times for organizing protests against Putin.
- July 2019 – Sentenced to 30 days in prison for calling for protest at Moscow City Hall. Rushed to hospital suffering acute allergic reaction and said he may have been poisoned.
- October 2019 – his organization, Anti-Corruption Foundation (FBK), is declared as a “foreign agent”.
- July 2020 – Calls the vote to extend Putin's rule a “huge lie.” In addition, his offices are raided. Banned from leaving Moscow. Navalny's organization is banned.
- August 2020 – hospitalized in suspected poisoning, according to spokeswoman.
- August 22, 2020 – Navalny arrives in Germany for treatment at Berlin's Charite hospital.
- September 2020-October 2021, Navalny recuperates in Black Forest village of Ibach, going through extreme conditioning exercises.
- December 21, 2020, Navalny tricks Konstantin Kudryavtsev, FSB Agent into admitting he poison Navalny's underpants with Novichok in his hotel room.
- December 2020, moves to Freiburg and works on feature film 'Putin's Palace' on the Black Sea coast
- January 17, 2021 – Navalny flies back to Moscow and is arrested at the airport for parole violations.
- January 19, 2021 – Putin's Palace is released and has been viewed over 125 million times.
- February 2, 2021 – Russian court sentences Navalny to a 3 ½ jail sentence for parole violations minus the time he spent under house arrest, which totals 2 ½ years, to be spent at penal colony IK-2, Vladimir Oblast, outside of Moscow.

- On April 26, 2021, the Moscow prosecutor's office labeled Navalny as an extremist and they began arresting members of Navalny's team as terrorists and extremist in an effort to dismantle Navalny's civic society network.
- The Russian courts kept applying fines and additional prison sentences of 10-15 years on trumped up charges of fraud and contempt charges. During one of his trials in on February 24, 2022, Navalny condemned the Russian invasion of Ukraine. He said it would "lead to a huge number of victims, destroyed futures, and the continuation of this line of impoverishment of the citizens of Russia."
- Navalny railed against the "monstrosity of lies" by the Russian state media and stated that Russian media personalities who were supporting the war in Ukraine "should be treated as war criminals and be sanctioned now and tried someday."

- From prison, Navalny tried to relaunch his Anti-Corruption Foundation in July 2022 as an international foundation with an international advisory board which included his wife Yulia. He even said he was relaunching his political network to fight the mobilization process for the Russian armed forces, for which he as given 19 more years in prison. In addition, his lawyers were arrested as extremists. **Summary:**

The anti-corruption campaigner fell ill during a flight and the plane made an emergency landing in Omsk, where doctors said he was in a coma and they were trying to save his life. In June, he described a vote on constitutional reforms as a "coup" and a "violation of the constitution." The reforms allow Mr. Putin to serve another two terms in office, after the four terms he has had already, as President for life. He survived the poisoning attempt after he was flown for treatment in Germany, but returned to Russia only to be arrested, convicted, and sentenced to 2.5 years for violating the terms of his parole. He is currently serving his term in the harsh I-K2 Penal Colony outside of Moscow. While at the penal colony, Navalny is constantly kept up at night, as prison guards enforce the punishment of sleep deprivation on him. He has incurred various violations by the prison guards and may face solitary confinement. Navalny stated in his Instagram account that he "never

imagined it was possible to build a real concentration camp 100 kilometers from Moscow."



- After takeoff, Navalny said that he was not feeling well and asked for a napkin; he was sweating. He asked to talk to him, he wants to concentrate on the sound of his voice. He went to the toilet, after which he lost consciousness.
- Alexei Navalny was connected to a ventilator in the Omsk emergency hospital No. 1, according to the politician's press secretary Kira Yarmysh.
- Federal TV channels in the final news broadcasts on August 20 did not talk about the poisoning of politician Alexei Navalny.



- The wife of politician Alexei Navalny, Yulia, appealed to President Vladimir Putin with a demand to allow the transfer of the oppositionist for treatment to Germany. Earlier, Putin's press secretary Dmitry Peskov said that the Kremlin did not receive an official appeal but saw messages on social networks. At the same time, Peskov clarified that in this case, "unnecessary bureaucracy is not needed." The official referred to the opinion of the doctors who had banned the transport of Navalny.
- The politician is still in a coma, the exact diagnosis is unknown, his associates believe that he was poisoned. Navalny was flown to Germany from Omsk. At the same time, throughout the day, Russian doctors insisted that transportation was impossible - and at least once publicly lied that the German doctors accompanied Navalny agreed with their position.
- The European Court of Human Rights took the decision on the application filed on urgent measures for the need to transport Alexei Navalny to a competent medical organization.
- Doctors of the Omsk hospital, where politician Alexei Navalny was in intensive care, allowed him to be sent for treatment to Germany.
- He was flown to Berlin, in a plane which was prepared by the Cinema for Peace Foundation.

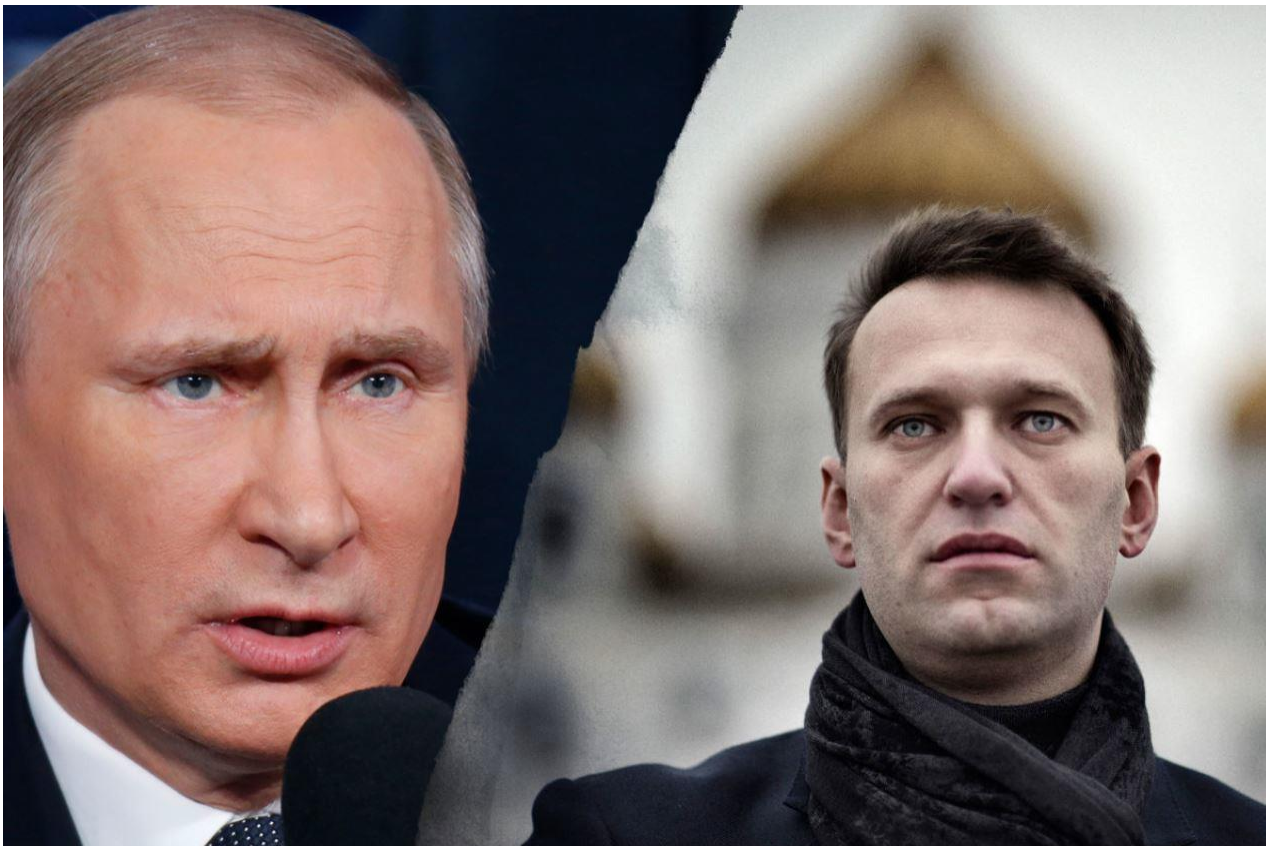


Yulia Navalnaya (Navalny's wife) and Ivan Zhdanov, the jailed chief of Russian opposition politician Aleksei Navalny's Anti-Corruption Foundation.

## **Reasons:**

Poisoning is a favorite method used by special services in a political war (it cannot be called a struggle; it is an undeclared war). It is impossible to investigate poisoning in a state where the secret service is run by the only party in power.

- The reason for the critically long pause with the transfer of Navalny for treatment outside Russia is most likely that the composition of the poison is a state secret. The time for its decay in the body is the time for masking the traces of the crime.
- By the ingredients of the poison, it is possible to establish the manufacturer (the place of possible production) and - most importantly - to clarify the mechanism of action, which allows not only symptomatic, but also evidence-based treatment. And it allows, if successful, to save many lives for the future. Disclosure of the poison formula is a major step towards antidote and devaluation of the poison for the customer. German doctors confirmed that the poison had the biological characteristics of Novichok, a Soviet-style military nerve agent.
- Without Putin's consent, it was impossible to take Navalny out of Omsk abroad (Navalny, by the way, has a recognizance not to leave), to accept external assistance, to provide not only a chance to survive for a person on the brink of life and death, but also an opportunity for specialists who cannot be controlled by the Russian power (that is, Putin), to conduct research and draw their own conclusions.



## What the Russian government was afraid of?

- This incident, he explains, is related to the Federal agenda, and not to the regional one, where local social issues predominate. An exception, he considers the campaign of his supporters in the elections to the Novosibirsk City Council, which was the main one for the FBK. What happened to Navalny will allow the Russian opposition to consolidate situationally.
- Previous internal divisions between them will be postponed, this will reinforce Navalny's leadership in the opposition environment. But if Navalny is unable to engage in vigorous activity for a while, on the eve of the elections to the State Duma, the opposition will be left without support from one of its most important media representatives. Navalny decided in Germany, once he became convinced that he was poisoned by Putin, that he would return to Russia. He conditioned himself for it and became determined to expose Putin's corruption. Now, with Navalny in jail, he has become another martyr for the future of democracy in Russia. **However, our predication of him becoming a martyr for the future of democracy proved to be true, especially with the March Russian Presidential elections coming with Putin determined to silence all opposition candidates and critics of his regime.**