

United Russia, Elections Commission Question Navalny's Fundraising

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Opposition candidate Alexei Navalny's fundraising system has raised objections in the Moscow City Duma, the Central Elections Commission and the Kremlin, with opponents saying that the candidate could be receiving funds from abroad.

The blogger's new system, called Credit Trust, has seen Russian citizens close to the campaign contribute the maximum sum permitted by law, 1 million rubles (\$30,466), and then open a digital wallet on Yandex.Money. Through the site anyone can anonymously compensate them for their donation, Navalny's representative Vladimir Ashurkov told Vedomosti.

Vladimir Zhirinovskiy, leader of the Liberal Democratic Party, told reporters Friday that his party would ask the Prosecutor General to investigate who is transferring money to the Yandex accounts.

"We can't know who is sending him money — Washington or Chukotka," Zhirinovsky said, suggesting that Navalny is violating the prohibition against accepting contributions from abroad.

Members of United Russia have also declared the strategy illegal. The law prohibits two-tier systems where the funds come from some unknown third party, Konstantin Mazurevsky, the deputy head of United Russia's executive committee, told Itar-Tass on Sunday.

The Navalny team has vehemently denied claims that their fundraising is illegal, saying that contributors donate their own personal funds prior to receiving compensation.

"Not one kopeck from abroad comes to the campaign fund account. Our system is completely protected from that," Navalny's head of staff, Leonid Volkov, told Gazeta.ru. He added that contributors have no guarantee of getting their money back.

Navalny posted a response to Zhirinovsky on his LiveJournal and offered a series of graphs illustrating the ages and corresponding average donation levels of his contributors.

"We have the most transparent and clearest system of financing. I look forward to when other candidates, including the representative from the Liberal Democratic Party, explain where their money comes from," Navalny wrote. He estimated that his campaign has already gathered around 30 million rubles (\$914,000), with most of the money coming from voters less than 40 years old.

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