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Navalny Aides Say Russian Prosecutors Seeking His Arrest

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Opposition leader Alexei Navalny.

Opposition leader Alexei Navalny's aides said Friday that a Russian prosecutor and the prison service have asked a court to issue an arrest warrant for the anti-corruption blogger on suspicion of violating his house arrest terms.

On his Twitter account, which he is banned from using, Navalny's aides said the Federal Prison Service was seeking his arrest for commenting on the so-called Yves Rocher case in which he is accused of stealing more than 30 million rubles ($840,600) from two companies, one affiliated to the French cosmetics firm.

They also posted a photograph of the request.

Navalny is under house arrest and is banned from using the Internet while he awaits trial, which he and other prominent opposition figures have ridiculed as politically motivated.

He was in court on Friday for a preliminary, closed hearing.

"The Federal Prison Service is soliciting the arrest of Alexei on the grounds [that] he is commenting the case of Yves Rocher and is publishing documents in the case," the Tweet read. "The prosecutor's office is supporting the prison service."

Neither the prison service nor prosecutor could be reached for immediate comment.

Last year Navalny was convicted of embezzling 16 million rubles ($466,000) worth of timber in an unrelated case and sentenced to five years in prison. The sentence was later suspended after large street protests in central Moscow.

Navalny says the criminal charges against him are trumped-up and the campaign to silence him is run by the Kremlin, which is wary of any potential rivals to President Vladimir Putin, who has ruled Russia since 2000.

Navalny, who rose to prominence as an anti-corruption campaigner, led street protests that shook the Kremlin in 2011 and 2012, marring Putin's return for a third term ruling Russia.

Navalny is barred from seeking office for years due to the conviction on the timber case.

See also:

Navalny Gets 6 More Months of House Arrest

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