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Russian Paper Deletes Article Claiming Navalny Received Kremlin Funds

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Opposition activist Alexey Navalny

Russian tabloid LifeNews removed a report from its website Thursday that claimed prominent opposition activist Alexey Navalny had secretly been receiving state funds after the Kremlin vehemently denied the allegations, the TASS news agency reported.

"Reports about the Kremlin financing [Navalny] are absolute nonsense and a stunt to increase ratings, with all due respect to LifeNews," an unnamed source in the Kremlin told state news agency TASS.

LifeNews — a sensationalist pro-Kremlin media outlet — released a report Thursday morning alleging that Navalny had received financing through government tenders won by Alexandrina Markvo, the common-law wife of Vladimir Ashurkov, a former banker who now serves as the executive director of Navalny's anti-corruption campaign.

Ashurkov fled Russia and sought political asylum in Britain earlier this year amid an investigation into embezzlement allegations during Navalny's 2013 Moscow mayoral

campaign.

Entitled "Kremlin Secretly Financing Navalny," the LifeNews report asserted that Markvo's Moscow-based arts and events company Buro-17 had worked with authorities during Navalny's electoral campaign, Vedomosti reported.

"Personally, I believe we have iron proof on Navalny, and LifeNews is correct. The people in charge think otherwise," LifeNews editor-in-chief Anatoly Suleimanov tweeted when asked why the article was removed.

Navalny, currently under house arrest for what he claims are politically motivated fraud charges, has been at the heart of numerous criminal cases. The opposition blogger has pleaded not guilty to all charges against him.

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