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Russian Opposition Politician Navalny Seeks 2018 Presidential Bid

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Opposition leader Alexei Navalny **Maxim Stulov / Vedomosti**

Opposition leader Alexei Navalny has confirmed his intention to run in the 2018 presidential elections.

Navalny is currently ineligible to run in elections because of a five year suspended sentence handed to him in 2013 after being found guilty by a Russian court of embezzling 400,000 euros ($450,000) when acting as a consultant for the KirovLes timber company in Russia's Kirov region.

In a blog post Monday, Navalny called the case "fabricated for political motives" and called on the Council of Europe to act on the ECHR ruling, claiming that the Russian Supreme Court will "do nothing."

The Kommersant newspaper reported Monday that his representatives have requested that

Russia's Supreme Court reopen the case, Navalny describing the ruling as "a formal obstacle to my participation in the elections."

The European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) ruled in February that the 2013 conviction was “prejudicial” and an “arbitrary application of the law.” While the Strasbourg court fell short of describing the case as political, it did conclude there were links between Navalny’s anti-corruption campaigning against Russia’s political elite and the attempts of Russia’s Investigative Committee to bring charges against him.

"My sentence should be instantly annulled and my political rights reinstated," Navalny wrote on his blog, emphasizing the necessity that his innocence be recognized by Russian legislature.

Navalny demanded his "legal right to run for election and represent those people who support me and my ideas."

According to Kommersant, Navalny wrote to Russia’s Supreme Court last month requesting that they reopen the case and accept the conclusions of the ECHR, his lawyers Olga Mikhailova and Karina Moskalenko subsequently writing to the European Council Committee of Ministers, requesting that they apply pressure on the Russian Supreme Court.

In their letter Mikhailova and Moskalenko ask that
ministers “use all possible assistance to
help to implement the ruling of the ECHR” relating to what they call "
a clearly politically
motivated sentence."

The Council of Europe
have since announced that Navalny’s case will be reviewed at a
session of the Council of Ministers
in September
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