

Russian Central Bank Denies Interfering With Alexey Navalny's Election Fundraising

January 25, 2017



Alexey Navalny **Maxim Stulov / Vedomosti**

Russia's Central Bank has denied asking electronic payment service Yandex Money to block a fundraising account belonging to opposition activist Alexey Navalny.

Navalny claims that a Yandex Money account used to fund his presidential election campaign had been closed due to government pressure. Writing on his blog on Jan.23, he alleged that Central Bank employees had called Yandex staff and demanded that his account be formally blocked.

Embed:

Центральный банк приказал Яндекс.Деньгам заблокировать сбор средств на мою президентскую кампанию <https://t.co/OXbjPPUNGQ>

pic.twitter.com/zRX4PXrHgW

— Alexey Navalny (@navalny) [January 23, 2017](#)

The bank denied the accusations in a message posted on their public Facebook page, claiming that it had no legal right to close specific Yandex Money accounts.

"Employees of the Central Bank did not make any calls or in any other way commit the actions that are described in your posts, Alexey [Navalny]," said an official statement of the Central Bank.

"We can only answer your demands with one of our own: tell us the name of our employee who demanded that Yandex Money close your account, or apologize for writing these lies."

The statement claimed that if Navalny publicly named Central Bank employee who ordered for his account to be closed, the financial regulator would conduct a full investigation into the matter.

Navalny responded by thanking the bank on Twitter, claiming that "their actions" had sparked a 1.5 million ruble (\$25,000) boost for his fundraising campaign in a single day.

Embed:

В ответ на действия ЦБ по блокировке сбора денег на кампанию вы перечислили 1,5 миллиона рублей за сутки. Спасибо! <https://t.co/irbpXVgIwB>

— Alexey Navalny (@navalny) [January 24, 2017](#)

Yandex Money later announced that the company wished to restrict how their services were used for political fundraising.

Alexey Navalny announced his intention to run for Russian president in the upcoming 2018 elections on Dec. 13 2016. His six-point manifesto focuses on battling corruption, boosting wages and pensions, and reforming the police and judiciary.

It also advocates for greater powers to be given to regional authorities across Russia, better ties with Europe, and an end to Russia's visa-free regime with countries within Central Asia.

Original url:

<https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2017/01/25/russian-central-bank-denies-interfering-with-navalnys-fundraising-a56921>