

Russian Opposition Leader Navalny Vows to Press On With Campaign, Even If Reconvicted

January 31, 2017



Evgeniy Isaev / CC 2.0

It might not be long before Russian anti-corruption icon Alexei Navalny is again a convicted criminal. In an interview with the website Meduza on Tuesday, Navalny's campaign manager, Leonid Volkov, warned that a retrial now underway in Kirov suddenly accelerated earlier this month, when court officials, he suspects, were instructed by the Kremlin to expedite the verdict.

Last December, Navalny announced his intention to run for president in 2018, when Vladimir Putin will likely seek a fourth term in office. Navalny's six-point manifesto focuses on battling corruption, boosting wages and pensions, and reforming the police and judiciary.

Previously, Navalny was barred from seeking public office after he was convicted of embezzlement in 2013 in a case that is widely criticized as politically motivated. In November

2016, the Russian Supreme Court overturned the conviction, freeing Navalny to run for elected office. Unfortunately for the oppositionist, the court also ordered a retrial, which is currently underway in Kirov.

Related article: [Russian Central Bank Denies Interfering With Alexey Navalny's Election Fundraising](#)

Speaking to Meduza, Volkov promised to move forward with Navalny's presidential campaign, regardless of the outcome in Kirov. If Navalny is convicted again and robbed of the legal right to run for president, Volkov says the team will still follow through on plans to open campaign offices in 77 different regions across Russia, campaigning on the hope and expectation that the Kremlin will be compelled to add him to the ballot, or risk invalidating the 2018 election.

And what if Navalny is actually imprisoned this time, as he was briefly in July 2013? "People will [protest] in the streets on their own — we won't need to call out anyone," Volkov said, adding that he can't be sure how many would take part. "Nobody can predict emotions. You can't plan this kind of thing, and you can't organize it."

Original url:

<https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2017/01/31/russian-opposition-leader-navalny-vows-to-press-on-with-campaign-even-if-reconvicted-a56999>