

Navalny Campaign Calls for Nationwide Protests on Putin's Birthday

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The  **Moscow Times**

Supporters of jailed Russian opposition leader and presidential hopeful Alexei Navalny have called for nationwide demonstrations on Saturday to coincide with President Vladimir Putin's birthday.

Navalny was [detained](#) en route to an unauthorized rally in Nizhny Novgorod on Friday. He was then charged with "calling for illegal gatherings" and jailed for 20 days. His campaign manager, Leonid Volkov, was given a similar sentence.

Related article: [Opposition Leader Navalny Jailed for 20 Days Over Protests](#)

Navalny's staff on Wednesday on social media [called](#) on Russians to come out and protest in 80 Russian cities on Oct. 7 — the day Putin turns 65 — including in Belgorod, near the Ukrainian border in western Russia, to Yekaterinburg in the Ural Mountains and Irkutsk, one of Siberia's largest cities.

They demanded the immediate release of Navalny and Volkov and argued he should be allowed to conduct his campaign and be admitted to the presidential elections in March 2018.

Navalny has announced his intention to run for president despite a criminal conviction that bars him from participating and which he says is politically motivated.

His incarceration came after he appeared at dozens of protests in recent weeks in provincial cities across Russia such as Arkhangelsk, Novosibirsk and Vladivostok, where thousands turned out to greet him.

Dozens of Navalny supporters have also been detained in recent weeks, including his campaign manager in St. Petersburg, and given fines or even jail time on charges of participating or organizing unsanctioned rallies.

Related article: [Police Detain Navalny's Campaign Manager in St. Petersburg Ahead of Rally](#)

Navalny's supporters wrote in a blog post on Wednesday that the authorities are concerned Navalny could undermine Putin's approval rating, which they claim depends on a lack of political competition.

"It's like asking a person who has been fed turnips all his life by which percent he appreciates the edibility of turnips," the blog post [reads](#).

Navalny's campaign also called on supporters to write posts on social media on Oct. 7 to demand political competition and participation in the election to any candidate who gathers the necessary 300,000 signatures.

"Let Turnip Professor Putin hear this and go on his deserved pension already. He has been in power 18 years, this is enough," said the post.

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