

Putin Snubs Navalny's Name Because He Doesn't Like Him, Kremlin Says

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Dmitry Peskov and Vladimir Putin / Kremlin Press Service

President Vladimir Putin avoids opposition leader Alexei Navalny's name because of how he views him as a person, the Kremlin spokesman suggested on Friday.

Russian officials have a long-running tradition of not saying the opposition leader's name in public or allowing him to appear on state media. During his annual press conference on Thursday, Putin again [avoided](#) referring to Navalny by name when asked a question about the anti-corruption activist.

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“Apparently, it has to do with his attitude towards this person, which the president did not conceal during yesterday's press conference,” Dmitry Peskov was [cited](#) by the RBC business portal as saying — without naming Navalny — on Friday.

Navalny has been barred from participating in the presidential elections in March 2018 due to a prior conviction his supporters say is politically motivated. Nonetheless, he has said that he is still in the running and [published](#) his campaign platform on Wednesday.

During Putin's press conference on Thursday, presidential candidate and opposition journalist Ksenia Sobchak [asked](#) Putin if he feared fair competition in the upcoming elections.

In his response, Putin compared Navalny to Mikheil Saakashvili, an opposition leader in Ukraine, which the Kremlin is widely seen as disdaining.

“About those people you mentioned,” Putin said of Navalny, “they are like the Russian version of Saakashvili.”

“Do you want us to have Saakashvilis destabilizing the country?”

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