

Sobchak Criticizes Navalny's Election Boycott, Urges Unity

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Alexei Navalny and Ksenia Sobchak (Sergei Fedeichev / TASS)

Russian presidential hopeful Ksenia Sobchak has offered opposition leader Alexei Navalny a place in her campaign, urging him not to boycott the March 2018 presidential elections.

Election officials decided on Monday to bar Navalny from running as a candidate because of a past criminal conviction that his supporters say is politically motivated. Shortly after the decision, Navalny called on his supporters to massively boycott next year's elections.

Related article: [Navalny's Bid for Presidency Shut Down by Russia's Election Commission](#)

Sobchak, who launched her presidential bid in October, criticized the decision to bar Navalny as a “monstrous injustice” but maintained that voters should still go to the polls.

“Elections are still the only way to change anything. Boycotting them is inefficient and harmful,” Sobchak [wrote](#) in an Instagram post on Monday.

She called on Navalny to join forces with her team if she is registered as a candidate. Russia’s Central Election Commission is [scheduled](#) to make the decision later on Tuesday.

Critics have [dismissed](#) Sobchak, a socialite and former reality TV presenter-turned opposition activist and journalist, as a “spoiler” candidate co-opted by the Kremlin to split the opposition ticket.

“I understand how hurt [he is] and how difficult it is for Alexei, but the common cause is more important,” she said Monday.

“Therefore, I continue to urge all democratic forces to unite.”

Navalny has not yet publicly responded to Sobchak’s offer.

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