

YouTube Blocks Navalny's Video Call for 'Elections Boycott'

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Alexei Navalny / Youtube

YouTube temporarily blocked Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny's call for a nationwide boycott of the upcoming presidential elections over what is said were "illegal hashtags."

The opposition leader announced a boycott of the March 2018 elections this week after officials barred him from running as a presidential candidate due to a prior criminal conviction.

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YouTube allegedly took down the video because it contained "illegal" hashtags, Navalny [explained](#) in a post on his website, citing a formal explanation from YouTube.

The video contained hashtags including #strike #Navalny2018 and #28January. It was [back](#) on

the website later on Thursday, this time without hashtags.

“YouTube eventually told us that the video call to participate [in the boycott] on Jan. 28 was deleted erroneously and they apologize,” Navalny [wrote](#) on his blog that day.

The 41-year-old anti-corruption activist suggested that the Kremlin had infiltrated YouTube with "moles," citing the rise of pro-government videos in top-trending lists and frequent bans on anti-Kremlin content.

“It’s becoming obvious that there is ill intent and that this is deliberate discrimination on political grounds,” he [said](#).

He has asked YouTube for a clarification.

Original url:

<https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2017/12/29/youtube-blocks-navalnys-video-call-for-elections-boycott-a60090>