The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

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

December 29, 2017



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.

Related article: Navalny's Bid for Presidency Shut Down by Russia's Election Commission

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