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Russian Opposition Party Warns of Political Repression and Torture Ahead of Elections

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Alexander Avilov / Moskva News Agency

A Russian opposition party, whose candidate is challenging Vladimir Putin in the presidential elections next month, has warned of a spike in political repressions and torture in St. Petersburg, the country's second-largest city.

In an online statement issued Monday, the Yabloko party warned of a string of attacks on political and civic activists in St. Petersburg in the past month, including the late January death of prominent local activist Konstantin Sinitsyn. Other incidents mentioned include the beating of human rights activist Dinar Idrisov and the kidnapping and reported torture of antifascist activists Viktor Filinkov, Igor Shishkin and Ilya Kapustin.

'Yabloko views what is happening as political repression designed to suppress political and civic activity,' the party wrote.

’This is an attempt to intimidate opposition activists before the Russian presidential elections," it said, adding that the allegations of torture should be investigated and its culprits brought to justice.

The statement was signed by Yabloko leader Emilia Slabunova and St. Petersburg deputy Boris Vishnevsky.

Yabloko is a liberal opposition party founded in 1993, whose candidate, Grigoriy Yavlinsky, is set to run against President Vladimir Putin in the March 18 elections.

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