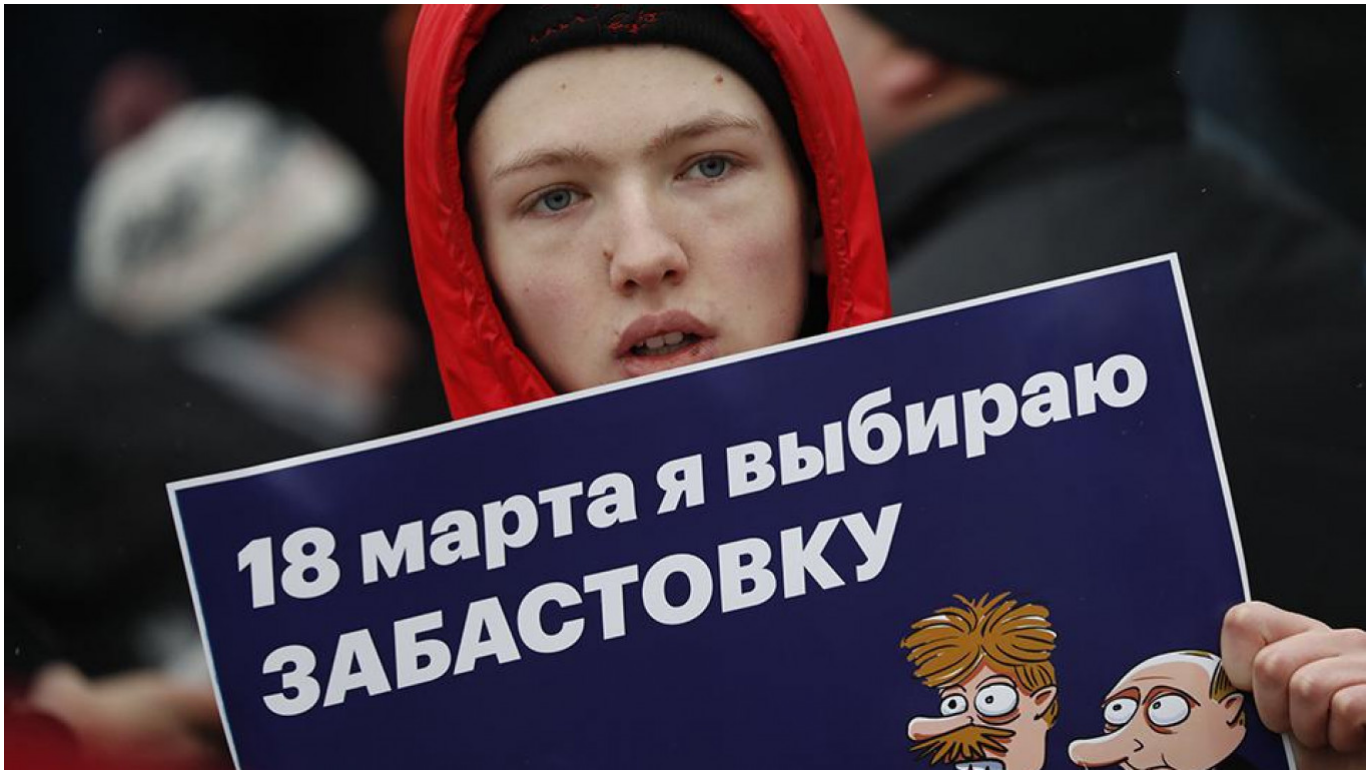
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Moscow Officials Block Navalny's Boycott Rally on Election Day

March 08, 2018



Artyom Geodokyan / TASS

Moscow city officials have rejected opposition leader Alexei Navalny's request to hold a rally in the capital on March 18, the day of Russia's presidential elections.

Navalny was barred from participating in upcoming elections, which Vladimir Putin is expected to win, due to a prior criminal conviction for embezzlement that his supporters say is politically motivated. He has called for a boycott the elections in which authorities are hoping to secure a 70 percent turnout.

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The Moscow mayor's representative Vladimir Chernikov told the RBC business portal that the so-called "Voter's Strike," violated Russian election law.

"Holding such a protest on election day is illegal," Chernikov said.

“We’ve said the organizers can change the topic of the rally,” he told RBC, adding that the organizers could change the location of the rally to a park outside the city center.

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