

Kremlin Critic Navalny Accuses Putin of Foreign Funding ‘Setup’

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Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny has accused President Vladimir Putin of framing his anti-corruption group as a “foreign agent” after Navalny urged people to strategically vote against pro-Putin candidates in elections last month.

The Justice Ministry on Wednesday [blacklisted](#) Navalny’s Anti-Corruption Foundation (FBK) under a 2012 “foreign agent” law that imposes crippling auditing and reporting requirements on groups listed. Navalny and his allies maintain that they receive funding solely through Russian donations, but the Justice Ministry later said that it blacklisted the FBK because of donations from the U.S. and Spain.

Navalny countered Thursday that the Kremlin had “arranged” the two foreign transfers to the FBK’s frozen bank accounts so that the group wouldn’t be able to return the money.

“These are the real crooks. And this clumsy scheme was organized on Putin’s personal orders,” Navalny [wrote](#) on his Instagram page.

Russian media [determined](#) Wednesday that the U.S. donation in fact came from Yury Maslikhov, a Russian citizen who runs a door-sales firm in Florida. A representative from Maslikhov's company [told](#) the Meduza news website that he had donated money to the FBK as a private individual.

Police [carried out](#) more than 200 raids against Navalny allies across Russia last month as part of a criminal money-laundering [investigation](#) into the FBK. The mass searches happened after the ruling party, which supports Putin, [lost](#) a third of its seats in the Moscow city council.

“The fabrication of a criminal case, the forgery, the provocation and blatant lies [are perpetrated] in front of the whole country,” Navalny wrote Thursday.

He later [published](#) documents showing the foreign payments which were made to the FBK, calling them "irrefutable proof" of Putin's set-up.

Navalny linked the FBK's "foreign agent" designation and the money-laundering case to what he says was his success in ousting pro-Putin lawmakers from the Moscow council as well as the FBK's series of video investigations accusing individual officials of corruption.

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