

Putin Critic Navalny Takes Russia to European Court Over Money Laundering Case

By [Reuters](#)

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Andrei Lyubimov / Moskva News Agency

Russian opposition politician Alexei Navalny lodged a complaint against Russia at the European Court of Human Rights on Friday to contest a money-laundering investigation he says authorities have opened to thwart his political activities.

Russian investigators opened the case against Navalny's Anti-Corruption Foundation last August after he called on people to attend rallies that grew into Moscow's biggest sustained protest movement in years before fizzling out.

On Tuesday, Navalny, Russia's most prominent opposition politician, said his bank accounts and those of his close family had been emptied and frozen, which he linked to the investigation.

"I have repeatedly faced persecution by the Russian authorities for my political activities," Navalny said in comments to the European Human Rights Advocacy Centre that is representing him and his allies in the case.

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The complaint was submitted by Navalny and several of his allies on Friday, Navalny's spokeswoman, Kira Yarmysh, said.

"The endless searches, seizures of equipment and freezing of bank accounts greatly interfere with our activities," Navalny said.

In September, law enforcement authorities carried out mass raids on the homes and offices of Navalny's supporters over the case. In December, authorities raided his Moscow headquarters, dragging Navalny out by force and confiscating equipment.

Russia's Justice Ministry in October formally labeled Navalny's anti-corruption group a "foreign agent", meaning it can be subjected to spot checks and face bureaucratic scrutiny.

Navalny was barred from running for president in 2018 because of a past conviction on charges he has called trumped up. Putin won that election in a landslide.

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