The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Don’t Blame Us for Navalny Poisoning, Russia Says

September 03, 2020



Germany said Wednesday it has “unequivocal” proof that Navalny was poisoned with a nerve agent from the Novichok family. **John Macdougall / AFP**

There is no reason to accuse Russia of poisoning prominent Kremlin critic Alexei Navalny, the Kremlin said Thursday, as the fallout from the case raises the threat of new Western sanctions against Moscow.

Germany said Wednesday that Berlin has “unequivocal” proof that Navalny was poisoned with a nerve agent from the Novichok family. Britain in 2018 blamed Russia’s military intelligence for poisoning former spy Sergei Skripal and his daughter with the same military-grade nerve agent, developed by the Soviet Union toward the end of the Cold War.

“I’d speak carefully about accusing the Russian state. After all, there are no charges and there’s no reason to accuse the Russian state,” Interfax quoted Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov as saying.

“We certainly wouldn’t want our partners in Germany and other European countries to rush

to any judgments, we would prefer to be in dialogue," Peskov told reporters.

Related article: Navalny Case Poisons Ties Between Germany, Russia

He added that the Kremlin sees no reason for sanctions to be imposed against Russia. German Chancellor Angela Merkel is facing domestic pressure to abandon the $11 billion German-Russian Nord Stream 2 project in the wake of the Navalny poisoning. The Gazprom gas pipeline will double the capacity for natural gas pumped from Russia to Germany when completed.

Peskov said he doesn't think that "anyone would benefit" from poisoning Navalny "if you take a sober look at what's happening."

He reiterated calls for Germany to share its findings on Navalny's poisoning, saying it would help Russian investigators establish the causes of his sudden illness. Peskov pointed to this lack of information when asked whether the Kremlin still believes there are no grounds to open a criminal case into Navalny's poisoning.

Navalny's associates have launched legal proceedings in Russia over what they say is the authorities' failure to investigate his poisoning.

The 44-year-old anti-corruption campaigner fell violently ill on a flight from Siberia to Moscow on Aug. 20. He was treated in Russia for two days before being airlifted to Germany, where he remains in a medically induced coma and on a ventilator.

Doctors in Russia have reiterated their original claims over the past 48 hours, saying that they ran comprehensive tests and found no toxic substances in Navalny's system. Peskov said no toxic substances were detected "before the patient was taken to Berlin."

German Chancellor Angela Merkel repeated her demand Thursday for Russia to answer questions over the Navalny poisoning. The United States, Britain, France, the European Union and NATO have joined her in expressing shock and dismay over the findings.

Original url:
https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2020/09/03/dont-blame-us-for-navalny-poisoning-russia-says-a71337