

Berlin Hospital Treating Navalny Returns Donation to 'Putin's Chef'

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Navalny and his associates owe Kremlin-linked caterer Yevgeny Prigozhin \$1.2 million over a defamation lawsuit. **Markus Schreiber / AP / TASS**

Berlin's Charité hospital has returned a 1 million ruble (\$13,300) donation for the treatment of Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny to Kremlin-linked catering magnate Yevgeny Prigozhin, his Concord company [said](#) in a statement Wednesday.

Navalny was flown to Germany two days after falling ill on a flight in Siberia due to what the German government says was a poisoning with the Novichok nerve agent. The Kremlin critic and his associates [owe](#) Prigozhin 88 million rubles (\$1.2 million) after the businessman acquired a court-assigned debt share in the Moskovsky Shkolnik school caterer that sued Navalny's team for defamation in 2019.

Related article: [Kremlin-Linked Businessman Prigozhin Vows to Ruin Navalny](#)

Prigozhin is the only known person to have sent money toward the opposition leader's

treatment, Concord said in its statement on social media, attaching copies of transfer receipts dated Sept. 7.

This was Prigozhin's second payment to Charité following an earlier transfer of 107,000 rubles (\$1,400) in compensation for a debt payment collected from Navalny's account, which the clinic kept.

Concord said that Charité is likely reluctant to accept the money due to Western sanctions against Prigozhin or because German medics are unwilling to disclose details of Navalny's treatment to him.

Days after Navalny fell ill, Prigozhin vowed to "strip [Navalny and his associates] of their clothes and shoes" with the court-ordered penalty. He added that "if comrade Navalny kicks the bucket, I personally don't intend to persecute him in this world."

Prigozhin is commonly nicknamed "Putin's chef" because Concord has done catering for the Kremlin. An investigation by Navalny's Anti-Corruption Foundation has linked Prigozhin to Moskovsky Shkolnik, links that Prigozhin denies.

Prigozhin is also associated with the Internet Research Agency, which was accused of interfering in the 2016 U.S. election, as well as with private military contractor Wagner, whose mercenaries have reportedly been deployed to conflicts in Syria, Libya and Mozambique, among others.

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