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Navalny Says Novichok Found 'In and On' His Body

By AFP

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Navalny on Monday posted a photo with his wife Yulia, saying he remembered little of his illness but that she had helped his recovery. **Alexei Navalny / Instagram**

Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny said Monday that Western laboratories had found traces of a Novichok nerve agent in and on his body and demanded that Moscow return his clothes.

Navalny, who is recovering in Berlin's Charite clinic, fell violently ill during a flight from Siberia to Moscow on Aug. 20. He spent two days in hospital in Russia before being airlifted to Germany.

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"Two independent laboratories in France and Sweden and the Bundeswehr specialized

laboratory confirmed the presence of Novichok in and on my body," he said in his first blog post since emerging from a coma, referring to a German military lab.

He noted that Russia had still not opened an investigation and that Russian talk shows had suggested that Western intelligence officials or his own allies carried out the attack.

"I did not expect anything else," he wrote.

He also demanded that Russian authorities return his clothes that were removed before he was flown to Germany — "totally naked" — saying they were important evidence.

"Taking into account that Novichok was found on my body, and poisoning through physical contact is highly likely, my clothes are a very important piece of evidence," he wrote.

"I demand my clothes be carefully packed in a plastic bag and returned to me."

'Love heals'

In a poignant post on Instagram, he published a picture with his wife of 20 years, Yulia, saying he remembered little of his illness but that she had helped his recovery.

"Now I definitely know from experience: love heals and brings you back to life," he said.

"Yulia, you have saved me, and let it go down in neurobiology textbooks."

He said she had played him music, sang him songs, and laughed.

The opposition figure said last weekend he could walk with a "tremble" and that in his first days he had needed therapy to help him recover his speech.

Navalny supporters and European leaders have said that the poisoning using Novichok, a military-grade nerve agent, points to a state-sanctioned attack.

Siberian transport police, which has carried out a basic examination of Navalny's movements, said Monday it was continuing a pre-investigation probe and had questioned around 200 people.

The head of Navalny's Anti-Corruption Foundation, Ivan Zhdanov, said employees would no longer collaborate with police in the Siberian city of Tomsk, accusing authorities of trying to conceal a crime.

"We are not going to take part in this," he said.

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