The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
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# Navalny Returns to Popular YouTube Show After Novichok Poisoning

October 30, 2020




Navalny is recovering from his poisoning by Novichok in Germany after spending over a month in a coma. **Screenshot Navalny Live**

Kremlin critic Alexei Navalny returned to his popular YouTube show for the first time after his poisoning with the Novichok nerve agent, accusing President Vladimir Putin of his attempted murder and vowing to return to Russia as soon as he recovers.

Navalny, 44, appeared to his show's 2 million subscribers on a video call from Germany, where he is currently recovering after spending over a month in a coma. The European Union two weeks ago sanctioned senior Kremlin and Federal Security Service (FSB) officials it held responsible for Navalny's poisoning in Siberia, a claim the Kremlin denies.

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"I need to return in such a condition that if they poison me a second time, I'll still have a chance" of survival, Navalny told his aide and lawyer Lyubov Sobol, who was broadcasting

from Moscow.

When asked about the president's first public comments last week about his poisoning (Putin said that he wouldn't have let Navalny leave Russia for treatment in Germany if he had wanted him dead), Navalny said: "as usual, Putin is lying."

"I still have no doubts that it was his direct order, but they [those who carried out the order] failed," Russia's de-facto opposition leader said Thursday.

Responding to questions about why he thinks he was poisoned on Aug. 20, Navalny quipped: "You'll need to climb inside a bunker, then inside Putin's head" to find out.

"My hypothesis is they see the falling ratings of [the pro-Kremlin party] United Russia, the economy is declining, they failed with coronavirus and our Smart Vote [strategy] is working," he said.

"They panicked" ahead of Russia's 2021 parliamentary elections, where Navalny's team plans to redeploy the "Smart Vote" tactic to unseat pro-Kremlin incumbents, Navalny added. He also linked the poisoning to ongoing anti-Kremlin protests in Russia's Far East and anti-government demonstrations in Belarus.

"[The poisoning] was probably always an item on the agenda, but this time they got scared," Navalny said.

"Now they're lying to sow some kind of ambiguity and divert suspicion from themselves," Navalny hypothesized.

The opposition leader urged viewers, even with the EU sanctions over his poisoning, not to expect Western countries to "jump out of their pants to help us and defeat our villains."

"We need to solve all our own problems," Navalny said.

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