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Navalny Ally Names Kremlin Critic's Top 8 Sanctions Targets

In list drawn up days before his detention, Alexei Navalny named Roman Abramovich as top target for Western sanctions, according to key ally.

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Alexei Navalny has criticized the West's sanctions against Russia as not targeting the true decision-makers. **Matt Dunham / AP / TASS**

Navalny ally Vladimir Ashurkov has published a list of eight Russian business and political elites who he says Alexei Navalny wants Western governments to sanction.

Top of the list is Chelsea Football Club owner Roman Abramovich, who Ashurkov calls "one of the key enablers and beneficiaries of Russian kleptocracy, with significant ties and assets in the West."

Russia's Health Minister Mikhail Murashko is also named, for his role "covering up Alexei's poisoning and hindering efforts to evacuate him to Germany for medical treatment."

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Other business figures who Ashurkov said the Kremlin critic wants to see sanctioned include Andrei Kostin, President of state-owned VTB Bank, Russia's agricultural minister Dmitri Patrushev — son of Security Council chief Nikolai Patrushev — as well as billionaire Alisher Usmanov, who has significant stakes in the MegaFon mobile network, Mail.Ru technology company, and Kommersant business paper.

Navalny drew up the list "just a few days" before his return to Russia, Ashurkov said in a post on Facebook. They represent the "people he felt should be sanctioned if the West wanted to get serious about encouraging Russia to cease attacking human rights and to rein in corruption."

"Shortly before Alexei flew back to Russia, we had a discussion about why sanctions aren't working. He said that sanctions aren't working because the West has refrained from sanctioning the people with the money," Ashurkov said.

"It is not enough to sanction the operatives who just follow orders in arresting and assassinating dissidents. The West must sanction the decision makers and the people who hold their money. Nothing less will make an impact on the behavior of the Russian authorities."

A former banker, Ashurkov is Executive Director of Navalny's Anti-Corruption Foundation. He left high-ranking finance jobs in Russia after he became an outspoken critic of President Vladimir Putin. After facing embezzlement charges in Russia, he was granted asylum in Britain in 2015.

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