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INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

As it Happened: Kremlin Critic Navalny Jailed After Return to Russia

January 18, 2021



Alexei Navalny leaving the police station where a makeshift court ordered him to be detained until Feb. 15. **Sergei Bobylev/TASS**

Kremlin critic Alexei Navalny will be kept in custody until mid-February, a court ruled Monday, following his detention Sunday evening at Moscow's Sheremetyevo airport.

The 44-year-old opposition leader flew back to Moscow after spending several months in Germany recovering from a poisoning attack that he said was carried out on the orders of President Vladimir Putin.

In the hearing Monday, a court set-up in a local police station on the outskirts of Moscow ruled to prolong his detention for 30 days, until Feb. 15. Navalny will now await a new trial on whether he violated the terms of a controversial suspended sentence handed down in 2014 by not reporting to authorities in person while in Germany.

The opposition leader's aides and lawyers said they were denied access to him for nearly 15 hours after he was detained, and his spokeswoman said they were give one minute's notice

before Monday's hearing began at 12:30 p.m.

Live updates:

20:30 Russian police have detained around 50 activists in St. Petersburg who were protesting Navalny's detention, the Sota Vision telegram channel reported.

19:30 In a press conference outside the police station, Navalny's lawyer Olga Mikhailova said she will "definitely appeal this decision, as it is completely inconsistent with the law," the independent Mediazona news site reported.

19:05 Police have begun to detain protestors outside the police station where Navalny's hearing took place, the Open Russia NGO reported.

18:55 Navalny was escorted out of the police station and put into a police van. He will be taken to Moscow's Matrosskaya Tishina prison, according to his lawyers. "Alexey will remain there until at least Feb.15, but the detention could be extended. Sooner or later, a trial will take place to replace the suspended sentence with a real one," Navalny's spokesperson Kira Yarmysh said in a tweet.

Embed:

> pic.twitter.com/fP7VHy3U8a
>
> — Ivan Zhdanov (@ioannZH) January 18, 2021

18:10 The hearing to determine whether Navalny's suspended sentence of 3.5 years will be converted into a prison sentence has been postponed from Jan. 29 to Feb. 2, Navalny's lawyer told Mediazona.

17:40 Reacting to the decision, Lyubov Sobol, a Navalny ally and lawyer, said: "It is important to understand that this is not 30 days in a special detention center which ends with release. This is a pre-trial detention center where Alexei was put pending consideration of the case to replace the suspended sentence with a real one."

Navalny was serving a suspended sentence regarding a 2014 fraud case, under which he was required to report in person two times a month. While in Germany recovering from the poisoning attack he missed six such appointments, prison authorities said earlier January. The European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) has attacked the 2014 conviction.

The European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) has previously ruled that Russia had violated the rights of Navalny and his brother Oleg to a fair trial in that case — concerning embezzlement charges relating French cosmetics firm Yves Rocher — and ordered that they be compensated for moral damages and legal costs.

17:10 Navalny called on his supporters to come to the streets in protest and told them not to be

afraid, in a video posted to YouTube after the verdict, recorded while he was awating the decision. Navalny's close associate Leonid Volkov announced mass nationwide protests in his support on Saturday, Jan. 23 ahead of an anticipated fraud trial.

"This thieving, bunker-dwelling old guy [Putin] sits and shakes in fear," Navalny said. "They are afraid and therefore they are doing everything so urgently, secretly, in a hushed hurry. They are afraid and they are afraid of you," Navalny said.

"Don't be afraid to take the streets. Not for me, but for yourselves and your future."

17:00 Navalny's allies have attacked the court decision. "They detained him at the border, took him to unknown places. His lawyer was not granted access, the hearing was carried out urgently right in the police station and he was detained for 30 days," Navalny's spokeswoman Kira Yarmysh said. "This cannot even be called a parody of the rule of law."

16:53 The court announces its decision. Alexei Navalny will remain in custody for 30 days, until Feb. 15.

16:45 The court has reconvened and started announcing its decision, Navalny's spokesperson Kira Yarmysh said.

16:40 The court hearing is being held in a police station, as opposed to a proper court, because Navalny does not have a negative coronavirus test following his arrival from Germany, Russia's Ministry of Internal Affairs said in a statement. It added: "In order to ensure sanitary and epidemiological safety, access to the room where the court session is taking place is limited."

16:30 The second court hearing scheduled for later today (15.55) is an appeal launched on Navalny's behalf against a previous court ruling freezing his assets and property, Ivan Zhdanov, Director of Navalny's Anti-Corruption Foundation, said on Twitter.

16:25 There has been no public announcement from the court since the judge announced a 15-minute break and said the verdict would be delivered at 15:45, according to Navalny's lawyer.

15:55 A second separate court hearing with Navalny is scheduled for today at 16:45, according to a court schedule seen by the VTimes.

15:40 One of the supporters gathered outside the Khimki police station was filmed waving blue underwear. That article of clothing came into focus in Russia after Navalny released video of a phone call where he tricked a suspected Russian intelligence agent last month into admitting that Novichok had been placed in his underpants.

15:35 Navalny's lawyer Vadim Kobzev said the judge has retreated to deliver the verdict at 15:45. "She only needs 15 minutes, meaning that [the verdict] is already ready," the lawyer said.

15:30 "Lyosha, when you were poisoned, I said that we can cope with everything, we will cope with this as well. Perhaps now you will even have time to read this, unlike the last time: there is no thing that we cannot cope with. Everything will definitely be fine!" Navalny's wife Yulia said in an Instagram post. Yulis Navalnaya was with her husband yesterday when he was

being arrested.

Embed:



View this post on Instagram

A post shared by @yulia_navalnaya

15:10 The representative of the Ministry of Internal Affairs proposes to arrest Navalny for 30 days for repeatedly violating the conditions of the probationary period, Life Shot Telegram channel reports.

14:05 Dozens of police officers have gathered in front of the police station where Navalny's court hearing is being held, according to footage from MBX Media.

13:55 The court hearing has gone on a 50-minute break. The judge granted Navalny's defense 30 minutes to familiarize themselves with the case, and 20 minutes to talk to the client.

13:50 Navalny asked to grant journalists accreditation and access to cover the ongoing court hearing. "They (journalists) are not physically accredited, which indicates a very strange bias. Of course, I advocate that this process is as transparent as possible, so that all media have the opportunity to observe this amazing absurdity that is happening here. I want ... real journalists who are right now standing outside the gates in the cold to be allowed in. You cannot, excuse me, pretend that this is not happening.." Navalny said.

13:13 Only journalists from the pro-government Life Shot tabloid and the state-run Rossia television channel have been allowed into the room, Navalny's spokeswoman said.

12:58 "Why is the court hearing taking place at the police [station]?... I've seen a lot of mockery of justice, but it appears that the old man in the bunker [Putin] is so afraid that he demonstrably ripped the penal code apart. This is lawlessness of the highest order, I can't call it anything less," Navalny said in a video published by his spokeswoman.

Embed:

> Алексея из зала «суда» pic.twitter.com/Dqsa4x0qrz
>
> — Кира Ярмыш (@Kira_Yarmysh) January 18, 2021

This story is being updated.

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