The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Navalny's Family Members, Allies Detained for Virus Violations at Protests

January 28, 2021



Alexei and Oleg Navalny **Sergei Karpukhin / TASS**

Jailed opposition leader Alexei Navalny's family members and allies have been detained on charges of violating coronavirus restrictions following widespread raids on their homes and offices, the head of Navalny's anti-corruption outfit Ivan Zhdanov said early Thursday.

The raids and detentions in more than 30 Moscow locations follow last weekend's nationwide rallies demanding Navalny's release that saw nearly 4,000 people detained. Supporters plan to stage another round of unauthorized protests next Sunday, with Russia's FSB security agency headquarters a key protest site in the capital.

Embed:

> Among over a dozen raids of Navalny supporters' homes yesterday was the flat of @DrAnastasy, the leader of a doctors' trade union backed by Navalny.

> She greeted the police with Beethoven pic.twitter.com/ovztYJRWvS
>
> — Matthew Luxmoore (@mjluxmoore) January 28, 2021

Navalny's brother Oleg and Anti-Corruption Foundation (FBK) lawyer Lyubov Sobol, as well as Navalny's ophthalmologist and head of the independent Doctors' Alliance union Anastasia Vasilyeva, have been detained for 48 hours, Zhdanov announced on Twitter.

Pussy Riot member Maria Alyokhina is also being held for 48 hours as part of the same criminal investigation.

The charges of violating anti-coronavirus restrictions carry a prison sentence of up to two years and can increase to five years if authorities find that the violations have led to someone's death. Russia's Covid-19 crisis center has said that surveillance data spotted at least 19 infected protesters in Moscow, warning of a possible spike in infections within two weeks.

Meanwhile, Russia's Investigative Committee said it has brought criminal charges against Navalny aide Leonid Volkov for allegedly inciting minors to attend unauthorized protests.

Related article: Russian Police Search Navalny's Apartment, HQ – Aides

A number of key Navalny allies were detained on the eve of last weekend's protests and are currently serving administrative arrests for organizing those rallies. Two of them were reported to have been briefly released to accompany raids in their apartments.

Russian investigative authorities said they have opened 21 criminal cases following Saturday's demonstrations on charges ranging from blocking traffic to using violence against authorities.

Several suspects, including a popular TikToker and a Chechen MMA fighter, face prison time for jumping on a state car and getting into a fistfight with riot police.

Western leaders have condemned what they called a violent crackdown on protesters and demanded their release.

Navalny, 44, called for protests after being jailed under a fraud conviction he claims was politically motivated on his return from Germany, where he was recovering from an August poisoning with the Soviet-era nerve agent Novichok.

The fierce Kremlin critic, who is expected to appeal his 30-day jailing Thursday, faces up to three and a half years in prison at an upcoming trial next week.

Original url:
https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2021/01/28/navalnys-family-members-allies-detained-for-virus-violations-at-protests-a72760