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Key Navalny Supporters' House Arrests Extended Into Summer

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Navalny's spokeswoman Kira Yarmysh is one of the figures ordered to remain under house arrest until June 23. **Mikhail Tereshchenko / TASS**

A Moscow court has extended the house arrest of four prominent activists and supporters of jailed Kremlin critic Alexei Navalny into the summer, the Mediazona and OVD-Info police-monitoring websites reported Thursday.

Ten Navalny supporters are accused of "inciting mass violations" of coronavirus restrictions by calling on supporters nationwide to protest his jailing in late January and early February. Critics accused the Kremlin of locking up Navalny's closest allies to stifle dissent ahead of parliamentary elections this September.

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Moscow's Basmanny District Court ruled to keep Navalny's spokeswoman Kira Yarmysh and Pussy Riot activist Maria Alyokhina, as well as head of Navalny's Moscow office Oleg Stepanov

and municipal deputy Dmitry Baranovsky, under house arrest until June 23.

The court is expected to extend six other supporters' house arrest later in the day, according to BBC Russia.

They include another Pussy Riot member and municipal deputy Lucy Shtein and Anti-Corruption Foundation lawyer Lyubov Sobol as well as Navalny's brother Oleg, ophthalmologist and independent doctors' union leader Anastasia Vasilyeva, senior associate Nikolai Lyaskin and municipal deputy Konstantin Yankauskas.

All 10 face up to 2 years in prison under the coronavirus-related charges that Russian lawmakers passed at the start of the outbreak last spring.

The court handed down its ruling two days after Hollywood stars including Whoopi Goldberg, Martin Sheen and Gillian Anderson signed a letter of solidarity with Alyokhina and Shtein.

Navalny was sentenced to two and a half years in a prison colony last month for violating parole while recovering abroad from a poisoning attack last year. The United States and European Union imposed sanctions on Russian officials and state entities over Navalny's poisoning, which the Kremlin denies, as well as his imprisonment.

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