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Top Navalny Ally Blames Kremlin for Father's Arrest

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Ivan Zhdanov **izhdanov.ru**

Jailed Kremlin critic Alexei Navalny's ally Ivan Zhdanov said Monday that his father has been arrested for corruption, blaming the Kremlin for the arrest and linking the criminal case to his own political activity.

Zhdanov, who heads Navalny's Anti-Corruption Foundation (FBK) which is famous for viral video investigations into senior officials' allegedly illicit wealth, said his father was placed in pre-trial detention in southern Russia over the weekend.

Yury Zhdanov, 66, is accused of recommending social housing to a family that turned out to have previously received it, his son said. Zhdanov junior said the authorities had found nothing criminal when they probed the terminated social housing agreement in 2020, when Zhdanov senior retired from civil service in northwestern Russia.

"I have no doubt that this criminal case has to do with me and my activities," Zhdanov wrote on Facebook.

“This is a completely new low and a new level of baseness for the presidential administration,” he added. “[President Vladimir] Putin has decided to reveal himself completely.”

Zhdanov senior faces up to four years in prison on abuse of office charges. His son warned that the elder Zhdanov risks “losing what remains of his health” while in pre-trial detention.

A number of observers linked Yury Zhdanov’s detention to the “Chechenization” of the country, arguing that Russian authorities are adopting the scare tactics from its southern region under the iron-fisted rule of loyal Kremlin ally Ramzan Kadyrov.

Navalny, 44, was jailed in January immediately upon returning to Russia from Germany, where he was treated for a near-fatal poisoning with a military-grade nerve agent that he blames on the Kremlin.

His imprisonment for violating parole on old fraud charges sparked mass nationwide protests, outcry from rights groups in Russia and abroad and condemnation from the West.

Navalny’s allies last week announced plans to stage new protests once they gather half a million signatures from people who plan to attend. Over 350,000 Russians in dozens of cities have signed up as of Monday afternoon, less than a week since the announcement.

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