

Navalny Ally Jailed 2 Years for Anti-Government Tweets – Mediazona

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Pavel Zelensky was charged with inciting extremism online for tweets posted after the self-immolation death of journalist Irina Slavina. **Natalia Zelenskaya / Facebook**

A Moscow court has sentenced one of jailed Kremlin critic Alexei Navalny's allies to two years in prison for two tweets critical of the Russian government, the Mediazona news website [reported](#) Thursday.

Pavel Zelensky, a camera operator for Navalny's Anti-Corruption Foundation (FBK), was detained in January on charges of inciting extremism online. The accusations stem from anti-government tweets he posted after the self-immolation death of journalist Irina Slavina after police searches at her apartment in October.

Related article: ['Blame the Russian Federation for My Death,' Journalist Writes Before Self-Immolation](#)

Moscow's Tushinsky District Court [found](#) Zelensky guilty of incitement and sentenced him to

two years in a penal colony, according to the Mediazona independent news website.

The state prosecution had reportedly requested a 2.5-year sentence for Zelensky.

Zelensky's wife [told](#) the Open Media news website that he plans to appeal the verdict.

Mediazona reported that Zelensky had pleaded guilty, with other Navalny allies speculating that officials may have subjected him to physical and psychological pressure to do so. Zelensky's wife had [told](#) Mediazona in February that he pleaded guilty in hopes of mitigating his sentence after he learned his mother was sick with the coronavirus.

The outlet added that Interior Ministry experts found signs of extremism in Zelensky's tweets, one of which called for readers to take to the streets to express their anger.

Navalny and FBK have been a constant thorn in the side of Russian officials, several of whom have found themselves the subjects of the group's popular video investigations alleging high-level corruption. Several Navalny allies are under house arrest on charges of violating coronavirus restrictions for urging protests calling for Navalny's release earlier this year.

Rights groups have accused Russia of applying the extremist label to opposition material as it increasingly criminalized online content in recent years.

Navalny, 44, is serving two and a half years in a notorious prison colony on charges of violating parole of his old suspended sentence for fraud. He is currently on hunger strike to demand proper medical treatment.

Navalny accuses the Kremlin of ordering his poisoning attack with the Novichok nerve agent last August. The Kremlin rejects the accusations and says there are no grounds to investigate Navalny's poisoning.

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