

Lisbon Mayor 'Regrets' Sharing Navalny Protesters' Contacts With Russia

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A demonstrator holds a picture of jailed Kremlin critic Alexei Navalny during a protest demanding freedom for political prisoners in Lisbon. **Armando Franca / AP Photo / TASS**

The mayor of Lisbon has [apologized](#) for sharing contact details of residents who staged rallies in support of poisoned Kremlin critic Alexei Navalny after he was arrested upon his return to Russia.

The Portuguese capital was among the [95 cities](#) outside Russia where rallies calling for Navalny's release took place in January. Several hundred thousand took to the streets across more than 100 Russian cities this winter, where 10,000 protesters were detained and dozens have been sentenced to jail terms of up to four years.

Portuguese newspapers reported this week that the Lisbon city council (CML) shared three pro-Navalny rally organizers' names, addresses and phone numbers with the Russian Embassy, outside which the demonstrations were held.

Related article: [Navalny Team Vows to Fight on After 'Extremism' Ruling](#)

The municipality later said the data transfer was legal under Portugal's protest rules, but has vowed to change its procedures "to better protect the right to protest and freedom of expression."

"The CML regrets that the reproduction of procedures established for situations of normal democratic functioning has not proved adequate in this context," the city council said in a statement Thursday.

"The CML vehemently rejects any accusations and insinuations of complicity with the Russian regime," the city council said.

Mayor Fernando Medina told reporters: "I apologize to the protest organizers ... and I want to assume [responsibility for] this regrettable mistake that should have not happened," according to Reuters.

Dual Portuguese-Russian citizen Ksenia Ashrafullina, one of the three Navalny rally organizers, [told](#) Reuters she felt "betrayed" because "the Portuguese state did not protect me."

"After Navalny was poisoned, we realized Russia was becoming more violent towards its citizens so how am I going to be allowed back in?" she was quoted as saying.

Russia's Embassy in Lisbon [accused](#) Ashrafullina of "self-promotion" and "low-grade provocations."

"Neither the Embassy in Lisbon, nor Moscow care about these individuals with unhealthy fantasies," it said in a Facebook post.

"We have other priorities... so the 'activist' can safely return home."

Navalny, 45, is currently serving two and a half years in prison on old fraud charges he and his supporters call politically motivated.

A Moscow court declared Navalny's political and activist network "extremist" on Wednesday, outlawing Russia's fiercest force that opposes President Vladimir Putin ahead of key parliamentary elections this September.

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