

Russian Opposition Deputy Barred From Moscow Elections Over Navalny Support

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Ilya Yashin **Sergei Bobylev / TASS**

Russian opposition politician and Moscow municipal deputy Ilya Yashin said he has been barred from running in the upcoming Moscow City Duma elections for supporting jailed Kremlin critic Alexei Navalny.

Yashin said the Moscow electoral commission cited a recent law that bars anyone associated with a terrorist or extremist organization from running for public office. Russia had [outlawed](#) Navalny's activist and political groups as "extremist" organizations earlier this month, banning their operations and putting members at risk of prison time.

Related article: [Navalny Ally Lyubov Sobol Drops Out of Duma Race After Russia's 'Extremist' Ban](#)

"The electoral commission deemed me as an extremist because I supported Navalny and forbade me to be nominated. I have not seen such impudent lawlessness in a long time,"

Yashin [tweeted](#) Friday.

“This law was created to bar independent candidates like myself; however, they can’t even comply with legal formalities. How can they prove my connection to [Navalny’s Anti-Corruption Foundation] FBK if I never worked for them or got paid by them?” Yashin [said](#) in a YouTube video.

Earlier this month, fellow opposition activist and Navalny ally Lyubov Sobol was forced to [withdraw](#) her candidacy from the upcoming State Duma elections due to her FBK affiliation.

Yashin said he had been approached by several people who tried to convince him that his links to Navalny were toxic and that he could find his place within the political system if he publicly denounced Navalny.

“It would never even occur to me to renounce my friends and my views. I don't want to fit into your rotten system, I want to change it,” Yashin said.

The Moscow City Electoral Commission [told](#) the state-run RIA Novosti news agency on Friday that a district commission decision barred Yashin from opening a candidate's bank account, forcing them to remove him from the Moscow City Duma by-election ballot.

The ruling, pro-Kremlin United Russia party is seeking to maintain its supermajority in the lower-house State Duma this September despite historically low approval ratings.

Kremlin critics say the authorities have been tightening the screws on dissent ahead of the State Duma elections with arrests, detentions and raids against opposition politicians and activists.

In his video Friday, Yashin reiterated his support for Navalny’s Smart Voting strategy that aims to oust United Russia incumbents by rallying support behind the most likely challenger.

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