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Russia Issues Arrest Warrant for Navalny's Brother

By AFP

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Oleg Navalny. **Tverskoy District Court / Moskva News Agency**

Russia issued an arrest warrant for the brother of jailed Kremlin critic Alexei Navalny on Wednesday, part of ongoing efforts to silence opposition voices critical of the Kremlin.

The Interior Ministry said Oleg Navalny, 38, is wanted on criminal charges, without providing further details and his name appeared on the ministry's wanted list, an AFP journalist confirmed Wednesday.

The move comes one day after Russia's prison authority requested courts to convert a suspended sentence he is serving into real jail time for violating coronavirus regulations.

Lawyer Nikos Paraskevov told the Interfax news agency Wednesday that the arrest warrant was issued when police were unable to locate Oleg Navalny at his residence.

Paraskevov said it was not clear whether the 38-year-old had left the country.

Related article: How Alexei Navalny's Jailing Changed Russia

Almost all of Alexei Navalny's most prominent allies have fled Russia after he was jailed and his organizations were outlawed.

Last August, Oleg Navalny was handed a one-year suspended sentence for breaking pandemic restrictions during protests demanding his brother's release.

He was accused of calling for Russians to attend an unsanctioned rally in January 2021 in support of his brother, who had returned to Russia after being treated in Germany for a near-fatal poisoning attack.

A Moscow court announced Monday it will consider the request to jail Navalny on Feb. 18.

In 2014, Alexei and Oleg Navalny were convicted in a fraud trial, which Kremlin critics say was politically motivated, related to their work for French cosmetics company Yves Rocher.

Oleg served three-and-a-half years in prison and was released in 2018, while Alexei received a three-and-a-half-year suspended sentence

After returning to Russia last year, Alexei had his suspended sentence converted to jail time, which he is serving in a penal colony outside Moscow.

President Vladimir Putin's most vocal domestic opponent spent months in Germany recovering from a poisoning attack that he and the West blame on the Kremlin.

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