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Russian Court Orders Navalny Brother Jailed in Absentia

By AFP

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Oleg Navalny was handed a one-year suspended sentence last year for breaking pandemic restrictions.
Moskva News Agency

A Russian court on Friday sentenced in absentia the brother of imprisoned Kremlin critic Alexei Navalny, Oleg, to one year in prison for violating the terms of a suspended sentence.

A district court in Moscow "replaced Oleg Navalny's suspended sentence... with jail time," his lawyer Nikos Paraskevov wrote on Twitter.

Last August, Oleg Navalny, 38, was handed a one-year suspended sentence for breaking pandemic restrictions.

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

Related article: Russia Issues Arrest Warrant for Navalny's Brother

Oleg Navalny was not present at the trial.

According to court documents cited by news agencies, he traveled to Cyprus in September last year and did not return to Russia.

In January, Russia's prison authorities lodged a request to convert his sentence to jail time after he did not report for police inspections. The same month, Russia's Interior Ministry issued an arrest warrant.

The judge granted the request, adding that "aggravating circumstances have been established," referring to Navalny's previous convictions, RIA Novosti news agency reported.

Oleg has already served time after he and Alexei were convicted in a fraud trial in 2014, which Kremlin critics say was politically motivated.

Oleg served three-and-a-half years in prison, 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.

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

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