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Navalny Urges Russians to Keep Protesting Ukraine War

By AFP

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Jailed Kremlin critic Alexei Navalny on Tuesday urged Russians to continue protesting against Moscow's invasion of Ukraine, days after thousands of protesters were arrested at anti-war rallies nationwide.

More than 13,500 Russians have been detained at demonstrations against the invasion of Ukraine since President Vladimir Putin ordered his army to attack its pro-Western neighbor on Feb. 24.

Navalny, who is serving a two-and-a-half-year jail term on fraud charges that his allies say are politically motivated, wrote on Twitter that anger was growing at home against the conflict.

He cited a survey carried out by aides and said protests were putting additional pressure on

the Kremlin, which he said was "desperate" to end the war "as soon as possible."

"The anti-war momentum will keep growing across the society, so the anti-war protests should not be halted under any circumstances," Navalny tweeted in English.

Navalny had earlier called for daily demonstrations against the war, urging Russians to gather in cities each evening and at weekends too.

OVD-Info, which monitors arrests during protests, said police had detained at least 5,016 people in 60 cities during the anti-war protests last weekend.

Virtually no opposition protests are allowed in Russia and demonstrators risk fines and jail terms by taking to the streets.

The authorities have moved to silence all criticism of the military campaign and Putin last week approved legislation to punish people — including with long jail terms — for spreading what is deemed to be fake news about Russia's military.

The authorities have already opened several administrative cases into breaches of the legislation since the law entered force last Friday.

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