

Jailed Kremlin Critic Navalny Sues Prison Over Working Conditions

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Jailed Russian opposition politician Alexei Navalny [has filed](#) a lawsuit against the penal colony where he is currently serving a nine-year prison service.

Navalny said the IK-6 prison in the Vladimir region hadn't disclosed information about the purchaser of the products that he manufactures in the colony.

The regional court press service [claimed](#) the purchaser refused to publicly share “information about the manufacture of their products in correctional institutions.”

Navalny, who is working as a sewer, [said](#) he created a labor union to protect the rights of prison workers.

“There are about 600,000 people sitting in prison in Russia right now. The vast majority of them are working. And it is completely slave-like, almost free labor in horrible conditions,” the politician [said](#) on Twitter.

Related article: [Russia's Prison Brand of Economic Self-Sufficiency](#)

Navalny claimed his monthly salary as a prison laborer is 5,173 rubles (\$85), which he said is considered a “huge” wage.

The IK-6 prison is notorious for its harsh conditions, with inmates [reported](#) to have been tortured.

Navalny [said](#) he works from for seven hours a day, starting at 6:40 a.m., with one 15-minute break.

Prison labor is a common practice in Russia.

Last month Russian prison officials [said](#) that they hope to replace Western brands like IKEA with products made by inmates, according to media reports.

State and municipal companies have signed 600 million rubles (\$10 million) of contracts with penal colonies from the Middle Urals region so far this year, a local newspaper [wrote](#).

Navalny was [transferred](#) to the maximum-security IK-6 penal colony in June after his prison term was extended to nine years on fraud charges that he and his allies have described as politically motivated and an effort to keep him in prison for life.

He was initially [sentenced](#) to 2.5 years in prison in February 2021 upon returning to Russia after recovering abroad from a near-fatal nerve-agent poisoning that he blames on President Vladimir Putin.

The arrest and prison sentence of Putin's most vocal domestic foe sparked mass protests across Russia that were met with a harsh crackdown.

Russia outlawed Navalny's political and activist networks as “extremist” organizations last June and most of his allies have since fled abroad to escape prosecution.

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