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Navalny Says Denied Attorney-Client Privilege in Prison

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Sergey Karpukhin / TASS

Jailed Kremlin critic Alexey Navalny said Thursday he has been barred from confidential communications with his lawyers or family at the penal colony where he's currently serving a nine-year prison sentence.

"It has been established that you continue your criminal activity, you are committing crimes directly from the prison facilities and you communicate with your accomplices through lawyers," Navalny said he had been told by prison authorities.

"All incoming and outgoing lawyer documents will henceforth be subject to a three-day check," the opposition figure wrote Thursday on his Twitter account, which is run by close associates.

Navalny also said the prison refused to provide him with details on his alleged "criminal activity" because the information was "secret."

Maria Pevchikh, the lead investigator for Navalny's Anti-Corruption Foundation (FBK), warned that the move "could effectively mean no communication at all" with Navalny.

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Navalny's spokeswoman Kira Yarmysh expressed fears that "if there is no access to Alexei, we will not know what is happening to him."

"Putin has already tried to kill him," Yarmysh added in her post on Twitter, referencing Navalny's August 2020 poisoning that Navalny blames on President Vladimir Putin.

On Wednesday, Navalny said he had been placed in solitary confinement for the fourth time in a month.

He 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.

Navalny was immediately jailed upon his January 2021 return to Russia from Germany, where he spent months recovering from his near-fatal poisoning.

European chemical weapons experts determined that the opposition figure was poisoned with the banned nerve agent Novichok and Navalny's team alleged that Russia's Federal Security Service (FSB) carried out the attack on the Kremlin's orders.

The Kremlin denies the claims.

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