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Russian Doctors Implore Putin to ‘Stop Abusing’ Navalny in Open Letter

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Alexei Navalny. **Sergei Karpukhin / TASS**

Dozens of Russian doctors signed an open letter on Tuesday urging Russian President Vladimir Putin "to stop abusing" jailed Kremlin critic Alexei Navalny, who was returned to solitary confinement on New Year’s Eve for the 10th time since his nine-year jail sentence began last year.

“We cannot and do not have the right to look calmly at the deliberate infliction of harm to the health of politician Alexei Navalny,” the letter, published by the independent Meduza news website, said.

At least 100 doctors have signed the petition so far, which demands the opposition politician be given a “full examination” and access to proper medical treatment.

Navalny said on Monday that he had been sent back to solitary confinement for the 10th time since his sentence began on New Year's Eve — this time for washing his face half an hour earlier than he was supposed to. The politician also added that he was deliberately put in a cell

with a prisoner with poor hygiene and severe flu symptoms.

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Navalny is currently experiencing fever, chills, and a cough, according to his lawyer Vadim Kobzev.

“From a medical point of view, it is obvious that Alexei does not receive sufficient medical assistance, and keeping him in solitary confinement is absolutely contraindicated in his condition,” the open letter said.

Navalny has now spent a total of four months in solitary confinement, developing severe back problems as a result of the harsh conditions.

The Kremlin critic, who built a huge social media operation producing videos exposing corruption among government officials, was sentenced to nine years in prison in March 2022.

Navalny was arrested last year when he returned to Russia from Germany, where he had been recovering from a poisoning attempt that he says was ordered by Putin, something the Kremlin has denied.

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