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INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Navalny Ally Chanysheva Jailed 7.5 Years for 'Extremism'

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Lilia Chanysheva in court Wednesday. **Team Navalny**

A Russian court on Wednesday sentenced a former regional coordinator of jailed Russian opposition activist Alexei Navalny to seven-and-a-half years in prison on charges of creating an extremist group.

Lilia Chanysheva, 41, headed Navalny's political office in the central Russian city of Ufa until it was forced to dissolve in 2021, when the authorities blacklisted Navalny's activist network as "extremist."

On Wednesday, Ufa's Kirov District Court found Chanysheva guilty and handed her a 7.5-year prison sentence, according to the regional news outlet Aspekty.

Prosecutors had requested a 12-year prison sentence for Chanysheva.

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Chanysheva was filmed thanking her supporters after the verdict.

“This [sentencing] is much easier to handle with you. I really need your letters and postcards,” she said from inside a glass box where defendants are placed in the courtroom.

In her final statement to the court last month, Chanysheva said the “extremism” case against her was politically motivated.

“My political rights and the rights of my fellow citizens have been consistently violated. This shows that Putin has long wanted to eradicate any dissent [...] for the sole purpose of retaining power in 2024,” she said.

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Chanysheva was the first of Navalny’s associates to be arrested on “extremism” charges in November 2021. Most of his other key aides have fled Russia and now live in exile.

Last year, Navalny’s team said Chanysheva faced up to 18 years in prison on two additional charges of “extremism” and one for creating an organization that “violates the rights of citizens.”

Russian state media reported in April that investigators had placed 11 people on an “international wanted list” in a criminal case linked to Navalny.

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