

Navalny Launches Anti-War Presidential Campaign From Jail

June 20, 2023



Russian opposition activist Alexei Navalny on trial at a prison in central Russia. **Sofya Sandurskaya / TASS**

Jailed Kremlin critic Alexei Navalny said he has [launched](#) a “long, relentless and exhausting” online presidential campaign against Russia’s war in Ukraine.

With his grassroots political network banned as “extremist” in Russia, Navalny vowed to deploy a targeted messaging strategy to win over pro-war or neutral Russians.

“We’ll change many people’s minds. We’ll sow doubts in almost all of them,” Navalny said in a post published through associates on his website Monday.

“This is an election campaign against the candidates named ‘War’ and Putin,” the opposition leader said.

Related article: [Navalny Says Faces Life in Prison on ‘Absurd’ Terror Charges](#)

President Vladimir Putin, 70, who ordered troops to invade Ukraine in February 2022, is widely expected to declare his re-election bid for the March 2024 presidential vote.

Navalny, 47, was barred from running for president in the 2018 race when Putin won his fifth term in office.

The Kremlin critic is currently standing trial on "extremist" charges which could see him sentenced to 30 more years in prison in addition to the nine-year sentence he is already serving.

In Monday's announcement, Navalny called on software engineers, sociologists and political scientists to volunteer their time to develop a "creative" and "adaptable" strategy to communicate with Russian voters.

"We'll do it according to the laws and technologies of good election campaigning [by] interviewing everyone, targeting hundreds of different groups, choosing an approach to each, identifying those who are on the fence and changing their minds," he wrote.

Navalny acknowledged the potential risks of criminal prosecution for joining his campaign, writing: "Our activities will, of course, be declared illegal and subversive."

"All the forces will be thrown to combat it. That's fine, we'll throw our forces into the fight against the apparatus of war, corruption and stupidity."

Related article: [Russian Judge Orders to Hold Navalny 'Extremist' Trial Behind Closed Doors](#)

The announcement was published as a Moscow court ruled to hold the latest trial against the Kremlin critic — who faces a string of "extremism" charges — behind closed doors.

Navalny's allies argue that Russian authorities are attempting to conceal the trial due to a lack of evidence against him.

Navalny was imprisoned upon his January 2021 return to Russia after recovering from a near-fatal poisoning with what Western scientists determined was the banned military-grade nerve agent Novichok.

Russian officials outlawed Navalny's political and activist groups as "extremist" organizations later that year, prompting nearly all of his close aides to leave the country.

Original url:

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