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Navalny-Backed Opposition Deputies Stripped of Mandates

June 28, 2023



Helga Pirogova and Sergei Boiko. **@_sergey_boyko / twitter**

Two Siberian opposition deputies backed by jailed Kremlin critic Alexei Navalny have been stripped of their mandates over claims that they had failed to submit personal income statements, a move the deputies themselves called politically motivated.

The Novosibirsk City Council voted by majority Wednesday to strip deputies Sergei Boyko and Helga Pirogova of their mandates, two years before they were set to expire.

Prosecutors had asked the local assembly earlier in June to strip the opposition deputies of their mandates for allegedly failing to submit personal income statements in 2022, claims which the two politicians deny.

Pirogova said that a "loss of trust" was the formal reason given by the Novosibirsk City Council for their decision.

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“It’s an absolutely illegal and politically motivated decision to take away our mandates. There are no grounds for this,” she told The Moscow Times.

“We were entrusted not by deputies, but by our voters, and it's not for deputies to vote on this.”

Pirogova previously said that the Novosibirsk City Council’s anti-corruption commission had refused to accept her income statements.

She told The Moscow Times that both she and Boyko plan to make an appeal and sue the Novosibirsk City Council.

On Wednesday, Boyko said: “My voters and I don’t give a damn whether [pro-Kremlin ruling party] United Russia trusts me or not.”

Embed:

> Я не формалист, но как-то совершенно бредово звучит "отозвать мандаты в связи с утратой доверия".
>
> Нам с Хельгой доверие оказали избиратели, а не жулики из ЕР. Мне вообще, как и моим избирателям, я уверен, совершенно похер доверяют мне единоросы или не доверяют. pic.twitter.com/jaPFXCfcGv
>
> — Сергей Бойко (@_sergey_boyko) June 28, 2023

Pirogova was forced to flee Russia in August after the Interior Ministry initiated criminal charges against her for spreading “false information” about the army.

Boyko fled the country in 2021 following a crackdown against former Navalny allies on retroactive “extremist” charges. He is now wanted by the Russian authorities.

The two opposition politicians and their supporters have called the charges against them politically motivated.

Both Boyko and Pirogova were voted into the Novosibirsk City Council in 2020 for five-year terms as part of Navalny’s “Smart Voting” strategy that sought to rally support against United Russia.

The Novosibirsk City Council passed a law in October allowing deputies to lose their mandates after a one-year absence in Russia.

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