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INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Russian Prosecutors Seek 20-Year Sentence for Navalny in 'Extremism' Trial

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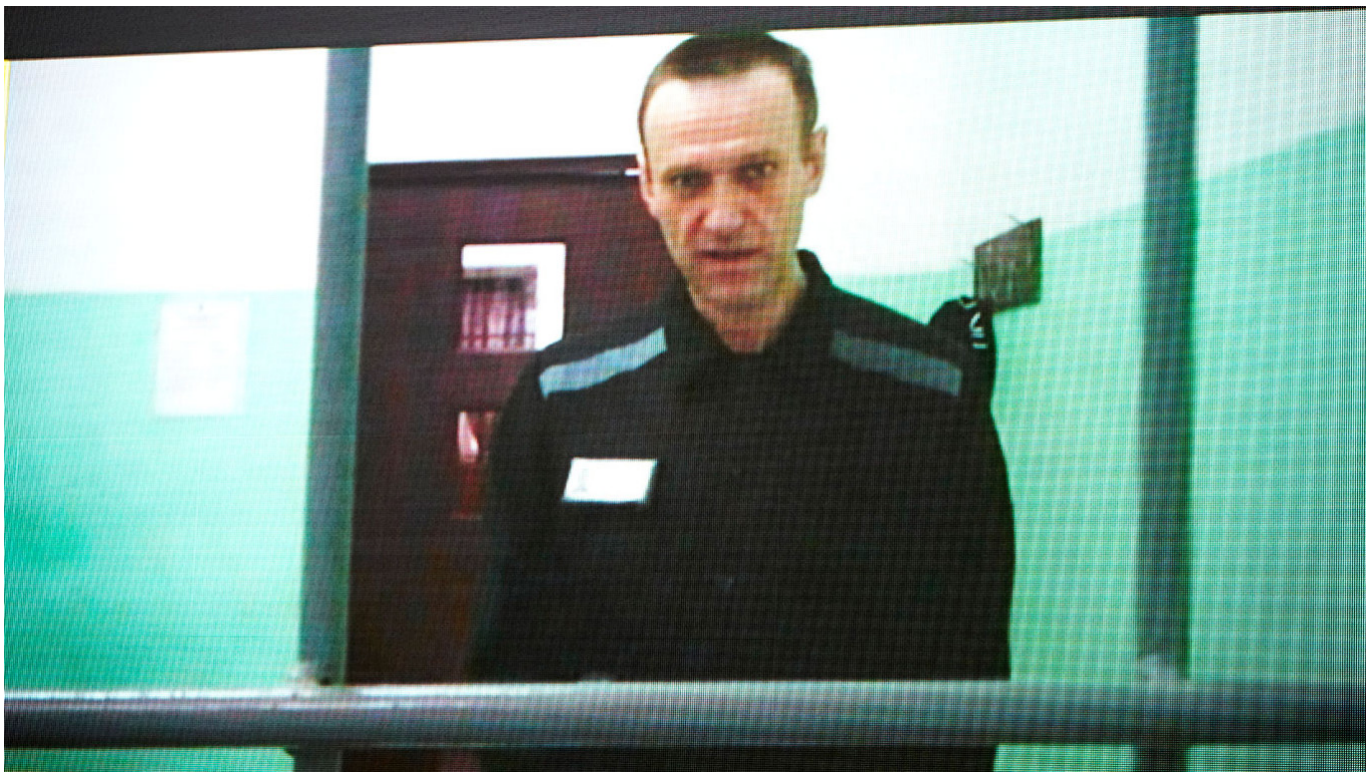

Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny. **Alexander Zemlianichenko / AP / TASS**

Russian prosecutors have requested a 20-year prison sentence for jailed Kremlin critic Alexei Navalny on a new string of "extremism" charges, his team reported Thursday.

Navalny, 47, has been charged with creating an extremist community and an organization that infringes on the rights of citizens; financing extremism; making calls to extremism; and involving minors in dangerous acts and the rehabilitation of Nazism.

He and his allies have denied the charges as "absurd" and politically motivated.

If convicted, the trained lawyer and Putin opponent will spend a total of 29 years in prison.

In his final word in a prison court before his sentencing, Navalny slammed the invasion of Ukraine and expressed his hope for Russia's future.

"My Russia made several big jumps, pushing everyone around, but then slipped and with a roar, destroying everything around, collapsed," Navalny said, according to a statement

published by his team.

“And now it is floundering in a pool of either mud or blood, with broken bones, with a poor and robbed population, and around it lie tens of thousands of people killed in the most stupid and senseless war of the 21st century.

“But sooner or later, of course, it [Russia] will rise again. And it's up to us what it will rely on in the future,” he added.

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His verdict is expected to take place on August 4.

The European Union added the chief of the Russian prison camp holding Navalny to its sanctions list as prosecutors requested the 20-year sentence.

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

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

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