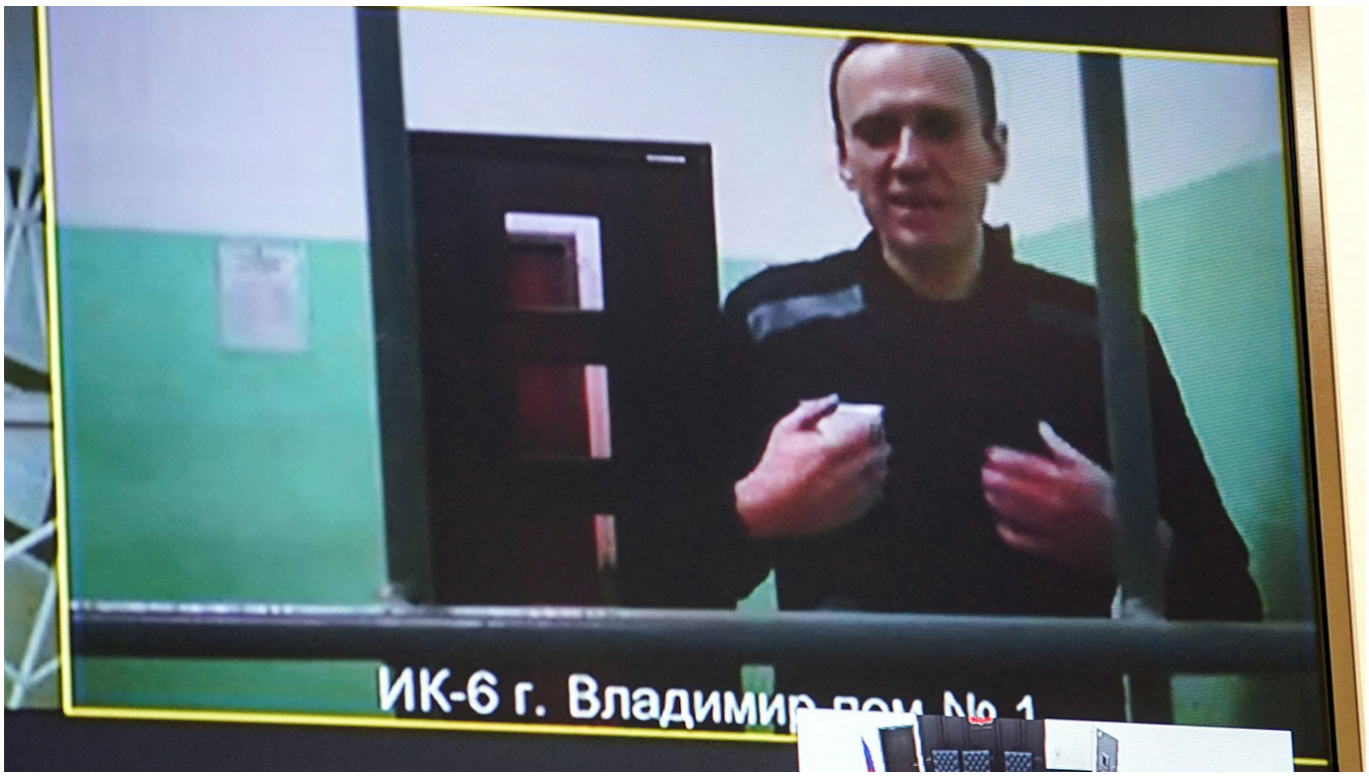
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Political Prisoners in Russia Stage One-Day Solidarity Hunger Strike

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A video screen shows jailed Kremlin critic Alexei Navalny. **Tatyana Makeyeva / AFP**

Jailed Kremlin critic Alexei Navalny and other Russian political prisoners, including journalist and activist Vladimir Kara-Murza as well as opposition politician Ilya Yashin, staged a one-day hunger strike on Monday in a show of solidarity with political prisoners worldwide.

Dating back to the Soviet period, "Political Prisoner Day" used to take place each year on Oct. 30, when political prisoners incarcerated by the Soviet government held a symbolic, one-day hunger strike to raise awareness about political oppression within the country.

However, following the collapse of the U.S.S.R, which conicided with the release of Soviet political prisoners, the commemoration day lost its relevance and was replaced with the annual "Returning of Names," when people take turns reading aloud the names of victims of Joseph Stalin's Great Terror in the 1930s.

A statement signed by Navalny and other prominent political prisoners currently jailed in Russia said that due to the 2021 closure of the Memorial rights group, which organizes the

"Returning of Names," as well as the surge in politically motivated jail sentences since Moscow invaded Ukraine last year, it was time to bring back the original "Political Prisoner Day."

"Power in Russia is returning to its roots: arrests, repressions, closed trials, demonstrative lawlessness under the guise of 'trial'," read the statement posted on Navalny's website.

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"In this situation, we think it is right for us to turn to our roots and traditions," the statement continued.

“We call on all political prisoners and those who want to express their support to join the protest and refuse to eat.”

Memorial, Russia's oldest human rights group, announced a fundraiser to help political prisoners pay for lawyers, medications, and travel for family members to visit them in prison and attend trials.

The group says there are over 600 political prisoners currently jailed in Russia.

Navalny previously went on a hunger strike for 24 days in 2021 over poor conditions in the prison where he is being held, after which he was provided improved medical care.

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