The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
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Exiled Navalny Aide's Father Released From Prison

November 01, 2023



Yury Zhdanov, father of Ivan Zhdanov, director of the Anti-Corruption Foundation. **Ateo Breaking / Telegram**

The elderly father of jailed Kremlin critic Alexei Navalny's top aide Ivan Zhdanov has been released from prison, he said Wednesday, after serving what his son called a political sentence.

Yury Zhdanov, 69, the father of lawyer Ivan Zhdanov, wrote on Instagram that he was released from a prison colony in northwestern Russia's Arkhangelsk region.

"I've had the audacity to call myself a free man for several days now," Zhdanov said, accompanying the post with a photo of himself in a prison jacket posing in front of the penal colony.

Zhdanov, a former civil servant, was in 2021 handed a three-year suspended sentence on charges of abuse of office.

In February 2022, a higher court replaced the remaining of Zhdanov's suspended sentence to a real prison term and he was placed in a penal colony.

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"I won't hide it, it was hard," Zhdanov wrote on Instagram, noting that he is still subject to three more years of administrative supervision.

"But I had to go through all the trials with dignity. After all, those who are worried about the fate of their relatives, other political prisoners and many of those to whom the words 'freedom' and 'justice' are not an empty sound — are looking at me."

Memorial, Russia's leading rights group, designated Yury Zhdanov a political prisoner in 2021.

Ivan Zhdanov, who has been living in exile since 2019, linked his father's imprisonment to his own political activities.

The younger Zhdanov heads Navlany's Anti-Corruption Foundation (FBK), which has published explosive video investigations into high-level corruption over the past decade.

Authorities banned FBK in the summer of 2021 for "extremism," forcing many of its members to flee the country to evade prosecution.

Navalny is serving a 19-year prison sentence on extremism charges which he and his allies dismiss as politically motivated.

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