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INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Navalny Ally Fadeyeva Sentenced to 9 Years for 'Extremism'

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Ksenia Fadeyeva. **t.me/mizafadeevu**

A court in Siberia has sentenced an ally of Kremlin critic Alexei Navalny to nine years in prison on charges of creating an "extremist organization," the independent news website Mediazona reported Friday.

Ksenia Fadeyeva, 31, Navalny's former Tomsk regional coordinator, was detained in December 2021 after a Moscow court outlawed Navalny's political network as "extremist."

Fadeyeva, who was elected to the Tomsk city council in 2020, was one of the few Navalny allies to remain in Russia despite the risk of criminal prosecution from the "extremist" designation.

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Tomsk's Sovetsky Court found Fadeyeva guilty and handed her a nine-year sentence in a prison colony.

"The 'judge' Khudyakov has ordered a nine-year sentence against Ksenia Fadeyeva" for extremism, her supporters' Telegram channel said, adding the defense would appeal.

Lawyers and supporters denounced the trial as a sham.

"What happened in this trial has nothing to do with justice," lawyer Semyon Vodnev said in a video posted by SOTA media, adding the defense had been "bullied."

State prosecutors had requested a 10.5-year sentence for Fadeyeva.

She denied the charges, which carry a maximum punishment of 12 years in prison.

Fadeyeva's trial was closed to the media and the public.

"Ksenia did not commit any crime, she is a brave politician who has been fighting against Putin's corrupt regime," the Anti-Corruption Foundation said in reaction to the verdict.

Moscow has used laws on "terrorist" and "extremist" bodies to hand out years-long jail sentences to critics, including Navalny himself.

Navalny galvanized huge nationwide protests in Russia before he was jailed in 2021 on fraud charges after returning from Germany, where he was recovering from a poisoning attack.

He saw his sentence extended to 19 years on charges of extremism in 2023, and was recently transferred to a harsher colony in Russia's Arctic.

Navalny's political network was designated "extremist" in 2021, putting employees, volunteers and supporters at risk of criminal prosecution.

Another former Navalny regional coordinator, Ufa-based activist and politician Lilia Chanysheva, was sentenced to 7.5 years in a penal colony in June on the same charges.

Vadim Ostanin, the head of Navalny's office in Barnaul, was imprisoned for nine years on "extremism" charges.

AFP contributed reporting.

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