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Moscow Court Arrests Navalny Allies in Absentia

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Maria Pevchikh. **Slaven Vlasic / Getty Images for Fashion 4 Development /AFP**

A Moscow court on Monday arrested in absentia four allies of jailed Kremlin critic Alexei Navalny.

At least eight exiled Navalny associates face criminal charges under wartime censorship laws, according to the Navally-affiliated news outlet Sirena.

Moscow's Basmanny District Court ordered Kira Yarmysh, Maria Pevchikh, Dmitry Nizovtsev and Anna Biryukova to serve two months in pre-trial detention once they are arrested or extradited back to Russia.

Pevchikh, who chairs Navalny's Anti-Corruption Foundation (ACF), is accused of vandalism, spreading "fake news" about the Russian army and creating an "extremist" organization.

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Navalny’s spokeswoman Yarmysh and Nizovtsev, who hosts the daily opposition news program Popular Politics on Navalny’s YouTube channel, are accused of participating in an “extremist” organization and spreading war fakes.

Biryukova, who heads public opinion research at ACF, is accused of making public calls to commit terrorism.

Russia’s Interior Ministry issued arrest warrants for Pevchikh, Nizovtsev and Biryukova in December.

Yarmysh has been wanted since March 2022 on separate charges of violating Covid restrictions.

Russia banned ACF and Navalny's nationwide political network as "extremist" organizations in 2021, a move widely seen as retaliation for their work to expose corruption among Russia's elites.

Pevchikh holds dual Russian-British citizenship and resides in the United Kingdom.

Many Navalny associates have fled Russia under threat of imprisonment amid a widening wartime crackdown on dissent.

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