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Navalny Calls for Election Day Protest Against Putin, Ukraine Invasion

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Alexei Navalny. **Yuri Kochetkov / EPA / TASS**

Jailed Kremlin critic Alexei Navalny and his allies have called on supporters to protest against President Vladimir Putin and the invasion of Ukraine by turning up to vote "at noon" in the March presidential election.

"Go vote against Putin and the war, and urge everyone to do the same," Navalny said Thursday on X (formerly Twitter).

Navalny, who is serving a 19-year extremism sentence in a remote Arctic prison, explained that voting alone would not be enough since election authorities would rig the results in Putin's favor.

"Without your personal campaigning against Putin, your personal vote against him has little meaning," he said.

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Navalny's strategy — dubbed "Noon Against Putin" — appeared aimed at exploiting both the Kremlin's efforts to drive up voter turnout and an expanding crackdown on other forms of unauthorized protest.

"This is a real nationwide protest action [that is] completely legal and safe," he said, adding: "The authorities themselves are calling for people to participate."

Navalny's team told supporters to cast their vote on the third and final day of voting on March 17.

They also noted that "it doesn't really matter what you do at the polling place: vote for any candidate except Putin, spoil the ballot, or take it with you."

The jailed activist credited former St. Petersburg regional assembly deputy Maxim Reznik for devising the plan.

Putin, 71, is still widely expected to secure his fifth overall presidential term in the March election.

He faces little opposition at the ballot, with the only pro-peace hopeful Boris Nadezhdin awaiting election authorities' decision on whether to allow him to run.

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