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Jailed Navalny Ally Yashin Vows to 'Fight Tyranny' After Activist's Death

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Alexei Navaln and Ilya Yashin. **Pavel Golovkin / AP / TASS**

Jailed opposition politician Ilya Yashin said Tuesday that he will continue to fight for democracy in Russia after learning about the death of his friend and associate Alexei Navalny.

"As long as my heart beats in my chest, I will fight tyranny," Yashin said in a letter in which he pays tribute to Navalny, and whose death he blamed on President Vladimir Putin.

"As long as I live, I will fear no evil. As long as I breathe, I will be with my people," the letter, which was shared on X (formerly Twitter), continued.

Yashin, 40, was sentenced to eight-and-a-half years in prison in December 2022 for spreading "false information" about the Russian army after he published accounts of the civilian massacre in the Ukrainian town of Bucha.

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Yashin is one of the few vocal Kremlin critics who decided to stay in Russia following Moscow's invasion of Ukraine.

He is also among scores of anti-war Russians to be handed lengthy prison sentences after authorities in March 2022 introduced wartime censorship laws that ban virtually all criticism of what the Kremlin insists on calling a “special military operation.”

In Tuesday's message, Yashin said he has “no doubt” that Putin “killed” Navalny, who died in a special-regime penal colony north in Russia's Arctic on Friday.

“This is how power is asserted in Putin’s understanding: through murder, cruelty and demonstrative revenge,” he said.

“This is not the thinking of a statesman. It’s the mindset of a gang leader.”

Russian investigators said Monday that they will not hand over Navalny's body to relatives for at least another two weeks as they conduct a "chemical examination" to determine the cause of his death.

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