

Hopeful Putin Challenger Leaves Russia as Top Court Rejects Presidential Bid

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Boris Nadezhdin. **Alexander Zemlianichenko / AP / TASS**

Pro-peace presidential hopeful Boris Nadezhdin [said](#) he has left Russia for vacation as the country's Supreme Court upheld a decision to bar him from running in next month's election.

"I'm on vacation with my kids," Nadezhdin wrote on the Telegram messaging app late Tuesday.

"We decided not to cancel a long-planned and long-awaited small trip for the whole family to a country in Asia," he said, adding that his team would represent him in court to challenge his disqualification from the March 15-17 presidential race.

On Wednesday evening, Nadezhdin [said](#) Russia's Supreme Court rejected his appeal against the Central Election Commission's (CEC) decision to bar him running.

Related article: [Hopeful Putin Challenger Asks Top Russian Court to Overrule Ballot Block](#)

Russian state-run news agencies [confirmed](#) the Supreme Court's decision after a 10-hour hearing.

“We brought the voters whose signatures had been rejected to court. The prosecutor said these people’s opinions didn’t matter and the handwriting expert’s opinion was more important than these citizens who left their signatures,” Nadezhdin’s spokesman Pavel Burlakov [told](#) reporters.

The ruling came less than a week after the death of prominent Kremlin critic Alexei Navalny in an Arctic prison. Nadezhdin praised the late activist as “one of Russia’s most talented and brave people.”

“I’ll do everything I can to realize the aspirations of Alexei and millions of citizens of our country,” Nadezhdin [said](#) Saturday, the day after prison authorities announced Navalny’s death.

The would-be presidential candidate said he plans to challenge the Supreme Court ruling within five days of the ruling, noting that the first two appeal hearings are scheduled for Feb. 26.

Nadezhdin has campaigned to end the war in Ukraine.

The CEC had said it found "irregularities" in some of the 105,000 signatures Nadezhdin submitted from Russian citizens who backed his candidacy.

Ahead of the court's decision, Nadezhdin's team said the alleged "errors" found by election authorities included minor typos that occurred when handwritten submissions were digitized.

AFP contributed reporting.

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