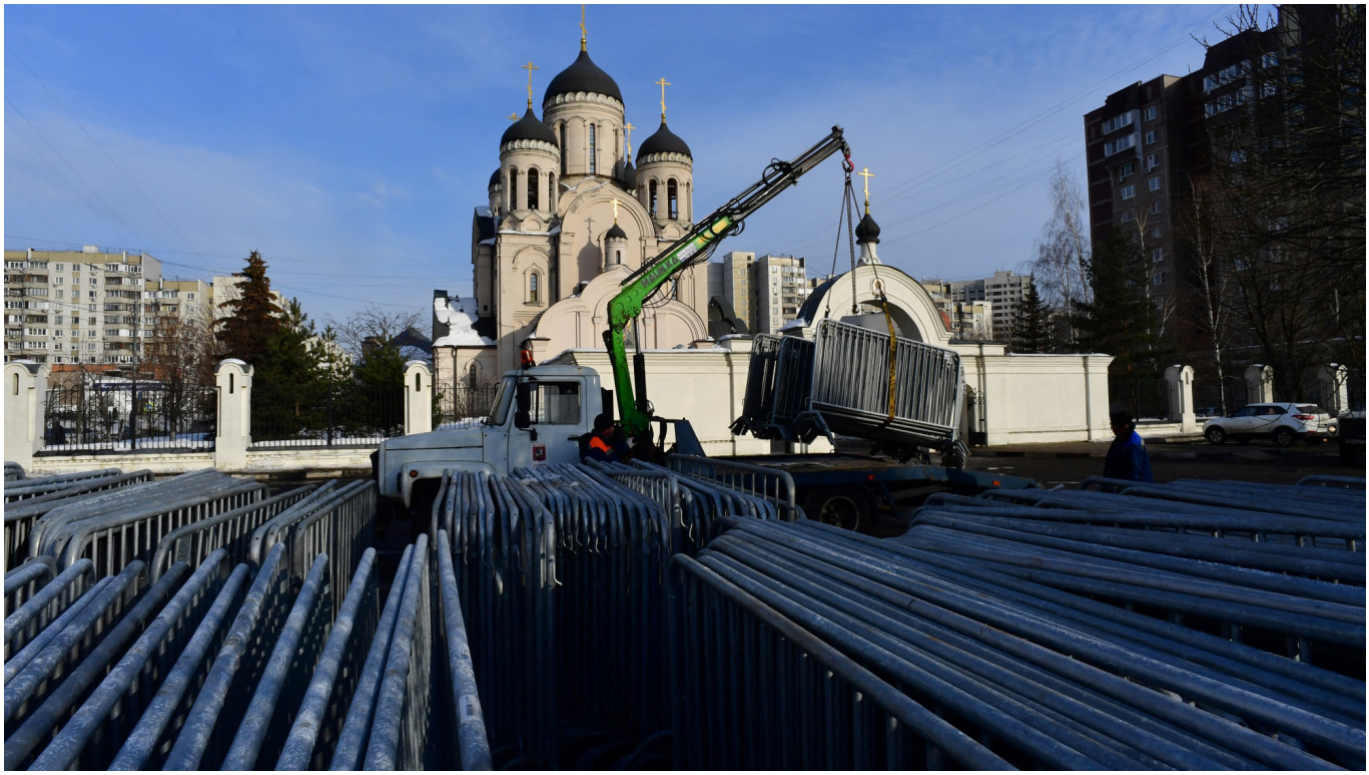
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Funeral Homes Refuse to Bring Navalny's Body to Memorial Service – Allies

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Workers unload metal fencing outside of the Moscow church where Navalny's funeral service is supposed to take place. **Olga Maltseva / AFP**

Funeral homes in Moscow are refusing to transport the body of opposition activist Alexei Navalny to the church where his public memorial ceremony will take place on Friday, his allies said.

"All the hearse services are getting calls from unknown people who threaten them so that they don't take Alexei's body anywhere," Navalny's spokeswoman Kira Yarmysh said Thursday afternoon.

Earlier this week, Navalny's exiled team called on supporters to attend his funeral service on Friday, which will take place at a Russian Orthodox church in Moscow and will be followed by a burial ceremony at a nearby cemetery.

The late activist’s team accused the authorities of trying to prevent a public funeral from taking place as it could turn into a show of support for Navalny’s movement and his opposition to President Vladimir Putin.

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Videos and pictures from the Borisov cemetery in southeastern Moscow’s Maryino district showed metal fencing, metal detectors and surveillance cameras being installed ahead of the funeral.

Navalny, President Vladimir Putin's most vocal critic, died nearly two weeks ago at the Arctic penal colony where he was being held on charges widely seen as retribution for political activism.

Russian investigators handed over his body to his mother more than a week after his death.

Navalny's allies have urged supporters who cannot attend the funeral service in Moscow to honor his memory at makeshift memorials Friday evening.

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