

Kremlin Denies Navalny Exchange Talks Were Underway Before His Death

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Vladimir Putin seen giving his election victory speech on Sunday. **Vyacheslav Prokofiev / TASS**

The Kremlin [said](#) Monday that President Vladimir Putin did not confirm negotiations for exchanging jailed opposition activist Alexei Navalny had taken place shortly before his death at an Arctic penal colony last month.

During an election victory speech on Sunday, Putin said he had agreed to swap Navalny for "some people" currently imprisoned in the West, the Russian leader's first public remarks on the activist's death, which he called a "sad event."

Navalny's allies previously [claimed](#) that negotiations to exchange him for a Russian convicted of murder in Germany were in the "final stages" before the late Kremlin critic suddenly died on Feb. 16.

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“President Putin did not confirm yesterday that negotiations had taken place [to release Navalny],” Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters Monday.

“He said one of the people had put forward an idea to exchange Navalny... he agreed about the prospect and immediately told the person who had put forward the idea,” Peskov added, declining to identify the person who had proposed the exchange.

Investigative media [reported](#) earlier this month that billionaire Roman Abramovich had allegedly suggested the idea of swapping Navalny for other jailed Russians.

Following Putin’s election victory speech on Sunday, Peskov [told](#) reporters that the Russian leader’s willingness to exchange Navalny “showed his transparency.”

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