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Russian Prison Where Navalny Was Held Set to Close

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The penal colony in Pokrovsk, Vladimir region. **Mikhail Metzel / TASS**

A prison where the late opposition figure Alexei Navalny was held shortly after returning to Russia in 2021 is set to shut down, local media reported Thursday, citing prison authorities.

Navalny served more than 500 days at the IK-2 penal colony in the town of Pokrov, Vladimir region, between February 2021 and June 2022 before his transfer to other facilities.

Navalny described IK-2 as a "real concentration camp" with a strict focus on discipline. Other inmates reported severe conditions, including physical abuse, sleep deprivation and restrictions on visitation rights.

The closure process for IK-2 has already begun and is expected to take a year, the Chesnok news website reported, citing the Vladimir region's branch of the Federal Penitentiary Service. Prisoners currently housed at IK-2 will be transferred to other regional facilities, though the future use of the site remains undecided.

Related article: Top 5 Takeaways From Navalny's Memoir 'Patriot'

Navalny, who gained international recognition for his opposition to the Kremlin, died at the age of 47 in February 2024 at the "Polar Wolf" Arctic penal colony under unclear circumstances. His family and allies have accused the Kremlin of being ultimately responsible for his death.

The late activist was imprisoned in 2021 after returning to Russia from Germany, where he had recovered from poisoning with what Western officials identified as a Soviet-era nerve agent called Novichok. His imprisonment and alleged poisoning prompted the United States and EU to impose sanctions on senior Russian officials.

The Kremlin has denied any involvement by President Vladimir Putin in Navalny's death. Media reports citing U.S. intelligence assessments said Putin "probably" did not order the opposition activist's death.

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