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‘No Point Negotiating’ With Putin, Says Navalny’s Widow

By AFP

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Yulia Navalnaya and British Foreign Secretary David Lammy at the Munich Security Conference
DavidLammy / X

The widow of Russian dissident Alexei Navalny warned Friday that there was "no point trying to negotiate" with Russian President Vladimir Putin, amid talks on ending the Ukraine war.

"Even if you decided to negotiate with Putin, just remember he will lie," Yulia Navalnaya told the Munich Security Conference two days before the first anniversary of Navalny's death.

"He will betray," she said about Putin. "He will change the rules at the last moment and force you to play his game."

"There are only two possible outcomes for any deal with Putin. If he remains in power, he will find a way to break the agreement. If he loses power, the agreement will become meaningless."

Navalny's death last year coincided with the opening of the 2024 Munich Security Conference on Feb. 16.

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Navalny has been declared "extremist" by Russian authorities. In Russia, anybody who mentions Navalny or his Anti-Corruption Foundation without stating that they have been declared "extremist" is subject to fines or up to four years in prison for repeated offenses.

The bereaved Navalnaya took to the stage in Munich shortly after the announcement of his death in an Artic prison camp.

On Friday, she was speaking on a panel at the conference with the exiled Belarusian opposition leader Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya.

"By helping Ukraine, you're helping the whole region," Tsikhanouskaya said during the discussion.

If Ukraine did not come out on top after the war, "Putin will be still strong enough to keep his influence on Belarus," she said.

"By putting Ukraine in a strong position during these negotiations, you put also Belarus, Moldova and other countries in a strong position."

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