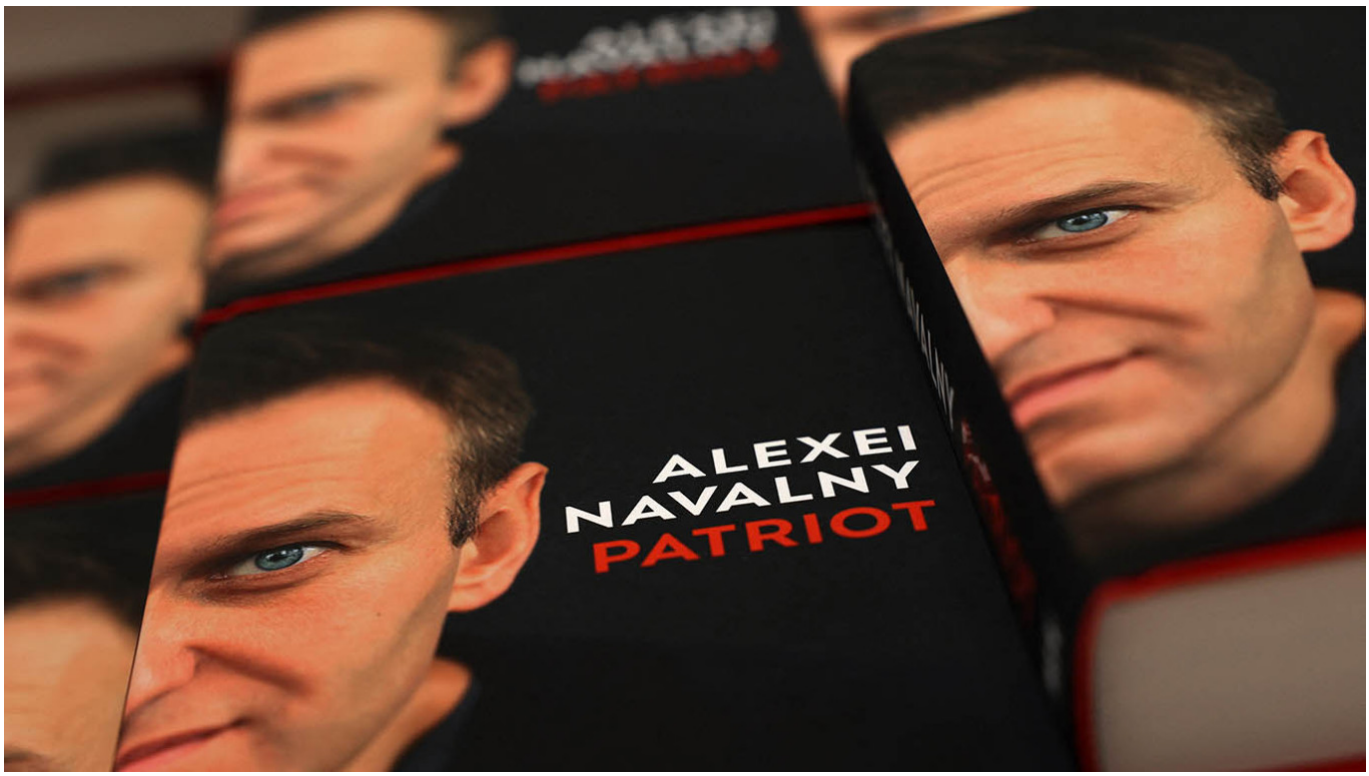
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Russia Declares Navalny Memoir 'Extremist'

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Adrian Dennis / AFP

Russia's Justice Ministry added late opposition leader Alexei Navalny's memoir "Patriot" to its list of "extremist" materials Wednesday — a move that bans the book — following a decision by the Leningrad Regional Court in June.

Leonid Volkov, who served as chief of staff for Navalny's 2018 presidential campaign, said on his Telegram channel that Russian President Vladimir Putin "feared, fears, and will always fear" Alexei Navalny.

"A very good book, be sure to read it," he added.

Ivan Zhdanov, another close ally of the late opposition leader, suggested the ban would backfire.

"I am sure that now even more people will read it," he said. "The book is available in all stores around the world and in every library. Putin is the one who's an extremist."

Alexandra Baeva, a lawyer, told the exiled Russian news outlet Agentstvo that searches for terms such as "Patriot Navalny" or "Patriot book Navalny" could now be treated as attempts to find extremist materials.

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

Valeria Vetoshkina of the human rights organization OVD-Info agreed, noting that searching for the text of the book itself might be considered an offense, though she added that the technical means to monitor such activity remain unclear.

The ban comes amid broader efforts to criminalize searches for extremist content. On July 22, Russia's lower-house State Duma passed legislation imposing fines of 3,000 rubles ($37) to 5,000 rubles ($62) for deliberate searches for extremist materials, including when using a VPN.

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The Federation Council approved the law on July 25 and it is expected to take effect on Sept. 1, following the president's signature.

"Patriot" was published in October 2024 in Russian, English and over 20 other languages. The memoir chronicles Navalny's life from his childhood to his imprisonment and, ultimately, his death.

Navalny began working on the book after his 2020 poisoning and continued writing while in prison, smuggling his notes out during rare visits from family and lawyers. The memoir was honored with the British Book Awards' Book of the Year in 2025.

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