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Kazakhstan Moves to Extradite Ex-Navalny Volunteer to Russia, Anti-War Group Says

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Yulia Yemelyanova. **Social media**

For at least the fourth time this year, prosecutors in Kazakhstan have granted Russia's request to extradite a Russian citizen facing criminal charges at home, an exiled anti-war group said Tuesday.

"Kazakhstan has become a categorically unsafe country for Russians," said lawyer Margarita Kuchusheva, who is a member of the Russian Anti-War Committee's team that helps Russians fight deportations from other countries.

The latest case involves Yulia Yemelyanova, a 34-year-old activist who had volunteered for the late opposition figure Alexei Navalny in St. Petersburg in 2017. Authorities in Kazakhstan detained Yemelyanova in August 2025 after she arrived in the country for a layover to another destination.

Russian law enforcement accuses her of stealing a mobile phone worth 12,000 rubles ($155) from a taxi driver in 2021, an allegation which the Anti-War Committee dismissed as "fabricated."

Rights groups argue that Yemelyanova could face more serious charges once she is extradited to Russia given that Navalny's anti-corruption organization has been designated as a terrorist group in the country.

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According to the Russian Anti-War Committee, prosecutors in Kazakhstan notified Yemelyanova on Jan. 29 of their decision to grant the Russian Prosecutor General's request for her extradition.

"The decision was issued in violation of legal procedures since her asylum application is still under review... The defense will appeal the prosecutor's actions in the Supreme Court," the group said in a statement.

Kuchusheva said Yemelyanova is at least the fourth Russian to face deportation from Kazakhstan in an expedited manner that bypasses procedural norms and violates the right to a defense.

Two of those individuals have been deported to Russia, while a third, like Yemelyanova, is awaiting a court ruling.

"In all these cases, the individuals faced political risks and had either filed or planned to file asylum applications, which were ignored," the Anti-War Committee says.

Of those already in Russia, mobilized soldier Semyon Bazhukov faces up to nine years in prison on charges of desertion, while IT specialist Alexander Kachkurkin faces up to life in prison on treason charges.

The human rights group Memorial has recognized Kachkurkin as a political prisoner.

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