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A Pro-Kremlin Blogger Has Denounced Putin – And Nobody Knows Why

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Laywer and blogger Ilya Remeslo. **@remeslaw / Telegram**

A Kremlin loyalist known for going after Russia's opposition has abruptly broken ranks, publicly denouncing President Vladimir Putin in a scathing manifesto that has left both supporters and critics struggling to find an explanation for the shift.

On Tuesday night, 42-year-old lawyer and blogger Ilya Remeslo published a post on his Telegram channel with the title "Five reasons why I stopped supporting Vladimir Putin."

In it, he accuses the Kremlin leader of sending Russians to their deaths in a "dead-end war" against Ukraine, wrecking the economy, eroding living standards, tightening control over the internet and media and allowing corruption to flourish.

"Vladimir Putin is not a legitimate president. Vladimir Putin must resign and be put on trial as a war criminal and thief," the manifesto concludes.

While prominent figures in Russia's online pro-war community, collectively known as "Z-

bloggers," occasionally criticize the authorities, Remeslo's direct and unyielding attack on the Russian president is unusual, and it has set off a frenzy of speculation across the political spectrum.

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Pro-Kremlin television host Vladimir Solovyov suggested Remeslo may have "snapped" or "switched camps."

Apti Alaudinov, who commands Chechen leader Ramzan Kadyrov's Akhmat special forces, described Remeslo as "someone who always seemed completely level-headed" and suggested that the lawyer may have been kidnapped.

"He was the main driving force behind jailing Navalny. As far as I understood, he was fully on Russia's side. What he's doing now is simply alarming — unless he's being held somewhere against his will or something like that," Alaudinov said.

Remeslo has long served as an attack dog for the Kremlin, using his legal background to file complaints against activists and regime critics. He was closely involved in campaigns against the late opposition activist Alexei Navalny and appeared in court proceedings against him.

Exiled opposition figure Leonid Volkov, who headed Navalny's 2018 presidential campaign, appeared even more dumbstruck than many of those within the Z-blogger community after reading Remeslo's manifesto, describing the 180-degree turn as "the fastest mid-air flip I've ever seen."

"I find it hard to imagine any arrangement in which someone in the presidential administration would greenlight Remeslo going after Putin personally... That opens a far too dangerous Pandora's box. It crosses every red line," Volkov wrote on X.

"Something doesn't add up," he added.

In an interview with the exiled news outlet Agentstvo on Wednesday, Remeslo doubled down on his criticism of Putin and said life in Russia has continued to worsen despite his earlier hopes for improvement. He said he was certain someone in the Kremlin would bring his manifesto to Putin's attention.

Remeslo, who lives in St. Petersburg, also said he plans to remain in Russia "unless my family is threatened in any way" and is prepared to face any criminal charges that law enforcement authorities may bring against him.

"They can't really jail everyone for criticizing Putin," he told the exiled news outlet Agentstvo. "That's nonsense."

Remeslo was allegedly later admitted to a mental health facility, St. Petersburg media reported, though the circumstances surrounding his hospitalization remain unclear.

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