

URGENT ACTION

ALEKSEI NAVALNY'S ILL-TREATMENT STEPPED UP

Politician and Kremlin critic Aleksei Navalny has been sentenced to a total of 19 years in the special-regime prison following new trumped-up charges. He has recently been confined to a single cell-type room (so-called "EPKT", a prison within the prison colony) for a year, for purportedly being a "persistent offender", by the head of the prison. Since his arbitrary arrest in January 2021 and subsequent imprisonment, Aleksei Navalny has been constantly subjected to harassment, including prolonged solitary confinement and other ill-treatment, by the penitentiary authorities, which has now been taken to the new level.

TAKE ACTION: WRITE AN APPEAL IN YOUR OWN WORDS OR USE THIS MODEL LETTER

Arkady Aleksandrovich Gostev
Director of the Federal Penitentiary Service
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Dear Director of the Federal Penitentiary Service,

I am deeply concerned not only by Aleksei Navalny's unjust imprisonment, but also him being constantly targeted for harsher treatment by prison administrations under your control. After numerous and extensive unwarranted disciplinary penalties, such as being confined in "SHIZO" penalty cells, he has been recently placed inside a "EPKT" cell. As you well know, this punishment is applied by the head of the prison administration, without even nominal judicial review, and is open to abuse. This is exactly what has been done to Aleksei Navalny, who was first repeatedly arbitrarily disciplined for purported prison regime violations and will now spend 12 months in EPKT as a "systematic offender".

These repeated punishments of Aleksei Navalny by prison administrations are reprisals for his legitimate political activities and civil society activism. It is obvious that their purpose is to make his conditions in prison, where he must not be in the first place, even harsher. Aleksei Navalny's conditions in prison amount to torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment, and have resulted in constant deterioration of his health. It is known that Alexei Navalny was placed in a punishment isolation cell (so-called SHIZO) 20 times. While in this cell, he was prohibited from visiting and calling his relatives: Navalny is entitled to visits by law, but he has not been able to get a single visit from his family in a year. Also, in the punishment cell the time for eating is limited - up to 12-15 minutes, as well as buying additional food in the prison shop. This treatment puts Aleksei Navalny's life and health at risk, both physical and mental.

Aleksei Navalny should have never been sent to prison in the first place and must be released immediately and unconditionally. In the meantime, I request that you use your existing powers to immediately reverse the decision of the head of IK-6 colony to place Aleksei Navalny in the EPKT. I also urge you to ensure that the ill-treatment of Aleksei Navalny is immediately stopped and that his treatment in any prison institution as well as while in transit between them complies with international laws and standards. All those responsible, or suspected of responsibility, for Aleksei Navalny's ill-treatment, including those among the IK-6 administration, should be immediately suspended and you must ensure that they face disciplinary, administrative or criminal proceedings as appropriate.

Yours sincerely,

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Aleksei Navalny is a prominent Russian opposition politician, anti-corruption campaigner and critic of President Vladimir Putin and the Russian government. In August 2020, he was poisoned with what experts later concluded to be the military-grade nerve agent Novichok. Russian authorities acquiesced for him to be evacuated to Berlin, Germany, for treatment while in a coma.

After recovering, Aleksei Navalny returned to Moscow on 17 January 2021 and was immediately arbitrarily arrested. He was accused of violating the conditions of parole under an earlier politically motivated conditional (non-custodial) sentence. This conditional sentence was replaced with a two years and eight months' custodial sentence on 4 February 2021. On 22 March 2022, he was convicted on further arbitrary and politically-motivated charges, including fraud, and sentenced to a further nine years' imprisonment, and again, convicted and sentenced on 4 August 2023 to a total of 19 years, on charges including financing and inciting "extremism" and "rehabilitating the Nazi ideology."

Aleksei Navalny has been constantly targeted for harsher treatment in every penal institution where he was placed since his arrest. He is currently serving his term in a strict regime (maximum security) penal colony IK-6 in Vladimir Oblast (240 km east of Moscow), but will be moved to a "special regime" prison colony (which is an even harsher prison regime than at his current colony) under the terms of his latest sentence, unless it is overturned on appeal. While in prison, Aleksei Navalny has been repeatedly placed in a punishment cells, for purported violations of prison discipline, including 20 times in so-called SHIZO (penalty isolation cell) where he was not allowed any visits or letters, exercise or walks outside, or a chance to buy additional food in the prison shop.

Prolonged solitary confinement is defined by the UN Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners as a period of 15 days or more in conditions lacking meaningful human contact for at least 22 hours a day. Prolonged solitary confinement constitutes a violation of the prohibition of torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

The legal limit in Russia of the single period for which a prisoner can be placed in SHIZO at a time is 15 days, but as of 27 September 2023 Alexei Navalny is spending 12 months inside so-called single-type penal confinement cell (EPKT), which is the most severe and lengthy form of disciplinary punishment for a prisoner, reserved for "systematic offenders" of prison discipline. During this time, he may or may not be sharing the cell with other prisoners.

It is not yet known in which prison colony Aleksei Navalny will be serving his new sentence, but he will remain in EPKT after his transfer. [Prison transfer in Russia is an extremely abusive procedure](#), that last for weeks and in some instances months. During this time, the prisoner's fate and whereabouts remain unknown to his or her family and lawyers until after reaching their final destination, amounting to enforced disappearance.

PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET: Russian and English.
You can also write in your own language.

PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL: 4 December 2023
Please check with the Amnesty office in your country if you wish to send appeals after the deadline.

NAME AND PREFERRED PRONOUN: Aleksei Navalny (he/him)