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Navalny murdered in prison

Autonomous Action

17 February 2024

Late last year, opposition politician Alexei Navalny, who was sentenced to 19 years in prison for a number of fabricated cases, was sent to a special regime penal colony in the settlement of Kharp in the Yamalo-Nenets Autonomous District. This is one of the most northern and hard-to-reach colonies. The Department of the Federal Penitentiary Service for the Yamalo-Nenets Autonomous Okrug is famous for its harsh regime and torture of prisoners. In addition to the Polar Wolf penal colony, where Navalny was taken, the region is known for torture and murder of prisoners, the Polar Owl penal colony for those sentenced to life imprisonment, and the strict regime penal colony 8, where political prisoner Oleg Sentsov, for example, has spoken about torture.

Today the family of Alexei Navalny received official notification of the death of the political prisoner in IK-3.

Whatever the causes of Alexei Navalny's death are established, what happened is murder. Russian authorities had already tried to kill the politician in 2020 with the Novichok poison. In the colonies Navalny was constantly kept in a SHIZO, in isolation from other convicts, the politician's lawyers were sent to a pre-trial detention centre on charges

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of participation in an “extremist community”. Finally, the political prisoner was sent to a geographical location that is impossible to reach quickly. And all these planned actions were aimed at minimising Navalny’s political influence. Even if his death was due to “natural causes”, the conditions in which this was possible were created by the Russian state.

It is important to note that Alexei Navalny is far from the first prisoner killed in a Russian prison. Here are a few examples.

Previously, the most famous such case in Russia’s recent history was the death in a Moscow pre-trial detention centre in 2009 of Sergei Magnitsky, an auditor for an international consulting company, who alleged the existence of schemes for large-scale embezzlement of budget funds by Russian officials and law enforcers. The exact circumstances of the death could not be established by the public due to the opposition of the authorities. However, it is reliably known that Sergei complained about the lack of medical care, and on the day of his death, eight (!) employees of the pre-trial detention centre escorted him to a separate cell, where he died.

On 13 September 2016, Valery Zakharkin, who had caused much inconvenience to the FSIN with complaints and appeals to the ECHR, was murdered in Polar Owl. He was beaten to death by “pressmen” Alexei Voevodin (a known neo-Nazi) and Alexander Ageyev on the instructions of operative Igor Nesterenko.

In February 2018, in St. Petersburg pre-trial detention centre-5, after torture and rape, unknown law enforcers killed businessman Valery Pshenichny, who claimed to have embezzled money from the Ministry of Defence, after torture and rape.

Last year, Crimean Tatar political prisoner Dzhemil Garov, who had previously complained about the lack of medical care, died in the Novocherkassk pre-trial detention centre.

One can argue endlessly about the reasons for these deaths and murders and their beneficiaries, but one thing is certain. If the murder is not authorised by the top thugs in the Kremlin and Lubyanka, public attention and human rights support can save the life of a prisoner or prisoner. No head of a pre-trial detention centre or colony will want to kill a prisoner, knowing that afterwards they will be subjected to several years of inspections and the media will write about their involvement in the murder.

Therefore, it is very important to:

- disseminate information about political prisoners,
- write letters to political prisoners – this shows the administration how many people are following the fate of a prisoner or prisoner,
- support the collection of fees for the labour of lawyers.

The Russian state tortures and kills. We cannot raise the dead, but it is in our power to make it as difficult as possible to torture and kill the living. Support political prisoners and initiatives that defend prisoners and prisoners of the regime.

Until all are free!