



The UIA Institute for the Rule of Law

STATEMENT

Paris, 23 February 2024

UIA-IROL WISHES TO DRAW ATTENTION TO THE SITUATION OF ALEXEI NAVALNY'S LAWYERS, WHO HAVE BEEN TARGETED BY THE RUSSIAN AUTHORITIES

At a time of worldwide consternation and strong protests following the death in prison of Alexei Navalny, a former lawyer and leading critic of Vladimir Putin's regime, the UIA-IROL is calling on the Russian authorities to take all measures to ensure that a full and independent investigation is carried out into the conditions that led to his death while he was being held in inhumane conditions in the IK-3 prison colony in Kharp, in the Russian Arctic.

UIA-IROL also wishes to draw attention to the situation of Alexei Navalny's lawyers, who also have been targeted by the Russian authorities.

Last October, Vadim Kobzev, Alexey Liptser, and Igor Sergunin – lawyers defending Navalny - were arrested and detained in Moscow's Basmanny district court for alleged involvement in "extremist activities," with a potential sentence of up to six years' imprisonment. Their names have reportedly been added to the list of "extremists and terrorists" of the state financial watchdog Rosfinmonitoring.

Alexander Fedulov, fearing that he would also be arrested, fled the country following the arrest of his three colleagues.

Similarly, lawyer Olga Mikhailova, one of the best-known members of Mr Navalny's defence team who defended Mr. Navalny for 16 years, left Russia in October of last year. Reportedly, the Basmanny district court also issued an arrest warrant for her on the day before Alexei Navalny's death.

UIA-IROL reminds the authorities that the harassment and arbitrary detention of lawyers is contrary to the Russian Federation's obligations under international law, including the [International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights](#) and the UN [Basic Principles on the Role of Lawyers](#), which affirm the crucial role of lawyers in upholding the rule of law and protecting human rights and the obligations of the State to ensure that lawyers are able to carry out their professional functions without intimidation, hindrance, harassment or undue interference.

The Russian authorities must put an end to the persecution of human rights defenders, including lawyers¹, and cease the arbitrary attacks and arrests, currently numbering in the hundreds, against all those exercising their right to freedom of expression.

¹ See La persécution des droits de la défense et de la liberté d'expression des avocats dans la Russie de Vladimir Poutine, Histoires vécues 2021-2023, Observatoire des avocats menacés, IDHAE, <https://t.co/UPZFW9VQXi>

More about UIA-IROL

The Institute for the Rule of Law of the International Association of Lawyers (UIA-IROL) promotes the Rule of Law and supports and defends, in particular, (1) lawyers, judges and human rights defenders who are harassed, threatened and/or persecuted in the exercise of their professions, (2) the independence of the legal and judicial professions, and (3) the UN Basic Principles on the Role of Lawyers, especially in defense of human rights.

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