



The UIA Institute for the Rule of Law

STATEMENT

Paris, 22 January 2025

UIA-IROL Condemns Sentencing of Navalny's Former Lawyers

UIA-IROL is profoundly concerned by the recent sentencing of three former lawyers of the late Russian opposition leader, Alexei Navalny—Vadim Kobzev, Alexei Lipster, and Igor Sergunin—who received prison terms ranging from 3.5 to 5.5 years on charges of "participating in extremist activity."

These convictions appear to be directly tied to actions taken in the course of fulfilling their fundamental professional duty: ensuring a fair defense for their client. It is our understanding the evidence presented by the prosecution was based on lawyer-client communication that was intercepted while the lawyers were preparing Navalny's trial. The interception of conversations between a client and his/her/their lawyers is a serious violation of the fundamental principle of the right of the defense. These communications are protected by legal professional privilege, a core component of the judicial system and the Rule of Law.

This development represents a concerning escalation in the suppression of legal professionals in Russia, undermining the independence of the legal profession and the fundamental right to a fair defense. The prosecution of these lawyers for fulfilling their professional duties sets a dangerous precedent, potentially deterring other legal practitioners from representing clients in politically sensitive cases.

UIA-IROL expresses solidarity with Vadim Kobzev, Alexei Lipster, Igor Sergunin, and all lawyers facing persecution for upholding justice. UIA-IROL calls on the international legal community, human rights organizations and global leaders to take action in support of the independence of the legal profession, which is fundamental to the protection of democracy and human rights.

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.

For more information go to: www.uianet.org - uiacentre@uianet.org
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UIA-IROL

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