

Urgent Action Office 3-1992 Yonge Street Toronto ON M4S 1Z7 Phone: (416) 363-9933 Fax: (416) 363-3103 urgentaction@amnesty.ca

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RUSSIAN FEDERATION

ACTIVIST DENIED ACCESS TO LAWYER

Since 10 December, Russia's Investigative Committee has arbitrarily removed four lawyers representing activist Lilia Chanyшева from the case, leaving her without a legal counsel of her choice in violation of her right to a fair trial. Liliya Chanyшева, a former regional coordinator of "Navalny's headquarters" in the city of Ufa, has been in detention since 9 November 2021, under false charges of "establishing or leading an extremist association" punishable by up to 10 years in prison. She has committed no crime and must be released immediately.

Please write to the Prosecutor General urging him to:

- take all the necessary steps to ensure that Lilia Chanyшева is released immediately and that all charges against her are dropped.
- Pending her release, she must be allowed to be represented by a lawyer of her choice

Write to:

Prosecutor General of the Russian Federation
Igor Viktorovich Krasnov
Ul. Bolshaya Dmitrovka, 15A
Moscow, GSP-3
125993, Russian Federation
Email: transgprf@genproc.gov.ru
Twitter: <https://twitter.com/Genproc>
Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/genprocrf/>
Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/genprocrf/>
Salutation: Dear Prosecutor General:

And Copy:

His Excellency Oleg Stepanov
Ambassador
Embassy of the Russian Federation
285 Charlotte Street
Ottawa, ON K1N 8L5
Phone: (613) 235-4341/236-1413 (24H)
Fax: (613) 236-6342
Email: info@rusembassy.ca

Additional information

Lilia Chanysheva, a former regional coordinator of “Navalny’s headquarters” in Ufa, Bashkortostan (central Russia), was arrested on 9 November 2021, following a search at her home. On the same day, the police searched the homes of other activists in Ufa and other Russian cities as part of a criminal case against Aleksei Navalny and his associates.

On 10 November, the Kirovsky District Court of Ufa put Lilia Chanysheva in pretrial detention. She was accused of “establishing or leading an extremist association” (Art. 282.1(1) of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation) in connection with her past work with Aleksei Navalny. If convicted, Lilia Chanysheva could face up to 10 years’ imprisonment. She was transferred from Ufa to Moscow on 21 November.

On 10 December, Lilia Chanysheva’s lawyer Vladimir Voronin was prevented from visiting her at the pretrial detention centre. Later, he learned that a member of the Investigative Committee had removed him from the case under the false pretext of a conflict of interest. Over the next two weeks, three more lawyers who tried to visit Lilia Chanysheva in detention were similarly prevented from doing so by the Investigative Committee. As of January 2022, Lilia Chanysheva has no lawyer in Moscow.

On 9 June 2021, the Moscow City Court arbitrarily banned as “extremist” three civil society organizations, namely the Anti-Corruption Foundation, the Citizens’ Rights Protection Foundation and “Navalny’s headquarters”, all of them linked to arbitrarily imprisoned Aleksei Navalny. The court hearing was closed to the media and the general public, and the grounds for the designation have not been made public. According to the information in possession of Amnesty International, no one of Navalny’s organizations have committed, called for or condoned any violent acts nor have did they committed any other internationally recognizable crimes.

On 28 September, the Russian authorities announced a new criminal investigation against Aleksei Navalny and his associates on unfounded charges of “establishment of an extremist association”. In October, it transpired that this investigation was joined with four other criminal cases against Aleksei Navalny, his colleagues and supporters. Lilia Chanysheva is the first of Navalny’s associates who has been arrested under this criminal case.

On 2 February 2021, Aleksei Navalny, a leading Russian opposition activist and anti-corruption campaigner, was given a custodial sentence of two years and eight months for purported violation of his probation terms, under his previous, politically motivated, sentence. Russian authorities have refused to release him despite the absurdity of these accusations (Aleksei Navalny had not reported to his probation officer while he was recovering abroad from his near-fatal poisoning) that flew in the face of mass protests in Russia and internationally, and the decisions of the European Court of Human Rights which established political motivation of the prosecution of Aleksei Navalny and demanded his immediate release. He is a prisoner of conscience and must be freed immediately and unconditionally.