

# Russia: police station hearing ordering Navalny's 30-day custody is 'farcical'



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Activist only allowed to see his lawyer one minute before impromptu hearing

Responding to news that the prominent Russian opposition activist Aleksei Navalny has been remanded in custody for 30 days following an unprecedented court “hearing” at the police station where he has been held since being arrested on arrival from Berlin yesterday, Natalia Zviagina, Amnesty International’s Moscow Office Director, said:

“Not only did the authorities shamelessly bring a judge to the police station to rule on Aleksei Navalny’s detention, but they also denied him access to his lawyer until the last possible moment. “No independent media or member of the public was present to witness this farcical ‘hearing’, but to give the illusion of a transparent process the ‘courtroom’ was packed with representatives of the pro-government press. “The Russian authorities must immediately release Navalny and anyone detained in connection with his arrival. They are prisoners of conscience, guilty of nothing other than exercising their right to freedom of expression.”

Amnesty has also called on the Russian authorities to open a criminal investigation into Navalny’s Novichok poisoning in August and to ensure that all those responsible are brought to justice.

The Khimki City Court has remanded Aleksei Navalny to 30 days in custody pending trial for “multiple violations of the terms of his probation” for his conviction in a previous politically-motivated trial. The hearing took place inside a police station where Navalny was placed after being detained

in Moscow's Sheremetyevo airport the previous evening. Navalny's lawyer was denied access to him until one minute before the hearing began in the police station. State-run TV channels were allowed into the police station whereas journalists from numerous independent outlets as well as Navalny's supporters were kept outside in freezing -20°C degree conditions.

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