

Navalny to Be Registered for Elections on Eve of KirovLes Verdict, Report Says

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Opposition leader Alexei Navalny greeting a supporter as he heads to the city's election commission on July 10. **Grigory Dukor**

Opposition leader Alexei Navalny will be registered Wednesday as a candidate for the Moscow mayoral election, just one day before a verdict in the KirovLes embezzlement case is scheduled to be delivered, a news report said Tuesday.

The Kremlin critic is awaiting the verdict in a criminal case alleging that he embezzled 16 million rubles (\$490,000) worth of timber from the state. The court's decision, which is expected Thursday, may include a six-year prison sentence and a potential 1 million ruble fine proposed by prosecutors.

A guilty verdict would knock Navalny out of the mayoral race.

As a candidate representing RPR-Parnas, Navalny needed to collect the signatures of 110

municipal deputies by July 11. The mayoral race began in early June when Sobyenin stepped down and called for snap elections in early September.

A Moscow elections commission member told Kommersant in an article published Tuesday that they had found no problems with Navalny's application.

Observers believe that Sobyenin's early call for elections this fall stemmed in part from the difficulty challengers would have in mounting a mayoral campaign in such a short time period. An advisor to the elections commission, Andrei Buzin, told Kommersant that the elections are being made to look competitive and that "Navalny's registration is a kind of compensation for the suddenness of the elections and the massive awareness advantage in favor of Sobyenin."

Polls published by the Levada Center earlier this month show that Sobyenin leads the field of candidates by a large margin. Among all respondents, 34 percent said they would vote for Sobyenin, who led his closest challenger, Navalny, by 30 percent.

Successful registration would put Navalny in a pool of what is thought will eventually be 6 registered candidates, including Sobyenin, Navalny, Nikolai Levichev of A Just Russia, Ivan Melnikov of the Communist Party, Sergei Mitrokhin of Yabloko, and Mikhail Degtyaryov of LDPR.

Sobyenin was officially registered as a candidate by the Moscow elections commission Tuesday. He submitted signatures from 115 municipal deputies and 80,016 signatures from regular Muscovites, almost 7,000 more than the 73,021 required for independent candidates, elections commission member Rima Kuznetsova told Interfax.

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