

On 45th Birthday, Jailed Kremlin Critic Navalny Vows Not to Turn Into ‘Caged Animal’

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Sergei Fadeichev / TASS

Jailed Kremlin critic Alexei Navalny on Friday [said](#) that his biggest achievement this year was not turning into a “caged animal” as he celebrated his 45th birthday behind bars.

The opposition politician is serving a 2.5-year sentence in a notoriously harsh prison colony outside of Moscow on what are widely seen as politically motivated charges.

“Don’t think I am a crazy pacifist... I haven’t changed any of my convictions,” a message posted on Navalny’s Instagram said.

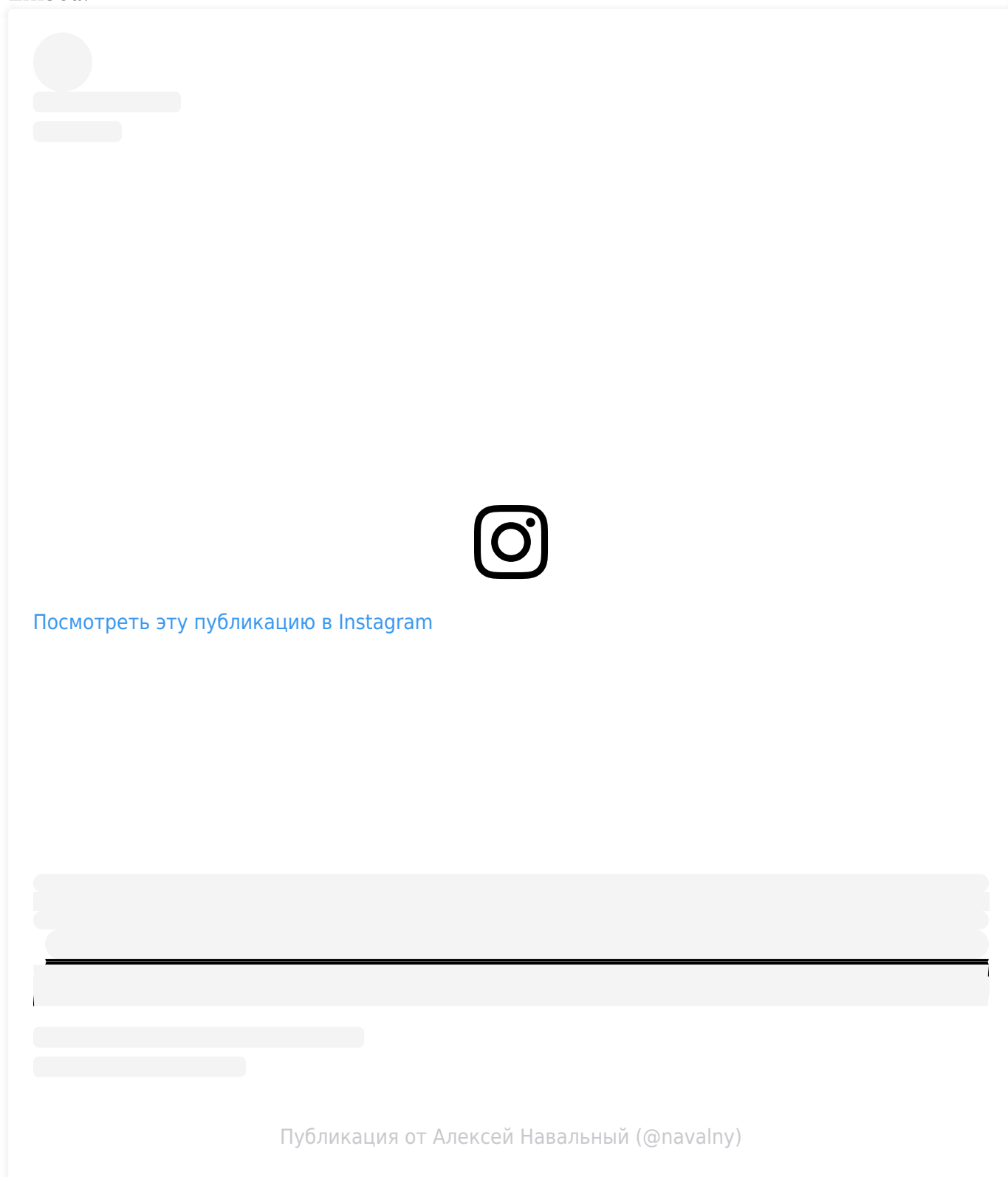
“But when I see those where my first reaction would be ‘You bastard, I’d strangle you,’ I try to push those initial thoughts away...and try with all my strength to understand, forgive and even love them,” the post said.

“That is why, I hope, I can say today my biggest achievement this year is that I have stayed

away from becoming a ‘caged animal’.”

Navalny was immediately arrested upon his January return to Moscow from Germany, where he had been recovering from a poison attack with a rare nerve agent that he blames on President Vladimir Putin. He was then given almost three years in jail for failing to show up for parole meetings under a 2014 suspended sentence for fraud charges that have been widely dismissed by human rights groups and Western governments as unfair.

Embed:



Placeholder for an Instagram post embed. The image shows a profile picture, the Instagram logo, and a link to view the post: [Посмотреть эту публикацию в Instagram](#). Below the link are several lines of redacted text. At the bottom, it says "Публикация от Алексей Навальный (@navalny)".

He recently ended a three-week hunger strike following the [advice](#) of his supporters and doctors, who had warned he could die “at any minute.”

Also on Friday, Putin signed legislation [banning](#) anyone with links to “extremist” organizations from running in elections as Navalny’s team awaits a court ruling to label it “extremist.” The ban would directly affect several Navalny allies, such as Anti-Corruption Foundation (FBK) lawyer Lyubov Sobol, who have announced plans to run for the State Duma in September.

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