

Navalny Recounts ‘Exhausting, Secret’ 20-Day Transfer to Arctic Prison, Says ‘Doing Fine’

December 26, 2023



Team Navalny

Jailed Kremlin critic Alexei Navalny on Tuesday [detailed](#) his transfer to a high-security prison colony in Russia’s Arctic that had kept him from the public eye for nearly three weeks and raised concerns about his safety.

In his first public letter since [unveiling](#) an anti-Putin 2024 presidential election strategy in a Dec. 7 post, Navalny sought to reassure readers that he remained upbeat despite the grueling journey above the Arctic Circle.

“I was transported with such precaution and on such a strange route that I didn’t expect anyone to find me here before mid-January,” Navalny wrote on X, formerly Twitter.

“Don't worry about me. I'm fine. I'm totally relieved that I've finally made it,” he added.

Navalny had been serving a prison sentence on fraud charges in central Russia’s Vladimir

region when his aides said he was moved to an unknown location in early December.

From the Vladimir region prison colony, Navalny said he was first moved to Moscow, then 1,500 kilometers east to Chelyabinsk and neighboring Yekaterinburg, then to central Russia's Kirov and the Arctic city of Vorkuta before finally arriving in the village of Kharp.

Embed:

1/9 I am your new Santa Claus.

Well, I now have a sheepskin coat, an ushanka hat (a fur hat with ear-covering flaps), and soon I will get valenki (a traditional Russian winter footwear). I have grown a beard for the 20 days of my transportation.

— Alexey Navalny (@navalny) [December 26, 2023](#)

In Kharp, the dissident is to serve a 19-year prison sentence in a stricter “special-regime” colony on extremism charges that he and his supporters decry as politically motivated.

“The 20 days of my transportation were pretty exhausting, but I’m still in a good mood,” Navalny wrote.

Navalny said he was “very surprised” when his lawyer located him and visited him in the Far North prison on Monday.

“He told me that you had lost me, and some of you were even worried. Thanks very much for your support,” said the 47-year-old anti-corruption campaigner.

Navalny described the strict and cramped conditions inside his prison colony, comparing it to a movie “with machine guns, warm mittens and felt boots, and with the same beautiful fluffy shepherd dogs.”

“Most importantly, I now live above the Arctic Circle.”

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