



United States Mission to the OSCE

Statement on Sentencing of Aleksey and Oleg Navalnyy

As delivered by Ambassador Daniel B. Baer
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
December 30, 2014

This morning a Moscow court handed down a suspended sentence against anti-corruption campaigner and opposition politician, Aleksey Navalnyy. The same court also sentenced his brother, Oleg, to 3.5 years in prison. Many independent commentators have noted that the charges against both brothers appear to be politically motivated. The sudden movement of the verdict from Jan 15 to this morning raises further questions about whether legal or political reasoning is behind the judicial process.

Aleksey Navalnyy surprised many inside Russia by his strong showing in Moscow's mayoral elections last year—though he didn't win, many were impressed that he garnered significant popular support and nearly forced a run-off, despite an uneven playing field.

In addition to longstanding concerns about the targeting of Aleksey Navalnyy with what appear to be politically-motivated criminal charges, today's verdicts add a new concern. Many have already observed that Oleg Navalnyy's sentence appears to be a calculated measure to put pressure on his brother. The targeting of family members of activists or political opponents for abuse or harassment is a vile tactic used by repressive regimes.

Thank you, Chair.