

# [***Who Is Yulia Navalnaya? Widow Of Alexei Navalny Becomes Russia s New Opposition Figurehead.***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BCP-SJC1-JBCM-F18P-00000-00&context=1516831)

Forbes.com

February 20, 2024 Tuesday

Copyright 2024 Forbes LLC All Rights Reserved

**Length:** 672 words

**Byline:** James Farrell, Forbes Staff

**Highlight:** Alexei Navalny s widow, Yulia Navalnaya, has emerged as a new opposition leader in Russia, but it s not the first time she s been in the public eye.

**Body**

**Topline**

Following confirmation of Putin critic Alexei Navalny s death in a Russian prison Friday, his wife and longtime political supporter Yulia Navalnaya stepped forward as a new potential leader of the Russian opposition movement, vowing to continue her husband s work.

<figure>

<figcaption>

Yulia Navalnaya, wife of Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny, speaks as she meets with Belgium's Foreign Minister Hadja Lahbib at the European Council building in Brussels, Monday, Feb. 19, 2024. (Yves Herman, Pool Photo via AP)

Associated Press

</figcaption></figure>

**Key Facts**

Navalnayaposteda video on social media Monday, announcing her intention to continue the work of Alexei Navalny to fight for our country and calling on supporters to stand with her as she works to build a free Russia.

She also signaled her willingness to confront Putin directly, accusing him of killing Navalny an allegation the Kremlin hasdenied and claiming Monday that she knew exactly why Putin allegedly killed Navalny, adding: We will tell you about it soon.

Navalnaya was long seen as a close confidant and supporter of Navalny s political efforts who routinely appeared by his side but rarely spoke out on her own, though some close to the couple have noted that Navalnaya was critical to Navalny s work: Alexei the politician is two people: Yulia and Alexei Navalny, Russian journalist Yevgenia Albatstold the Financial Times.

Navalnaya first emerged to the public as a potential outspoken force in her own right in 2020, following anattempted poisoningof Navalny that nearly killed him.

As Navalny spent days in a coma following that incident, Navalnaya spoke out about the incident,documentingalleged efforts to block her from seeing him at the Russian hospital where he was initially taken,appealingdirectly to Putin to allow him to be treated in Germany instead of Russia and criticizinga Putin-linked doctor who suggested that Russia work collaboratively with Germany to evaluate his health efforts that led to some to refer to her as Russia s unofficial first lady, according to Vanity Fair.

Some speculated at the time that her emerging public image could help launch her own political career, according to Vanity Fair, but in 2021 she rejected that notion, claiming it was more interesting to be the wife of a politician, but acknowledging that what she does is to a certain extent, also ***politics***.

**Crucial Quote**

By killing Alexei, Putin killed half of me half of my heart and half of my soul, Navalnaya said in her video Monday. But I still have the other half, and it tells me that I have no right to give up.

**Key Background**

Navalnayawas born in Moscow in 1976 to a Russian scientist and a government employee who divorced when she was young. She reportedly met Navalny while vacationing in Turkey in 1998. They married in 2000 and have two children, Daria and Zakhar. Daria has also spoken out about her father s work. Both Navalny and Navalnaya were members of the liberal Yabloko opposition party in Russia until Navalny was expelled in 2007 forattendinga nationalist event in Russia that some deemed anti-immigrant. Navalny has been seen as one of the key leaders of Russia s fractured opposition and an outspoken voice against Russian President Vladimir Putin. A documentary on his life and efforts won an Oscar in 2023 Navalnayaspokeon his behalf at the ceremony, as he was already serving in a Russian prison on a sentence of extremism that his supporters have long derided as politically motivated. He died on Feb. 16, prompting global outrage, though Russian officials have denied foul play.

**Tangent**

Navalnaya s X account, launched Monday, was briefly suspended Tuesday morning, initially sparking questions from supporters and Navalny s Anti-Corruption Foundation, which tagged X owner Elon Musk in apostasking for clarity. X s Safety accountpostedshortly after, clarifying that the account was mistakenly flagged for violating the platform s rules, but was reinstated as soon as we became aware of the error.

**Further Reading**

**Load-Date:** February 22, 2024

**End of Document**