

# [***China's State Media Repeat Russian Talking Points After Navalny's Death***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BC9-CNJ1-JBR6-907W-00000-00&context=1516831)

Newsweek.com

February 19, 2024 Monday 8:31 AM EST

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**Length:** 714 words

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**Highlight:** The Chinese Foreign Ministry said Navalny's death was "Russia's internal affair" in response to a media query.

**Body**

Chinese media outlets have echoed narratives that align closely with Russian official statements following the death of Russia's leading opposition figure [*Alexei Navalny*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/alexei-navalny?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships).

*China Newsweek* (no relation), a state-owned magazine reported on Saturday on the circumstances of Navalny's death, saying that he was in "good health" but had been treated with a "respiratory infection earlier."

Russia's Federal Penitentiary Service said Friday that Navalny, who has been in jail under major fraud and contempt of court charges since February 2021, felt unwell after a walk, "lost consciousness almost immediately," and died shortly afterward at the age of 47.

"Prison medical staff arrived at the scene within two minutes to rescue him, and emergency personnel from the nearest hospital in Rabetnangi, the camp, also arrived at the scene and tried their best to save Navalny for about half an hour, but they could not save Navalny's life, and the preliminary cause of death was determined to be a blood clot falling off," wrote *China Newsweek*, citing Russian state news outlets.

The framing of [*Navalny's death*](https://www.newsweek.com/alexei-navalny-prison-interview-death-jail-putin-russia-1870911?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) by Chinese media, coupled with the government's official response and the subdued reactions on social media, underscores the delicate balance China maintains in its diplomatic relations with Russia.

China News Service, another state media outlet, succinctly repeated Navalny's convictions in Russia, without providing context, on Friday following his death—that he was sentenced for "economic crimes" in 2021 and "for crimes such as building extremist communities and funding extremist activities."

The Chinese government's stance on Navalny's death was summarized by the Foreign Ministry's Spokesperson's Office in response to inquiries from Agence France-Presse: "This is Russia's internal affair. I will not comment."

*Newsweek* has contacted the Chinese Embassy in Washington, D.C.

The Kremlin has found a quasi-ally in [*Xi Jinping*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/xi-jinping?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships)'s China, which has [*rebuffed appeals*](https://www.newsweek.com/china-russia-sanctions-europe-xi-jinping-1848652?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) from U.S. and European leaders for Beijing to distance itself from President [*Vladimir Putin*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/vladimir-putin?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) over his attack on [*Ukraine*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/ukraine?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships). China has said it remains neutral on the conflict, which it has repeatedly refused to describe as an "invasion" or "war."

Navalny's activism and opposition to Putin were acknowledged by pro-government nationalist website Guancha, which described him as "a leader of Russia's political opposition" and "as an anti-corruption blogger and street protest leader, organizing opposition political events and using social media and blogging sites to build a nationwide network of supporters."

"After Navalny returned to Russia in 2021, he was jailed many times for 'organizing unapproved anti-Putin protests,' embezzling public funds, fraud, etc," Guancha, said following Navalny's death.

In 2020, Navalny had been poisoned by nerve agent Novichok. A joint investigation by Russian news website The Insider and Netherlands-based investigative journalism group Bellingcat blaming the attack on Russian intelligence agents. The Kremlin denied having anything to do with the poisoning.

He was transported to Germany for medical attention and he returned to Russia in January 2021 upon his recovery. He was then hit with the first of his many prison sentences.

"This poisoning incident once triggered a 'war of words' between Russia and the United States and Europe. The United States and Europe hyped the matter as a 'political murder' planned by Russia, while Russia refuted it."

"Belarus also pointed out that calls between Polish and German officials intercepted by the country showed that Navalny's poisoning incident was "purely fabricated" and was intended to prevent Russian President Vladimir Putin from "intervening in 'Belarusian affairs,'" Guancha reported.

This recognition of Navalny's role in Russian ***politics*** contrasts with the limited discussion of his death on Chinese social media platforms like Weibo, where coverage was notably sparse.

On Weibo, only one hashtag, "Biden said he was not surprised by Navalny's death," was briefly shared at time of writing.

"I never believed that Putin would kill this terrorist; there is no need," said a Weibo user from Fujian said.

"Navalny died of a blood clot, which is one of the common complications of the COVID-19 vaccine," the same Weibo user added.

[*Link to Image*](https://d.newsweek.com/en/full/2350709/russian-opposition-leader-alexei-navalny-stands-near.jpg)

**Graphic**

Russian Opposition Leader Alexei Navalny Stands Near

DIMITAR DILKOFF/AFP via Getty

Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny stands near law enforcement agents in a hallway of a business centre, which houses the office of his Anti-Corruption Foundation (FBK), in Moscow on December 26, 2019. China’s state media repeats Russian talking points after Navalny’s death

**Load-Date:** February 19, 2024

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