

The story

The health of jailed Kremlin **critic** Alexei Navalny is getting worse and he is beginning to lose **sensation** in his legs and hands, his lawyer says.

Useful vocabulary

critic – person who gives their opinion about something they don't like

penal colony – prison located far away from other people

embezzlement – theft of money; stealing money people had trusted you to look after

acute pain – strong feeling of discomfort

progressing – developing

sensation – physical feeling

respiratory – breathing

persistent – long lasting

tuberculosis – infectious disease, particularly affecting the lungs

injustice – treating someone unfairly; not respecting their rights

incarcerated – put in a locked space such as a prison

amount to – is the same or equal to

torture – inflicting strong pain on someone to get them to do or say something

proper – correct; as expected

in accordance with – in a way that follows what is meant to be done

prominent – well known; important

corruption – dishonest behaviour by people in power

More about the story...

What has been happening?

In January, Alexei Navalny was sent to a **penal colony** for two and a half years to serve a sentence for **embezzlement**. His lawyer, Vadim Kobzev, says he has been diagnosed with two spinal hernias. Last week, Navalny started a hunger strike to demand proper treatment for **acute** back and leg **pain**.

What has happened now?

His lawyer said the situation is getting worse. Talking on Twitter (in Russian) he says "Alexei is walking himself. He feels pain while walking. It is very concerning that the illness is clearly **progressing** in terms of losing **sensation** in his legs, palms and wrists."

Earlier this week, Navalny, age 44, was moved to a sick ward in the prison in the town of Pokrov with symptoms of a **respiratory** illness. He had complained of a **persistent** cough and temperature and he said there had been cases of **tuberculosis** in his prison.

What has been the response?

White House Press Secretary Jen Psaki said the Biden administration considered Navalny's imprisonment "politically motivated and a gross **injustice**" and called for his immediate release. Earlier, human rights group Amnesty International said Navalny had been **incarcerated** in conditions that **amount to torture** and may slowly be killing him.

Last week, Russia's prison service denied Navalny's allegations that he was not receiving **proper** treatment, saying he had been given "all the necessary medical assistance **in accordance with** his medical indications".

More about Alexi Navalny

Anti-corruption campaigner Alexei Navalny has long been the most **prominent** face of Russian opposition to President Vladimir Putin. He has millions of followers on social media – many in their early 20s or younger. His Anti-Corruption Foundation (FBK) has made detailed claims about official **corruption**.

His return to Moscow and immediate arrest on 17 January, after five months recovering in Berlin from a near-fatal nerve agent attack, led to mass protests across Russia by his supporters. Police responded with force and thousands were detained for attending the unauthorised rallies.

Find out more: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-56671117>

and <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-16057045>

Questions

1. How long has Alexei Navalny been sent to a penal colony for to serve a sentence for embezzlement?
2. What is happening to Alexei Navalny's health now?
3. True or false? *The Russian prison service say Alexei Navalny is getting the correct medical treatment.*
4. How has Alexei Navalny attracted many of his supporters?
5. Why did Alexei Navalny go to Berlin for five months?

Answers

1. How long has Alexei Navalny been sent to a penal colony for to serve a sentence for embezzlement?

Alexei Navalny has been sent to a penal colony for two and a half years to serve a sentence for embezzlement.

2. What is happening to Alexei Navalny's health now?

According to his lawyer, his situation is getting worse. He says "the illness is clearly progressing."

3. True or false? *The Russian prison service say Alexei Navalny is getting the correct medical treatment.*

True. Russia's prison service denied Navalny's allegations that he was not receiving proper treatment.

4. How has Alexei Navalny attracted many of his supporters?

He has millions of followers on social media – many in their early 20s or younger.

5. Why did Alexei Navalny go to Berlin for five months?

He went to Berlin to recover from a near-fatal nerve agent attack.