
Russia: Borrell (EU) on Moscow Court's ruling, effort to "suppress political opposition". Crackdown on human rights. Free Navalny!

The ruling by a Moscow Court to label Mr Alexei Navalny's organisations as "extremist groups" is "the most serious effort to date by the Russian Government to suppress the independent political opposition and anti-corruption investigations, and to eliminate Mr Navalny's political networks' influence ahead of the State Duma elections in September, and beyond". This is according to EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs, Josep Borrell, who in a statement today called the Court's decision "unfounded". The ruling, he explained, confirms "a systematic crackdown on human rights and freedoms which are enshrined in the Russian constitution" and "will have far-reaching consequences for the Russian civil society, opposition and critical voices". Borrell also urged the Russian government to "abide fully by its international obligations and commitments it has made, including in the Council of Europe and the OSCE". The EU also repeated its call for Mr Navalny's "immediate and unconditional release", as his sentencing is "politically motivated and running counter to Russia's international human rights obligations". "The Russian authorities are responsible for Mr Navalny's safety and health in the penal colony", Borrell concluded, "to which we hold them to account".

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