Beat: Politics

“If you really want to defeat Putin, you have to become an innovator”

The widow of Navalny in the EP

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USPA NEWS - Yulia Navalnaya, the widow of murdered Russian anti-corruption activist Alexei Navalny, addressed the European Parliament on Wednesday. Welcoming Yulia Navalnaya to the chamber, EP President Roberta Metsola said that “for many in Russia and outside, Alexei Navalny represented hope. Hope in better days. Hope in a free Russia. Hope in the future.” She stressed that if “history teaches us anything, it is that the pillars of autocracy, in the end, always, always crumble under the weight of their own corruption and people’s inherent desire to live freely. And when they inevitably do, it will be thanks to what Alexei and your family did”.

In her speech, Yulia Navalnaya accused Russian authorities, led by President Vladimir Putin, of having orchestrated Alexei Navalny’s killing. She said that the public murder had once again shown everyone that “Putin is capable of anything and that you cannot negotiate with him”. She expressed concern that none of the EU’s current restrictive measures have really stopped Russia’s aggression in Ukraine.

To this end, she called for more innovative ideas to defeat Putin’s regime, both domestically and its actions towards its neighbours. “If you really want to defeat Putin, you have to become an innovator. You can’t hurt Putin with another resolution or another set of sanctions that is no different from the previous ones. You aren’t dealing with a politician but with a bloody mobster. The most important thing is the people close to Putin, his friends, associates, and keepers of the mafia’s money. You, and all of us, must fight this criminal gang.”

She continued by saying that, in this case, being politically innovative means fighting organised crime, not political competition. “No diplomatic notes, but investigations into the financial machinations. Not statements of concern, but a search for mafia associates in your countries, for the discreet lawyers and financiers who are helping Putin and his friends to hide money”.

Yulia Navalnaya also pointed out that “in this fight you have reliable allies - there are tens of millions of Russians who are against Putin, against the war, against the evil he brings”, before concluding: “Putin must answer for what he has done to my country. Putin must answer for what he has done to a neighbouring peaceful country. And Putin must answer for everything he has done to Alexei”.

Before his death in prison on February 16, 2024, Alexei Navalny was one of Russia’s most famous oppositional voices, known for his work in exposing corruption, as well as an ardent critic of President Vladimir Putin. The exact circumstances of his death remain uncertain. Navalny was awarded the European Parliament’s Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought in 2021.

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