

Navalny ally says he will ‘never give up’ in fight against Putin

Leonid Volkov, who was brutally attacked in March, says he shares his late friend’s belief in ‘beautiful Russia of the future’

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Leonid Volkov, a close ally of the late Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny, has vowed to “never give up” fighting against Vladimir Putin despite [recently being attacked outside his home](#).

Navalny [died in an Arctic prison in February](#), which Volkov blamed directly on the Russian president.

In March, Volkov was [attacked with a hammer outside his home in Lithuania](#) where he lives in exile and was briefly admitted to hospital.

In his first television interview since the attack, Volkov told BBC’s Sunday with Laura Kuennsberg that Navalny “asked us to never give up and to continue our work ... to defeat Putin and to build this beautiful [Russia](#) of the future”.

Doing so was the “only practical way to preserve his legacy and to make his ultimate sacrifice not to be in vain,” said Volkov, in extracts of the video link interview aired on Saturday.

He called Navalny a “great guy, inspiring personality, a true hero and a great and very capable political leader”. He said his death was an “open wound in our hearts” and he could not be replaced.

But the task of the opposition movement was now to support Navalny's wife, Yulia, as its new "charismatic leader," he added.

Volkov said during the attack, someone broke a car window and sprayed teargas in his eyes before hitting him with a hammer.

Navalny's allies shared photos showing Volkov's injuries, including a black eye, a red mark on his forehead and bleeding on his leg.

Volkov worked as the late leader's ex-chief of staff and as chair of his Anti-Corruption Foundation until 2023.