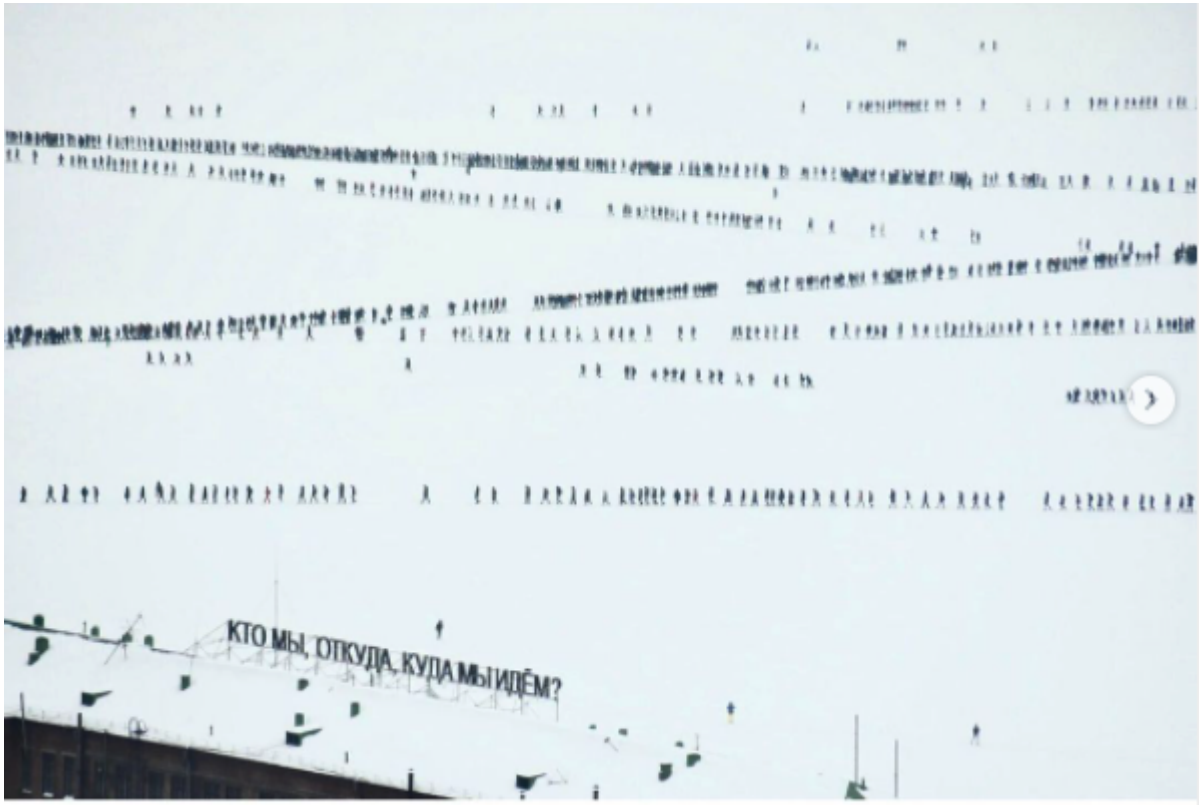
Twitter Thread by Tatiana Stanovaya



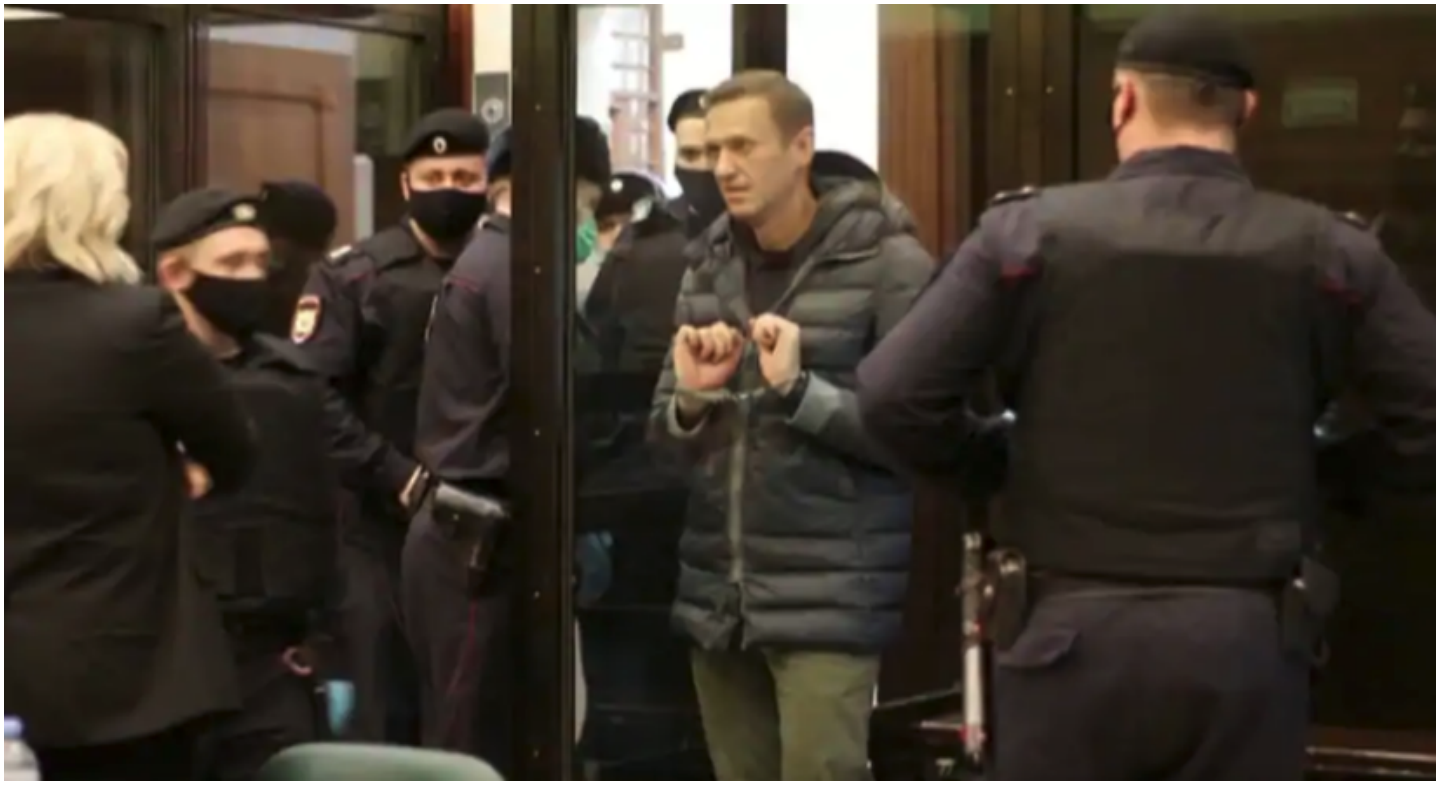
Tatiana Stanovaya
@Stanovaya

THREAD: A few quick thoughts on #Navalny and why the Kremlin opted for such a harsh sentence. 1/10



Ever since news broke about the failed assassination attempt last August it's been clear the security services have been operating according with very simple logic. 2/10

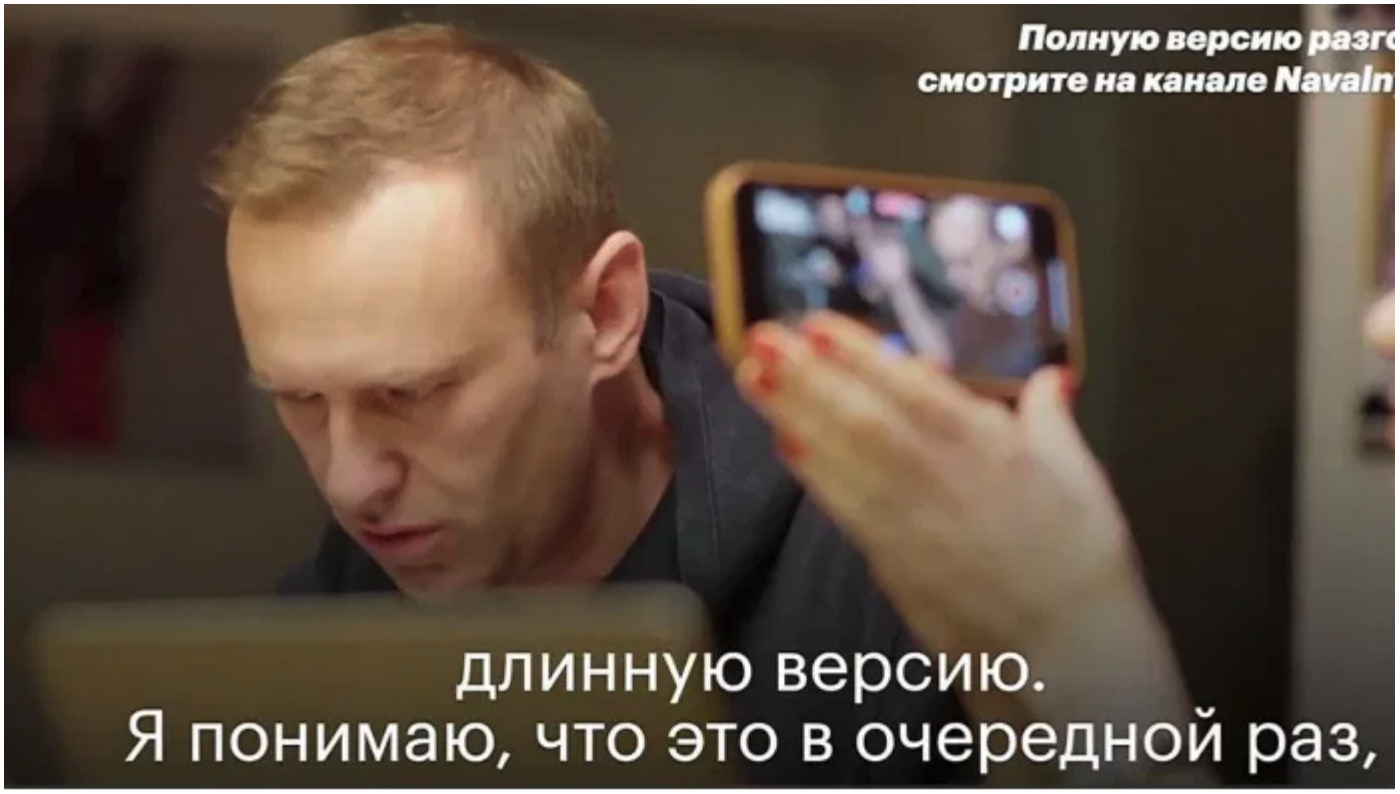
The overriding goal was to destroy Navalny and to demonstrate that no move aimed against the security services would remain unpunished. 3/10



Thus, there was no way for the authorities to accept that Navalny could return and operate freely against Putin and the security establishment in the new political conditions created by the fact of the assassination attempt. 4/10



The current ruling is only the first part of a saga.The Kremlin has plenty of other potential criminal charges it can bring against Navalny.The goal is to make Navalny—and others-realize that they face the prospect of spending the rest of their lives behind bars. 5/10



Other groups will face increased pressure - liberal media, NGOs, opposition-minded activists, and average citizens. 6/10



Make no mistake: the Kremlin is not terribly afraid of protests. The Kremlin's spin doctors clearly have elbowed aside. Outfits like the FSB can take problems like protests, social discontent, opposition activity, and falling approval ratings in stride. 7/10



For them, Navalny and the people who have marched in recent weeks are nothing less than enemies of the state and a tool for foreign meddling and interference. That excludes the possibility of dialogue or concessions let alone the legitimate right to protest. 8/10



The current situation is a pivotal moment for Putin's regime. For the first time in 20 years it faces a completely new situation. This is the first time the Kremlin is unable to channel public discontent in a controllable direction. 9/10

The authorities will resort to repressions but they are no longer able to consolidate people around Putin. That effort will, in turn deeply divide and polarize society with all the attendant, unpredictable consequences. END