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Khimki Suspects Held as Logging Resumes

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Moscow region police said Friday that they have detained two anti-fascist activists involved in an attack on the Khimki administration building after identifying them from video footage posted online, Interfax reported.

The suspects, Maxim Solopov and Alexei Gaskarov, face up to seven years in prison on charges of hooliganism despite "weak" evidence against them, Gaskarov's lawyer said Saturday, Gazeta.ru reported.

The attack took place Wednesday when 90 to 300 masked protesters pelted the building with stones and smoke grenades and covered the walls with graffiti opposing the destruction of the Khimki forest, slated for deforestation to make way for an $8 billion highway. Police did not arrest anyone at the scene.

The deforestation, which was supposed to be halted because of legal issues, proceeded Saturday, Ekho Moskvy radio reported, citing Yevgenia Chirikova, a leading environmentalist.

Chirikova said she has been forced to go into hiding with her young children by the police, who are visiting the apartments of environmentalists to detain them on various administrative charges in a bid to prevent a new anti-deforestation rally scheduled for Monday.

Meanwhile, Yabloko leader Sergei Mitrokhin said he suffered a minor injury Saturday in a tussle with police officers while trying to stop the logging.

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