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Hundreds Beat Drums, Whistle for Kashin

By Alexandra Taranova

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A little girl reading a copy of the mock newspaper Kashin at a rally in support of Kashin and Fetisov on Sunday. **Igor Tabakov**

Hundreds of people beat drums, blew whistles and sounded other instruments Sunday at a central Moscow rally to protest the brutal beatings of Kommersant journalist Oleg Kashin and Khimki forest defender Konstantin Fetisov this month.

More than 500 people "armed" with drums, whistles, horns and pipes attended the rally near the Chistiye Prudy metro station, which was authorized by City Hall and ended peacefully, said Yevgenia Chirikova, a rally co-organizer and a leading defender of the Khimki forest.

“The rally was extremely noisy, dynamic, but civilized," she said by telephone.

Kashin, who was beaten by two unidentified assailants on Nov. 6, remained in serious condition in an intensive care ward through the weekend, and his colleagues from the

Kommersant daily distributed a mock newspaper called КашинЪ (Kashin) at the rally. With 10,000 copies printed, the newspaper carried articles about attacks on the Russian journalists and about the versions behind the attack on Kashin.

A police spokesman confirmed to The Moscow Times that no violations occurred during the rally, which was watched by 90 policemen. But the spokesman estimated the number of participants at 300 people.

The protesters also demanded the ouster of the Khimki city administration and justice in the case of Fetisov, who was also badly beaten two days before the attack on Kashin. Kashin also wrote about the Khimki administration's support for the construction of a federal Moscow-St. Petersburg highway through the local forest.

Another rally was held Sunday in the Moscow region town of Zhukovsky against a local plan to cut down the Tsagovsky forest southeast of Moscow to build a road between the capital and Zhukovsky. Police said 500 people attended the rally, while organizers claimed to have gathered 1,500 protesters, Interfax reported. The rally was also authorized by the authorities.

A third rally, a so-called Day of Wrath gathering organized by the opposition Friday and banned by City Hall, erupted in clashes with the police and the arrest of 24 protesters, police said. One police officer was hospitalized after a protester thrust a burning flare in his face.

Rally organizers Sergei Udaltsov and Konstantin Kosyakin were sentenced Saturday to 12 days and 10 days, respectively, in jail for resisting police.

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