

Mayor Vows 'Harsh' Police Crackdown

By [Natalya Krainova](#)

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As police beefed up security in the city center and at train stations, Mayor Sergei Sobyenin warned football fans and nationalists on Monday that any attempt to repeat last weekend's violent, racist rioting would be dealt with harshly.

Sobyenin, breaking his public silence about Saturday's rioting just outside the Kremlin walls on Manezh Square, also urged residents to avoid feuding.

"If someone thinks that they can do whatever they want in the city, riot [and] kill harmless citizens, they are mistaken," Sobyenin told a City Hall meeting, RIA-Novosti [reported](#).

"The reaction of authorities will be harsh. Order will be secured in Moscow," he said.

Sobyenin called on all ethnic groups to try to "treat one another with respect and to control their emotions."

"Once we lose our tempers, we are doomed to have a never-ending feud," he said.

Police stepped up downtown security Tuesday as new reports surfaced online that ultranationalists were planning to stage another unsanctioned rally, Interfax reported. Police were paying special attention to the Yevropeisky shopping center near Kievsky Station, listed as a possible site for the rally, as well as the Kursky, Leningradsky, Yaroslavsky and Kazansky stations, the report said.

No incidents were reported as of late Tuesday.

Members of Moscow's Caucasus diasporas, meanwhile, discussed staging a counter-rally by the Yevropeisky mall on Wednesday to protest the violence against them, with up to 10,000 Caucasus natives ready to attend, Chechen-born activist Azamat Mintsayev told Interfax on Monday.

But he denounced calls for an unsanctioned rally as a "provocation," Gzt.ru [reported](#).

Saturday's unsanctioned rally of 5,500 football fans and nationalists angered over the Dec. 5 death of a football fan during a brawl with Caucasus natives turned violent when protesters attacked a group of dark-skinned young people who happened to pass by the gathering.

Eleven suspects in attacks on the young people were identified, and the Investigative Committee [said](#) Tuesday that it was looking for protesters who had attacked police officers.

Meanwhile, Nikolai Levichev, leader of the Just Russia faction in the State Duma, linked the rioting to Vasily Yakemenko, former head of the pro-Kremlin Nashi youth group who now leads the Federal Agency for Youth Affairs.

"The country's youth policy must not be reduced to allocating state money for PR stunts by certain odious youth groups," Levichev told a news conference, RIA-Novosti reported.

He called for Yakemenko to be fired.

Russian Orthodox Patriarch Kirill also weighed in on the issue Tuesday, blaming the violence on a "political provocation" by "forces keen to destroy Russia," Interfax reported. He did not elaborate.

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