

Nemtsov Freed After 15 Days in Prison

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Opposition leader Boris Nemtsov was released Saturday after his arrest 15 days earlier at an anti-government rally that had been authorized by officials.

Nemtsov was detained Dec. 31 after leaving a rally at which he called for Prime Minister Vladimir Putin's ouster. Police said Nemtsov was trying to attend a second, unauthorized demonstration -- charges he denied.

A court sentenced him to 15 days in prison, drawing outrage in the West and leading Amnesty International to name him a prisoner of conscience. The arrest sparked an unusually prolonged string of daily protests in Moscow by scores of Nemtsov's supporters, dozens of whom were also detained by police.

"They tried to break and scare me, but they didn't succeed," Nemtsov said after his release. "I'm full of strength and energy. I just need to recover," he said, complaining that he had been kept in "medieval conditions" for the first two days of his sentence.

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