

Voina Lodges European Case Against Russia

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A member of a Russian art group detained since November lodged a case against Moscow at the European Court of Human Rights on Tuesday, the group's representatives said.

The group Voina drew attention last year by painting a huge phallus on a drawbridge near a Federal Security Service building in St. Petersburg. They have pulled other similarly confrontational stunts aimed at Russia's notoriously corrupt security forces.

Police detained group members Leonid Nikolayev and Oleg Vorotnikov in mid-November after police cars were overturned in a demonstration to protest against abuse of power by the force.

Nikolayev's lawyer, Pavel Chikov, said authorities had failed to provide sufficient evidence against his client. He added that they were not justified in holding the artist in pretrial detention and had failed to submit the detention order to an appellate court.

"The investigators did not give any evidence to the court, only statements in Russian blogs

that the art group Voina committed these actions and that Nikolayev is a member of the group," Chikov said. The two are charged with hooliganism, a crime that could land them in prison for seven years. They were released on bail Tuesday.

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