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Minsk Releases Russians

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Three Russian citizens who went on trial in Minsk over their alleged participation in the anti-government protests in Belarus in December avoided jailing, Interfax reported Thursday.

The suspects, Dmitry Medved, Artyom Breus and Ivan Gaponov, were convicted by a Minsk district court, but released. Breus and Gaponov were fined about $5,800 each, and Medved was handed a three-year suspended sentence.

All three pleaded not guilty. Several Russians were earlier jailed in Minsk on similar charges, which sparked the ire of Moscow.

Thousands rallied in Minsk after the December presidential vote, which they said was rigged by the winner, incumbent Alexander Lukashenko. Police cracked down on protesters, many of whom remain in detention.

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