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INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Navalny and Yashin Appeal to European Court

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Whistleblower Alexei Navalny and Solidarity activist Ilya Yashin, both jailed for 15 days for disobeying police after a protest rally on Dec. 5, appealed their sentences in the European Court of Human Rights, Navalny's lawyer said.

The opposition activists insist their rights were violated because police did not explain the reasons for their arrest and denied them timely contact with their lawyers and appropriate detention conditions, Dmitry Volov wrote on his blog Monday.

Moreover, the court ignored video footage proving their innocence while accepting "false testimony by police," Volov said.

The Strasbourg-based court did not comment by Tuesday, but Volov said he expected the complaints, filed on Sunday, to be fast-tracked, as was done with a similar complaint from opposition activist Boris Nemtsov earlier this year.

Navalny and Yashin were among the 300 people detained last week after a rally on Moscow's

Chistoprudny Bulvar that was organized to protest allegedly widespread violations at the State Duma elections on Dec. 4.

More than 600 people were detained after another rally on Dec. 6, rights activists said.

The arrests, coupled with allegations of vote-rigging, triggered the biggest opposition rally in decades on Saturday, when between 30,000 and 40,000, according to independent estimates, gathered on Moscow's Bolotnaya Ploshchad. Police did not intervene.

Navalny, Yashin and fellow activist Pyotr Verzilov are currently staging "noise protests" in pretrial prison, banging on the cell door for 10 minutes every hour with shouts of "Freedom!" Gazeta.ru said Saturday. Prison officials threatened sanctions but were not reported to have implemented any by Tuesday.

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