

Opposition Tent Distribution Event Halted Quickly by Police

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An event organized by opposition group Rosagit to hand out tents on Pushkin Square on Wednesday was stopped almost immediately after it began, Gazeta.ru reported.

Group co-founder Vadim Korovin was detained by police shortly after the scheduled start time of 7 p.m. The group had planned to distribute camping tents suitable for use on asphalt, apparently for possible use in long-term street protests.

Around 200 members of pro-Kremlin youth movement Nashi were present at the event. The group had said it would attend to collect tents for the pro-Kremlin youth camp Seliger.

Nashi leader Maria Kislitsyna said in a statement on the group's website that it interpreted the event as a call by the opposition for demonstrators to occupy public spaces with the goal of enacting pressure on the government, as in the 2004 Orange Revolution in Ukraine.

“The opposition, which has still not agreed a place to hold its demonstrations, in this way is proposing that people participate in illegal activities and create a new Maidan,” she said in the statement. Maidan is the name of a central square in Kiev on which protesters camped out for

days during the so-called Orange Revolution in 2004.

In an interview that aired Tuesday on TV channel Dozhd, opposition leader Alexei Navalny said he supports escalation of the conflict between the opposition and current leadership but that it should remain peaceful. “People sitting in tents and drinking tea – what's wrong with that?” he said.

Navalny added that he was not involved in the tent-distribution project.

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