

Post -Vote Protests In Center Blocked

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City Hall has turned down opposition requests to hold a rally on central squares on March 5 — the day after the presidential vote.

The opposition sought permission for an event on Manezh Square next to the Kremlin or on Lubyanskaya Ploshchad in front of the Federal Security Service building. The city government has offered alternative locations outside the city center, including Bolotnaya Ploshchad, the site of two opposition rallies in recent months, and Poklonnaya Gora.

Opposition leaders including Alexei Navalny have called on demonstrators to rally on Lubyanskaya Ploshchad on March 5 in defiance of City Hall's refusal.

"Only Lubyanka! Only hardcore!" Navalny wrote on Twitter on Tuesday.

A Facebook group devoted to opposition rallies conducted a survey on Tuesday in which 76 percent of those polled — or about 4,500 people — said they would attend an unsanctioned event on Lubyanskaya Ploshchad on March 5 instead of a possible sanctioned rally on Bolotnaya Ploshchad.

City Hall also refused to sanction an opposition demonstration on Novy Arbat on March 8 or 9 or for a march on major thoroughfare Kutuzovsky Prospekt on March 10, Left Front head Sergei Udaltsov said Tuesday on Twitter.

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