Police Haul Away Dozens of Street Protesters

April 01, 2012

Dozens of activists were detained after weekend tussles between police and anti-government protesters.

Police detained about 75 people rallying in Moscow and St Petersburg on Saturday against Vladimir Putin, who will return to the presidency in May after four years as prime minister.

The demonstrators also demanded freedom of assembly.

In Moscow, riot police locked elbows and pushed a crowd of about 300 protesters and journalists along sidewalks and roadways near a central square.

Protesters chanted, "Russia without Putin!" and "freedom of assembly, always and everywhere!"

Eduard Limonov, head of the banned opposition National Bolshevik Party, was shoved into the back of a van as police bundled several other protesters roughly into buses.

One man threw a flare and was grabbed and carried off by his arms and legs. Sixty people were detained, state media said.

In St. Petersburg, police detained about 15 of the 50 protesters who gathered off the main avenue, including local opposition leader Olga Kurnosova.

At a smaller gathering in central Moscow earlier on Saturday, one of the organizers of the election protests, Sergei Udaltsov, discussed opposition plans for the coming weeks including a rally on the eve of Putin's May 7 inauguration.

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