

Opposition Cancels May 1 March to Prep for May 6

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Protesters at a Feb. 4 opposition march on the same route as had been planned for a May 1 march that opposition leaders have called off. **Igor Tabakov**

Opposition leaders ditched plans to stage a march on May 1, saying Friday that they would focus on preparing for a mass event on the eve of President-elect Vladimir Putin's inauguration.

"In order to concentrate our efforts, we are canceling the previously announced event on May 1 and calling for focus on preparation for protests on the day before the inauguration," the leaders said in a message posted on the Facebook page of the opposition group We Were at Bolotnaya Ploshchad and Will Come Again.

Signatories included anti-corruption blogger Alexei Navalny, Parnas co-leader Boris Nemtsov, and Left Front head Sergei Udaltsov.

Earlier this week, City Hall approved the opposition's request to hold a march from Kaluzhskaya Ploshchad along Bolshaya Yakimanka, concluding with a rally at Bolotnaya

Ploshchad. The same route had been used for an opposition march on Feb. 4 that drew as many as 50,000 demonstrators.

Opposition leaders plan to hold an event they call "March of a Million" on May 6 through central Moscow, finishing with a demonstration at Manezh Square next to the Kremlin, to protest what they called in Friday's letter "the results of these dishonest and unfair elections."

City Hall has not said whether it will authorize the event.

Putin will be sworn in as president on May 7 in a ceremony in the Kremlin. He won the March 4 presidential election with 63.6 percent of the vote, according to official results.

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