

Anti-Putin Rallies Set to Greet Inauguration

By [Jonathan Earle](#)

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The March 10 rally where the March of a Million was first proposed. **Vladimir Filonov**

The opposition will greet the inauguration of Vladimir Putin with two days of demonstrations, including a much-touted “March of a Million” that organizers hope will help the protest movement regain momentum after a two-month hiatus.

Sunday’s “March of a Million,” the largest event planned, will begin at 3 p.m. on Kaluzhskaya Ploshchad and end with a rally on Bolotnaya Ploshchad from 4 to 7:30 p.m.

“Earlier demonstrations were for fair elections,” co-organizer Sergei Udaltsov said. “The main slogan of this demonstration is ‘for fair government’ and ‘for Russia without Putin.’ We don’t consider the elected president or the current parliament legitimate. Our central demand is new elections.”

Bolotnaya Ploshchad was the site of two earlier rallies and a symbol of the movement, which

began with a call for new elections after December's parliamentary vote but now includes demands for broad democratic reforms.

While organizers are hopeful that the turnout will equal the size of earlier rallies — which drew tens of thousands of people — City Hall has approved a crowd of only 5,000 people. About 7,000 had [signed up](#) for the event on Facebook as of Friday afternoon. More than 100,000 attended the second rally on Bolotnaya on Feb. 4, organizers said at the time.

Udaltsov, leader of the Left Front movement, shrugged off the 5,000-person limit and said organizers would press ahead with their plans.

“Exactly how many people will be there — it's hard to say,” he said. “We're expecting a lot of people.”

The fine for exceeding the limit imposed by authorities is 2,000 rubles (\$68).

Amid reports of deepening divisions within the opposition movement, a group of activists has announced an unsanctioned rally of 3,000 to 5,000 on Manezh Square at 7 p.m. on Sunday.

“We're going to stand there until Putin leaves his post,” said Mark Galperin, a co-organizer of the event, adding that activists hope to spark a nationwide uprising and expect to be detained by police.

On Monday, inauguration day, activists wearing white ribbons, the symbol of the opposition, will stroll through central Moscow beginning at 11 a.m.

The [flash mob](#), which will take place within the Boulevard Ring, was inspired by February's White Circle event, in which thousands of activists joined hands to form a circle around the Garden Ring.

Organizers invited those willing to risk confrontations with police to gather along Kutuzovsky Prospekt, Novy Arbat, and Ulitsa Znamenka — the presumed route of the Putin's motorcade, which is expected to arrive at the Kremlin via the Spasskaya Gate at noon. The flash mobs will be free of slogans and signs and don't require a city permit, organizers said.

Meanwhile, the activist hacker group Anonymous announced plans to attack the website of the prime minister on Sunday and of the government on Monday in a show of solidarity with the opposition.

In comments attached to an ominous YouTube video denouncing Putin, the activists called on supporters to participate in the denial-of-service attacks.

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