

Jailed Opposition Leader Could Face More Serious Charges

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Protesters have sat through the night in a continuous round-the-clock protest since Monday. **Howard Amos**

Demonstrators continued their non-stop marathon protest overnight, gathering as many as 1,500 people after two prominent opposition leaders were given 15-day jail sentences, but anti-corruption blogger Alexei Navalny could end up facing even more serious charges.

Navalny's lawyer Vadim Kobzev wrote in Twitter that the opposition activist would be questioned in connection with criminal charges for inciting a riot during the May 6 protest on Bolotnaya Ploshchad.

The Investigative Committee said Monday it was opening a criminal investigation under criminal codes for inciting a riot and harming a law enforcement authority, charges which carry a maximum penalty of three and five years in jail, respectively.

Both Navalny and Left-Front leader Sergei Udaltsov were given 15 days in jail on charges

of disobeying a police officer Wednesday, sparking outrage among opposition activists.

After a rally on Lubyanskaya Ploshchad in front of the headquarters of the Federal Security Service Wednesday, protesters began gathering at Chistiye Prudy and Alexander's Garden in a continuation of the mobile protests that have been ongoing since President Vladimir Putin's inauguration Monday.

The numbers at Chistiye Prudy grew as high as 1,500 people, and about 50 protesters made it through the night to outlast even police buses, the last of which rolled away mid-morning Thursday, Interfax reported. Protesters cheered as the last police bus left.

A group of writers and musicians, including prominent opposition figures Boris Akunin and Dmitry Bykov, has also announced they will take part in an opposition "writer's walk" to take place in downtown Moscow Sunday. The format mirrors the "people's walk," which is the name given by opposition figures to their protest processions. Demonstrators have said they do not need permission from city authorities to walk in groups around the city since they do not chant slogans or carry signs.

Meanwhile, Investigative Committee spokesman Vladimir Markin said the number of police officers injured at Monday's protest where about 300 were arrested has been raised to more than 30, Interfax said.

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