

Activists Detained Outside Investigative Committee

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June 17, 2012



Ilya Yashin and Ksenia Sobchak arriving for questioning at the Investigative Committee central office on Friday. **Sergei Karpukhin**

Police detained 10 opposition activists over the weekend during an unsanctioned, Occupy-style protest outside the offices of the Investigative Committee.

The activists, who carried a banner reading “Freedom for Political Prisoners,” gathered Saturday to show support for four opposition leaders — Sergei Udaltsov, Boris Nemtsov, Ksenia Sobchak and Ilya Yashin — who were summoned for questioning in connection with violent clashes between police and protesters that erupted at a March of Millions rally on May 6.

“Police officers have blocked off sidewalks, are pushing us to the metro and say we’re obstructing people’s paths,” Anastasia Udaltsova, the wife of Left Front leader Udaltsov, wrote on Twitter.

Udaltsov, who said police detained 10 people, later tweeted that participants in the protest had decided to “gather in large numbers outside the Investigative Committee building every Saturday at noon.”

Udaltsov first raised the idea of protesting outside Russia’s top investigative body at the June 12 March of Millions rally on Prospekt Akademika Sakharova.

Meanwhile, pressure continued to grow on the opposition leaders, with a judge in the Volga River city of Ulyanovsk ruling Friday that Udaltsov should be forced to attend a June 20 hearing on a lawsuit filed by a pro-Kremlin youth activist who has accused him of beating her in April. The judge issued the ruling because Udaltsov failed to appear in court Friday. Udaltsov said he missed the hearing because he was being questioned at the Moscow district branch of the Investigative Committee that day.

The investigators questioned Udaltsov about a complaint by a reporter for NTV television that Udaltsov forcefully detained her in his apartment last Monday after it was searched by investigators.

Udaltsov has denied the accusations by both the Ulyanovsk activist and the Moscow reporter. He has said that he considers the beating accusation to be a provocation and that the NTV reporter entered his home and started filming there without his permission.

The media have identified the Ulyanovsk activist, Anna Pozdnyakova, 20, as a journalist who supports or belongs to United Russia’s youth wing, Young Guard. It is unclear which media outlet she works for, but she has written on Twitter that she is a freelancer and aspiring journalist for Dorozhnoye Radio.

Also Friday, the central office of the Investigative Committee continued questioning the other three opposition leaders, Nemtsov, Sobchak and Yashin. Investigators returned Sobchak’s foreign-travel passport, which they had confiscated Monday during searches of opposition leaders’ homes and offices, including hers. Sobchak [tweeted](#) that the investigators, who confiscated more than \$1.7 million in cash from her apartment Monday, asked her Friday whether the U.S. State Department paid her the money and why she was keeping such a large sum at home. Sobchak said in a radio interview that part of the money came from her own business and that she had all the required tax documents for it, Interfax reported.

Over the weekend, she scorned U.S. media for taking seriously a Twitter message that she wrote, saying investigators had asked whether she had any information about the assassination of U.S. President John F. Kennedy before handing back her passport with a U.S. visa.

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