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Udaltsov Pledges Support for Activists Detained Over May 6 Protests

By The Moscow Times

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Left Front leader Sergei Udaltsov

Left Front leader Sergei Udaltsov fielded questions from relatives of opposition activists detained after violence broke out at a May 6 opposition protest, laying the blame for their detention on authorities and saying he would meet to hear out their complaints.

Udaltsov, a key organizer of protests against President Vladimir Putin's rule, fielded the questions live on air after Dozhd TV journalists called the opposition figure Wednesday evening.

In answer to a question from the mother of Fyodor Bakhov, a scientist detained for ignoring police officers' instructions at the Bolotnaya Ploshchad protest, as to why protest leaders weren't doing more to support those detained, Udaltsov promised a meeting and described defending political prisoners as "our sacred duty."

"We are all victims of these reprisals. We aren't to blame for the fact that these people are in prison. The authorities are guilty," Udaltsov said, according to a transcript of the program on Dozhd TV's website.

Udaltsov added that he had held discussions with rights defenders on the matter and that a meeting with relatives was penciled in for early next week.

Police have so far detained 13 activists over the riots on May 6. According to a Nezavisimaya Gazeta report, investigators were gearing up to detain three more suspects Tuesday.

The May 6 Committee, founded to express solidarity with those detained in the aftermath of the riots, is planning a rally July 26 to protest the Bolotnaya activists' detention.

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