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City Hall Approves Route for 'The March Against Scoundrels'

By The Moscow Times

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City Hall on Wednesday approved the march dubbed "The March Against Scoundrels" to be held Jan. 13 in protest of the law passed recently banning Americans from adopting Russian orphans.

After talks with City Hall, the protesters agreed to the route suggested by the mayor's office: from Strastnoi Bulvar to Prospekt Sakharova, said Alexei Maiorov, head of the city's security department, Interfax reported.

The original route was meant to end in front of the State Duma, since that is where the controversial adoptions law was first initiated, opposition leader Sergei Udaltsov told the BBC's Russian service.

"Initially we declared a route from Belorussky station along Tverskaya Ulitsa to the State Duma. There was an alternate route from Kaluzhskaya Ploshchad to the State Duma, since one

of the demands of this protest is the dissolution of the State Duma, and criticism of the deputies who passed this savage, anti-orphan law. But this didn't suit Moscow officials, and they suggested another route," he said, adding that the protest itself is more important than the route.

Under the permit, the number of people in attendance at the protest may not exceed 20,000, Maiorov said. The rally is scheduled to begin at 1 p.m. and end at 4:30 p.m., with some streets in the center of the city to be blocked off.

The law at the center of the protest took effect Jan. 1 and was passed in response to the Magnitsky Act, which the U.S. enacted to punish Russian officials suspected of violating human rights.

State Department spokeswoman Victoria Nuland said Tuesday that there are approximately 500 to 1,000 U.S. families at various stages of adopting a Russian child. The United States is continuing discourse with the Russian government in a bid to complete these adoptions, she said.

"We would obviously like to see those adoptions be able to move forward," she said at a news conference, according to a transcript posted on the State Department's website. "We're going to continue to try to work on these pipeline cases. It's really quite tragic, as you can imagine, for the families and for the children."

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