

Inquiry Into Bolotnaya Riot Suspect Udaltsov Completed

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Udaltsov at a protest on Trubnaya square in 2012 holding a poster that reads "freedom." **Evgeny Razumny**

The Investigative Committee has finished its inquiry into two prominent opposition activists suspected of organizing alleged riots at Bolotnaya Ploshchad in May 2012, and the cases have been sent to Prosecutor General Yury Chaika.

Chaika has thus been asked to begin court proceedings against Sergei Udaltsov and his ally Leonid Razvozhayev, who are accused of plotting mass riots at anti-Kremlin protests a day before Vladimir Putin's inauguration to his third term as president, the Investigative Committee said in a statement Monday.

A public inquiry earlier this year concluded that no mass riots occurred at the authorized rally, but violent clashes were provoked by police and unidentified masked men. If the Prosecutor General's Office confirms the indictment, as is expected, the case will go to court.

The two men face up to 10 years in prison if convicted.

Udaltsov, leader of the Left Front opposition movement and a popular figure in the 2011-12 anti-Kremlin protests, has been under house arrest in Moscow since February. Last month, a Moscow city court extended his arrest until February 2014.

Razvozhayev, a Left Front member and an aide to Duma Deputy Ilya Ponomaryov, has been in pre-trial detention for more than a year after being captured by Russian security forces in Kiev last October. The activist is also accused of illegally crossing the Russian border, reportedly using his brother's passport to travel to Ukraine. Razvozhayev said the security services kidnapped and tortured him into confessing to plotting political disorder, but investigators have refused to open a criminal case into the allegation.

The cases against both men began late last year after a report by the state-run NTV television channel, "Anatomy of a Protest 2," alleged that the protest organizers received funds to start riots from Georgian government officials.

Udaltsov confirmed that he and his aide Konstantin Lebedev had met with Georgians, but denied that they were plotting riots.

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