

Russian Prosecutor Seeks 5 to 6 Years in Jail for Anti-Putin Protesters

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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A Russian prosecutor demanded prison terms of between five and six years for eight demonstrators charged with mass disorder at a protest in 2012 against President Vladimir Putin, which if granted could provoke an outcry before the Winter Olympics.

Putin has staked his reputation on next month's Sochi Games, signaling an easing of a clampdown on dissent by releasing members of the Pussy Riot punk band and former billionaire tycoon Mikhail Khodorkovsky as part of a wider amnesty.

The eight could face maximum sentences of eight years in an almost two-year case that Kremlin critics have likened to Soviet show trials launched by investigators keen to help Putin shore up control in his third term as president.

One defendant, Alexei Polikhovich, shouted on Wednesday that the accusations against him were a "lie" from the courtroom cage where he and other defendants were being kept

in handcuffs.

The judge delayed court proceedings until Jan. 27 after the prosecutor read out the requests for sentencing and a verdict is expected next week.

In December, the amnesty freed four of the protesters, known as the Bolotnaya 12, after the name of the central Moscow square where they had taken part in a protest against Putin that turned violent.

The rally on the eve of Putin's inauguration followed several peaceful protests that were fueled by claims of fraud in a parliamentary election and dismay at Putin's decision to return to the Kremlin after a stint as prime minister.

The protest movement, which has since faded, was the biggest Putin had faced during his 14 years in power.

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