

# Defendants in Bolotnaya Case Plead Not Guilty

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The defendants in the dock at the Zamoskvoretsky Court on Wednesday.

Defendants in the trial over alleged riots at an anti-Kremlin rally in 2012 pleaded not guilty in their final speeches at Moscow's Zamoskvoretsky Court on Wednesday.

The defendants were charged after a May 2012 opposition rally on Bolotnaya Ploshchad that ended in violent clashes between protesters and police. The opposition has argued that the case is politically motivated, saying that no actual riots took place at the rally and that there is no evidence proving that any of the defendants assaulted police officers.

Of the case's original 29 suspects, three have been convicted, 14 are under arrest or house arrest and eight have been granted amnesty.

One of the eight defendants on trial, Sergei Krivov, delivered his speech for several hours and challenged the authorities by referring to a theory that President Vladimir Putin, then

prime minister, organized the 1999 Moscow apartment bombings in order to justify the Second Chechen War and to come to power, the May 6 Committee, a support group for the Bolotnaya case, wrote on Twitter.

About 150 people gathered in the courtroom, while some supporters of the defendants stayed outside. The group shouted "Shame!" and "Down with the gang!," an anti-government Ukrainian slogan borrowed from Kiev protesters.

Two people were detained by police for holding one-man pickets.

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