Moscow Police Detain 13 at Unsanctioned Bolotnaya Rally

May 06, 2014

A group of women dressed as prisoners protesting outside the Zamoskvoretsky Court in February.

Police reportedly detained 13 people on Tuesday at an unsanctioned protest in Moscow on the second anniversary of an anti-Kremlin rally that ended in clashes between police and demonstrators.

The detention-monitoring website OVD Info said that 12 protesters and a journalist were held after banners reading "Russia is not a prison" and "Freedom to political prisoners" where hung from a bridge leading to Bolotnaya Ploshchad, the site of the disturbances two years ago.

Sanctioned pickets in support of those jailed over the 2012 protest took place at the Tretyakovskaya and Novokuznetskaya metro stations, Interfax reported.

City Hall last week turned down an application for an opposition rally on Bolotnaya Ploshchad on May 6 and warned of the "consequences" of holding an unsanctioned meeting.

Nearly 30 of those who attended the rally in 2012 — held on the eve of Vladimir Putin's

inauguration for a third term as president — were charged with participating in what the authorities have described as "mass riots."

Critics say that the so-called Bolotnaya case formed part of a wider crackdown on Kremlin opponents and that the skirmishes were stoked by police aggression.

In February, Moscow's Zamoskvoretsky Court handed down prison sentences ranging from 2 ½ to four years to seven Bolotnaya defendants, while an eighth got a suspended sentence.

Eleven defendants were freed under an amnesty passed last year, while several others are still awaiting sentencing.

Konstantin Lebedev, who was sentenced to 2 ½ years in prison last year for his role in the violence, left prison on parole on Tuesday, his lawyer told Interfax.

Lebedev had entered into a plea bargain with prosecutors and in March testified against Left Front leaders Sergei Udaltsov and Leonid Razvozzhayev, each of whom face 10 years in prison for allegedly organizing riots at the rally in 2012.

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