

# Young Activist Shocked by Riot Charges 2 Years After Bolotnaya

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Polina Strongina, the 24-year-old activist who was detained in St. Petersburg.

The latest defendant to be charged for participating in a 2012 anti-government protest on Moscow's Bolotnaya Square expressed surprise on Tuesday about the charges laid against her.

"This was completely unexpected," said Polina Strongina, the 24-year-old activist who was detained Monday in St. Petersburg. "I wasn't at home when they [the Interior Ministry] got me. I was really surprised. Now I have no idea what will happen next."

Strongina, who was released on her own recognizance later that night, is being charged under article 212 of Russia's Criminal Code for participating in mass riots. The Criminal Code states that participation in mass riots is punishable by "deprivation of liberty for a term of three to eight years."

On May 6, 2012, thousands gathered on Bolotnaya Square in downtown Moscow to protest against the reelection of President Vladimir Putin. The demonstration ended in clashes between protesters and law enforcement. Charges were laid against nearly 30 activists following the incident, eleven of whom have been amnestied.

Strongina told The Moscow Times that she was detained for having allegedly thrown a bottle at police officers during the protest. She declined to elaborate on whether the Investigative Committee's accusations held true.

The Investigative Committee claimed on Monday that Strongina admitted to having committed "wrongdoings" on Bolotnaya Square during her interrogation. But activist Dmitry Kopp, Strongina's boyfriend, dismissed the Investigative Committee's claim as "inaccurate."

"Polina [Strongina] faced psychological pressure during the interrogation," Kopp told The Moscow Times. "We cannot call this a confession."

When asked about her interrogation, Strongina refrained from providing information about her questioning or the charges she faces because of a non-disclosure agreement she signed with the Investigative Committee.

The Investigative Committee released a statement on its website on Monday warning that it would identify and hold accountable "absolutely all organizers, participants of the mass riots and persons who used force against representatives of authority" on Bolotnaya Square.

**See also:**

[Moscow Police Detain 13 at Unsanctioned Bolotnaya Rally](#)

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