

Suspect Pleads Guilty to Police Violence in Anti-Kremlin Protests

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Activist Ilya Gushchin pleaded guilty on Tuesday to having used force against a police officer at an anti-Kremlin protest in May 2012 that erupted in violent clashes between demonstrators and police and has seen more than 30 charged.

While admitting that he used force against a riot police officer by tugging on his sleeve, Gushchin denied that there was any criminal intent behind what he did, and said there had been no mass riots that day as investigators have alleged throughout the case.

According to Gushchin, his own involvement in the case was limited to taking part in a human chain, a "so-called nonaggressive defense to prevent other people from being detained," RIA Novosti reported.

Gushchin pleaded guilty to only one of three charges against him. He also faces charges of participating in mass riots and resisting authorities, which carry a combined maximum punishment of 11 years behind bars. If found guilty of using force against a police officer, he faces an additional five years.

The now infamous rally on Bolotnaya Ploshchad on May 6, 2012, had been sanctioned by the city administration, but violence broke out between police and demonstrators, resulting in dozens of injuries and more than 400 detentions.

Investigators have maintained that suspects in the ongoing case over the incident organized or participated in premeditated mass riots, while the suspects and their supporters say the charges are politically motivated.

The first conviction in the case came in 2012, when Maxim Luzyanin was sentenced to 4 1/2 years in prison. Thirty other individuals were charged in connection with the case, but 11 of them were granted amnesty and several other cases remain ongoing.

See also:

[Prosecutors Seek 8-Year Prison Term for Russian Protest Leader Udaltsov](#)

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