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Russian Activist Denies He Tried to Hang Himself on Red Square

By The Moscow Times

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Russian performance artist Pyotr Pavlensky has denied reports he tried to hang himself near the Kremlin.

Russian performance artist Pyotr Pavlensky, best known for nailing his scrotum to the cobblestones of Moscow's Red Square last fall, has denied reports he tried to hang himself near the Kremlin in another political protest.

"It's a great story," the activist said in a post on his Facebook page in the early hours of Thursday. "But I, if anything, did not hang myself."

Russian and Belarussian media on Wednesday evening reported Pavlensky had been detained after trying to hang himself on Red Square.

Pavlensky had reportedly recited a "manifesto" for freedom in Russia, and then got into an argument about the conflict in Ukraine with another visitor to the Moscow landmark,

Naviny.by reported.

He then broke away from the crowd of listeners, threw a noose that he had brought with him around his neck, and tried to hang himself from an unspecified elevation, the report said.

Following his scrotum-nailing act to protest Russia's slide into a "police state" in November last year, Pavlensky was charged with hooliganism but the charges were dropped after investigators concluded his performance had had no ideological agenda, but was intended as a form of artistic expression.

He was detained again in February for staging a show of solidarity with protesters in Ukraine by re-enacting a scene from the protests on Kiev's Maidan Square by building a mini-barricade of car tires and lighting them on fire in St. Petersburg.

In July 2012, he sewed his mouth shut to protest the trial against Pussy Riot punk rock group, two members of which were later jailed for the anti-Kremlin stunt in Moscow's Christ the Savior Cathedral.

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