

Moscow Police Detain 25 People at Seminar on Maidan-Style Political Protests

By [Anna Dolgov](#)

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Moscow police have released some of participants detained at a seminar on Ukrainian-style political protests.

Moscow police have released without charge 25 participants detained at a seminar on Ukrainian-style political protests, in a sign that authorities are looking to sniff out early signs of internal dissent in Russia.

The seminar, which took place Tuesday evening south of the capital, was titled "Maidan: Organizing the Space of Freedom" — a nod to the demonstrations on Kiev's Maidan Square that toppled former Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovich in February.

A clip of the seminar, posted online by opposition news site Grani.ru, shows participants engaged in a video call with Ukrainian protesters, before riot police in helmets and bulletproof

vests walk into the room, led by a senior officer.

Colonel Viktor Borisenko, a deputy chief of the southern Moscow branch of the Interior Ministry, told those gathered that he was acting on a "report that a crime is being committed here," according to the video shot by Grani.ru, a website that is blocked in Russia.

Borisenko declined to elaborate on his reasons for shutting down the seminar, saying only that participants would have to submit statements and that explanations could be exchanged at a police station.

Police did not use force nor made any attempts to interrupt a video recording of their involvement, but escorted the participants to a police van and drove them to the station, according to the online footage and participants' comments on social networks.

Grani.ru and the OVDInfo.org news site, which reports on police activities, put the number of detainees at 25 people. All were released later in the night, OVDInfo reported early Wednesday.

No charges have been filed, and police have provided no explanation for the detentions, the report said.

[публикация Радика Вильданова.](#)

One of the organizers of the seminar, Kirill Filonenko from the Free School of Resistance public organization, later said police had told at least one participant that she had been participating in an illegal action, Newsru.com reported.

Filonenko also said his group regularly holds lectures, but that previous meets have taken place without any interference by authorities. Police attention appears to have been drawn to the latest seminar by a rally of pro-Kremlin activists who stood outside the building and denounced the Maidan lecture as it was taking place.

When police led seminar participants outside, pro-Kremlin activists flanking their procession shouted: "Shame on Maidan, shame on fascists, shame on liberals — traitors to the motherland!"

Russian officials and state-run media have for months denounced the political protests that toppled Ukraine's previous, Moscow-backed administration as a fascist coup — a rhetoric that was also used to justify Moscow's annexation of Crimea in March.

Crimea's annexation has been well received by the Russian public, and a handful of public figures who have criticized the action — such as rock star Andrei Makarevich — have been denounced as "traitors" by sections of the state media.

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