At Least 3 Detained at St. Petersburg Rally for Ukrainian Pilot Savchenko

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Police have detained at least three people for participating in a rally in St. Petersburg in support of Ukrainian pilot Nadezhda Savchenko, who has ended her 80-day hunger strike in a Russian prison.

Some 70 people lined up Sunday on St. Petersburg's central Nevsky Prospekt, holding hands and displaying Ukrainian flags and ribbons in that country's blue and yellow national colors, the city's Fontanka news agency reported.

At least three people have been charged with participating in an unauthorized gathering, according to the report.

Savchenko, who is jailed in Moscow, last week ended a hunger strike that had gone on for more than 80 days. The pilot, who reportedly lost at least 17 kilograms after going on a water and glucose diet on Dec. 13, has eaten some broth after breaking her fast and was requesting juice and vegetable puree on Ukrainian doctors' advice, her lawyer Mark Feygin said

on Twitter.

Savchenko has been celebrated as a hero in Ukraine and was declared a Ukrainian parliament deputy following her imprisonment. But Moscow rejects Ukrainian and Western calls to release her, and accuses the pilot of abetting the killing of two Russian journalists who died during an artillery strike in eastern Ukraine last summer.

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