

Moscow Authorities Warn Opposition Against Bolotnaya Rally

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Moscow city authorities have warned members of the Russian opposition not to stage an unsanctioned rally on May 6 honoring the protest that erupted into violent clashes on Bolotnaya Square on that day in 2012, Interfax reported Tuesday.

"If there are any protests that fall under the 'unsanctioned event' description, appropriate measures will be taken," Alexei Mayorov, Moscow's regional security chief, told the news agency.

Earlier, opposition activists had filed a request with City Hall for permission to stage a 15,000 protester-strong rally on Bolotnaya Square on May 6. City authorities counter-offered a new location, Shchukino, a residential district on Moscow's northwestern outskirts. The opposition activists refused, and the issue has not yet been resolved, Interfax reported.

One of the rally organizers, Alexander Ryklin, told Interfax that it is possible that the event

will take the form of single-man protests, which do not need to be sanctioned by authorities, but which do require picketers to stand a considerable distance from one another.

On May 6, 2012, a protest staged in opposition to President Vladimir Putin's inauguration erupted into clashes between police and protesters on Bolotnaya Square. More than two dozen people have since been charged, many having since been handed either real or suspended sentences.

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