

Russian Artist Jailed for Organizing Unsanctioned Rally in Siberia

May 04, 2015



Artyom Loskutov pictured in 2010 at a "monstration" rally.

The Amnesty International human rights group has declared a Russian artist to be a "prisoner of consciousness" after he was sentenced to 10 days in jail for organizing a colorful anti-government demonstration.

Artist Artyom Loskutov was on Sunday found guilty of organizing an unsanctioned rally in front of Novosibirsk's City Hall, the Riafan news site reported. He was sentenced to 10 days in jail and ordered to pay 5,000 rubles (\$96) in fines.

The May 1 rally — also known as a "Monstration" — has taken place every year since 2004 and sees participants in brightly colored costumes hold up gibberish signs and chant nonsensical slogans, the RFE/RL reported Friday.

"I can't get away from the sense that I'm living in some kind of absurd" Loskutov was cited as saying in the report. "Reading the news, I am always surprised by the direction we are going. That's why the 'Monstration' is the more honest and adequate reaction to our lives."

This years' signs included slogans such as "Lord, forgive us," and "The empire is evil, very evil," Amnesty International said Sunday after the Novosibirsk court handed down its sentence to Loskutov.

"It is obvious that he was punished merely for using the right to freedom of expression and freedom of peaceful assembly. Amnesty International considers Artyom Loskutov to be a prisoner of consciousness and demands his immediate and unconditional release," it said in a statement.

Original url:

<https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2015/05/04/russian-artist-jailed-for-organizing-unsanctioned-rally-in-siberia-a46267>