

Protesters Against HIV Drug Prices Arrested in Moscow

May 14, 2015



Each protester faces a fine of up to 20,000 rubles (\$400) or 40 hours of community service, OVD-Info reported.

Eight activists were arrested Thursday outside the presidential administration building in Moscow for staging a protest against the shortage and rising cost of medicine for HIV/AIDS patients, the OVD-Info news site reported.

A picture of the protest published online showed four activists from the Patient Monitoring movement that supports people living with HIV/AIDS kneeling on the ground dressed as patients with shackles around their necks, which were held by four other protesters dressed as grim reapers and meant to represent major pharmaceutical companies.

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A photo posted by godlevskaya (@godlevskaya) on May 14, 2015 at 12:04am PDT

The activists were taken to a nearby police station and charged with violating the law on pickets before being released. Each protester faces a fine of up to 20,000 rubles (\$400) or 40 hours of community service, OVD-Info reported.

Patient Monitoring claims it has received more than 50 complaints about the shortage or absence of medication from HIV/AIDS patients across Russia, the Yod news site reported. There are an estimated 1.2 million people in Russia living with HIV/AIDS, the International Business Times reported late last year.

The Kremlin has repeatedly vowed to keep in check the cost of medications, which have skyrocketed since the ruble lost nearly half its value in 2014. Earlier this week, Prime Minister

Dmitry Medvedev ordered regional authorities to ensure that essential medication remains affordable.

In the first quarter of 2015, the cost of essential drugs increased by 6.9 percent, Russian media reported. The price of medication considered nonessential increased by 29 percent during the same period.

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