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INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Siberian Prisoner Sews Mouth Shut in Protest Against Case

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Alexander Podoinitsyn was arrested for the possession and manufacture of drugs, Russian media reported.

A man being kept in detention in Siberia while awaiting trial has sewn his mouth shut and declared a hunger strike in protest against his detention, a local news website reported Tuesday.

In a video posted to YouTube on Sunday, Alexander Podoinitsyn says he has been held at pretrial detention center No.1 in the eastern Siberian city of Chita since March 2014 in connection with a case that the inmate says was fabricated against him. He was arrested for the possession and manufacture of drugs, Russian media reported.

On Tuesday, the FlashSiberia news agency published a photo of Podoinitsyn with his lips sewn together. He has now been transferred to a separate cell where he is being monitored over CCTV, the report said, citing prison service officials.

Dramatic instances of self-harm as a form of protest are not uncommon in Russia. Artist

Pyotr Pavlensky has frequently shocked Russian audiences with his gory protest stunts. He famously nailed his scrotum to the cobblestones of Red Square in 2013 in protest at what he said was Russia's descent into a police state.

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