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Protesters Rally Against Arrests of Moscow's Street Musicians

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A street musician playing bagpipes on Arbat street in Moscow.

About 40 people gathered in central Moscow over the weekend to protest a recent spate of detentions of street musicians, who are being accused of participating in unauthorized rallies and fined, Russian media reported.

Following Sunday's protest on Moscow's famed Arbat street — a pedestrian street that is a magnet for tourists and street performers — musicians plan a series of one-person rallies during the week to show support for their colleagues, who have faced fines and had their musical instruments confiscated by police, one of the protest organizers, Oleg Mokryakov, wrote on Facebook.

Mokryakov said the authorities had unleashed a "landslide of repressions against them [street musicians] in recent months."

Detentions of street musicians have increased in frequency in Moscow, where police treat the artists as participants in illegal unauthorized gatherings, the website of local radio station

Govorit Moskva reported earlier this month.

Yevgeny Gerasimov, head of the culture and communication committee at the Moscow City Duma, urged any musicians who have been detained to complain to the local authorities, the report said.

He also called for artists and government officials to discuss the creation of "art zones" in the city, Govorit Moskva reported.

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