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Moscow Authorities Approve March in Honor of Slain Kremlin Critic Nemtsov

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Holding placards declaring "I am not afraid," thousands of Russians marched in Moscow on Sunday in memory of Nemtsov, whose murder has widened a split in society that some say could threaten Russia's future.

Moscow City Hall has approved a rally to mark the one-year anniversary of the death of Kremlin critic Boris Nemtsov, opposition party member Konstantin Merzlikin told The Moscow Times on Wednesday.

The authorities have given permission for 50,000 people to attend the memorial event, which is due to take place on Feb. 27. The rally will start at Strastnoi Bulvar and finish at Prospekt Akademika Sakharova.

This was confirmed by the head of the City Hall's security department Alexei Mayorov, according to the Kommersant newspaper.

Russian opposition initially submitted an application to hold a rally across the Bolshoi Moskvoretsky Bridge outside the Kremlin — where Nemtsov was shot dead.

The proposed route would have mirrored the silent rally held on the day following the assassination to mourn the politician's death.

However, the authorities approved a different route.

The opposition activists have accepted the new route, but believe that City Hall's decision has political motive, Merzlikin, a senior member of the opposition party PARNAS, said.

“Last year nothing prevented us from walking across this bridge. This year City Hall referred to a provision stating that such public activities cannot be carried out on bridges and crossovers,” Merzlikin said.

The change of the route isn't the only sad news for Nemtsov supporters on the eve of the anniversary of his death.

On Wednesday night, a makeshift memorial to Nemtsov on the sidewalk of Moscow's Bolshoi Moskvoretsky Bridge was attacked by vandals, according to Merzlikin.

The police monitoring website OVD-Info reported that the volunteers guarding the memorial spot were detained over “some fictional scandal,” according to one of the detained volunteers Karine Kovkhayeva.

While Nemtsov's supporters were held up at the police department, all the flowers were removed from the memorial site.

This is the fourth attack on the memorial since the start of the new year, according to OVD-Info.

Last week, a memorial to Nemtsov was completely destroyed in the Russian city of Nizhny Novgorod during the visit of opposition leader and former prime minister Mikhail Kasyanov, Merzlikin said.

Opposition leader Boris Nemtsov was shot four times in the back by an attacker in a car in the late evening of Feb. 27, 2015.

Russia's Investigative Committee claimed earlier this year that Nemtsov's murder had been solved. Five suspects have been arrested over the killing, including the alleged murderer Zaur Dadayev. According to the investigation, the crime was masterminded by Ruslan Mukhutdinov, currently on the international wanted list.

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