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# Moscow City Hall Cancels Protest Against Anti-Terror Laws

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Moscow City Hall has withdrawn permission for a protest against new anti-terror laws, the Slon news website reported Friday.

A raft of anti-terror legislation, authored by conservative United Russia deputy Irina Yarovaya, was this month approved by Russian President Vladimir Putin. The laws, described by whistle-blower Edward Snowden as the "Big Brother Law," were passed despite opposition from Internet providers over the high cost of building the required data storage infrastructure and from civil rights groups over increased government surveillance.

An application for a demonstration on July 26 against the laws was submitted this month by opposition activists Leonid Volkov, Ivan Zhdanov and Yevgeny Zamyatin.

The authorities suggested changing the event's location on July 14, the organizers agreed, and the event was subsequently confirmed.

Alexei Mayorov, head of Moscow's department for regional security, told the Interfax news agency Friday that Moscow City Hall had discovered problems with the application and was canceling the event.

"We received an application for a July 26 demonstration on Articles 23 and 24 of the Constitution and Internet freedom. The application procedure was not carried out correctly and we have subsequently rejected the event,'' he said.

The protest organizers have called its cancellation "illegal" and are considering further action.

Volkov, writing on his website Friday morning, reiterated that the freedom of assembly is formally guaranteed by Russian law. "They have no right to reject a demonstration," he said before explaining the formal reason given for the event's cancellation.

The authorities explained to the organizers Thursday that while the original application for the demonstration had been signed by Volkov, Zamyatin and Zhdanov, the agreement to change location was only signed by Zhdanov and was therefore not approved.

Volkov expressed his doubt that this was the real reason for the event's cancellation. "It's absolutely obvious that one of the authors of the Yarovaya law called and threw a tantrum," he said.

"Legally, everything with the protest is fine. The mayor's office holds a different position, an illegal one."

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