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Russian Court Allows Face Covering at Rallies

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Russia's Constitutional Court has ruled that activists at public rallies can partially cover their faces without fear of prosecution, the Kommersant newspaper reported Friday.

Protesters in Russia are not allowed to hide their identity from the police, but can cover some of their face so long as it does not present a "significant obstacle to identification," the court said.

The ruling maintained that slogans and drawings drawn on protesters' faces are also legal, as are scarves in bad weather and bandages worn for medical reasons.

The case follows complaints from activists in the city of Samara, who were fined for wearing tape over their mouths during a pro-LGBT demonstration on the "Day of Silence" — an annual event against the harassment of gay people.

Activists claimed that police had ignored the motive behind their demonstration, saying that authorities were in no way hampered in their ability to identify individuals.

The judiciary urged policemen to exercise caution when classifying violations and "pay attention to the motives and objectives of such actions, including the means and methods," RBC reported.

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