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Moscow City Hall Denies Permit for Rally Against Anti-Terror Laws

By Daria Litvinova

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Moscow City Hall has refused to give permission for a rally against the ⊠infamous anti-terror legislation "the Yarovaya package," organizer ⊠Leonid Volkov wrote on Twitter Monday. Volkov, an ally of the opposition⊠ leader Alexei Navalny, said that city authorities had claimed that the ⊠spot for the rally was already booked for another event.⊠

The area had been approved for the rally earlier this month, but Moscow ⊠officials later revoked the permit, citing inaccuracies on the ⊠application form. Volkov and other activists were then rejected after ⊠applying for a second time. The group moved to sue City Hall over the ⊠issue last week, with the court expected to rule on the suit on Monday. ⊠"I can't even imagine which laws they haven't violated [by rejecting the⊠ application and not offering an alternative location]," Volkov wrote on⊠ Facebook.⊠

The politician also claimed that an official from the Human Rights ⊠Ombudsman's office had called him to condemn the actions of City Hall as⊠ "illegal" and "appalling." Volkov was

assured that the Ombudsman's ☒office was monitoring the situation and is planning to contact City Hall☒ and the Interior Ministry in order to force them to issue the permit, ☒he said.☒☒

The protest is against a controversial series of hard-hitting ☒anti-terrorism laws was passed by the Russian State Duma and signed by ☒president Vladimir Putin this summer. Ultraconservative United Russia ☒lawmaker Irina Yarovaya submitted the bills alongside Federation Council☒ member Viktor Ozerov.

The changes to existing legislation will tighten ☒restrictions on Russians suspected of committing terrorist and extremist☒ activities.☒☒The proposals are wide-ranging and include harsher penalties for ☒inciting or justifying terrorism online, requiring parcels to be checked☒ for illegal items and increasing the number of crimes with which ☒children aged between 14 and 17 can be charged.

Communications companies will also see a crackdown, with the new laws ☒requiring them to monitor the content of phone calls and messages and to☒ keep them on file for six months. All messaging apps which use ☒encryption will also be required to add additional code allowing access ☒to the Russian security services.

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