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Orthodox Christians Protest Arrest of Anti-Church Activists

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Orthodox☒Christians are to protest the arrest of activists fighting against the construction of a church in northern Moscow's Torfyanka Park, the RIA Novosti news☒agency reported Wednesday.

Demonstrators plan to carry out solitary pickets – the only form of protest which doesn't require a pre-approved permit under Russian law – at☒the capital's iconic Cathedral of Christ the Savior.

Two Torfyanka activists, who have petitioned the government to build the church elsewhere, face☒criminal charges for "offending the feelings of [Christian] believers."
Radical Orthodox
organization "Forty Times Forty" claims that the activists had prevented them from carrying out religious rituals, insulted a priest, and defiled an Orthodox cross.

The pickets will emphasize the "Christian identity" of the Torfyanka activists and oppose "Forty Times Forty's" involvement in the case. "A church should not be built at the expense of new criminal cases," the organizers said in a statement.

The arrests marked the latest development in the conflict over the Torfyanka Park church, which dates back to mid-2015. Patriarch Kirill, the head of the Russian Orthodox Church, has even weighed in on the issue, calling the activists "cultists and pagans."

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