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Moscow Authorities Reject Permit for Rally Against Domestic Violence Decriminalization

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Senior Airman Rusty Frank / Wiicommons

Moscow authorities have refused a request for permission to hold a rally against the decriminalization of domestic violence on Bolotnaya Square, near the Kremlin.

Moscow city officials claim that the square is too small to accommodate the thousands of people who are expected to participate. Organizers of the event only anticipated 1,000 people to attend.

Alexandra Voskresenskaya, who wrote the permit application, told the news portal openrussia.org that city authorities did not offer an alternative location for the rally, which was planned for Jan. 28.

"We were told to either change the form of the event to holding pickets — because in such a case the notification can be submitted in three days — or to submit a new notification with a

new date," she said.

Voskresenskaya said that picketing is not a viable option because it does not allow the use of sound amplifying devices.

If organizers decide to reapply to host a rally, the planned date will likely be postponed because permits to host rallies must be submitted ten days prior to the planned event.

On Saturday, Jan. 21, activists from the group "Spring" carried out a street theater protest against domestic violence in St. Petersburg. The actors set up a mock boxing ring on a typical household carpet and acted out three "rounds" which depict common forms of domestic violence in Russia — an alcoholic grandson beating his pensioner grandmother, a fight between husband and wife, and corporal punishment of a child.

On Jan. 11, a bill which reduces the penalty for physically beating family members to an administrative offense was approved after its first reading in the State Duma. The second reading is scheduled for 25 Jan.

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