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More Than 1000 Detained as Anti-Corruption Protests Sweep Russia

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A protester is pulled down from a lamp post during anti-corruption rally in downtown Moscow.
Alexander Zemlianichenko / AP

More than 1,000 people were detained across Russia on Monday as part of the latest wave of anti-corruption protests.

According to figures from Russian police watchdog OVD-Info, 866 protesters were detained in Moscow June 12. At least 32 people were held overnight after attending the rally, which had not been sanctioned by the city government.

Hundreds were arrested in St. Petersburg during similar anti-corruption protests, OVD-Info reported. At least 245 people were still being held by police in St. Petersburg in the early hours of Tuesday morning, the watchdog said.

St. Petersburg's Fontanka newspaper said 400 people in the city were facing prosecution for breaking local anti-protest laws, including 140 minors.

Arrests were also reported in other regional cities, the Far Eastern port of Vladivostok and the Siberian town of Novosibirsk.

Local police forces have disputed the figures, with officials reporting that only 150 people had been detained in Moscow and 500 in St. Petersburg, the Meduza news site reported.

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Protests were held across the country on June 12, an official public holiday celebrated as Russia Day.

The demonstrations were organized by presidential hopeful Alexei Navalny after he accused Russian Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev of "building a corruption empire." The Kremlin has denied the allegations.

Similar protests "demanding answers" from Medvedev were held on March 26, also sparking mass detentions.

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Moscow City Hall had given Navalny's supporters permission to congregate June 12 on the capital's Sakharov Avenue, but protesters shunned the venue after officials refused to give permission for a stage and sound equipment. Demonstrators instead marched on the city's central Tverskaya Ulitsa, tussling with police.

Navalny was detained outside his apartment and later jailed for 30 days for violating protest laws.

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