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Putin Says Anti-Corruption Protesters 'Are Only Doing It for Publicity'

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Police detain a protester during anti corruption rally in St.Petersburg, Russia, June 12, 2017. **Dmitri Lovetsky / AP**

Russia's nation-wide anti-corruption protests have already led to hundreds of arrests and a backlog of court sentences for "public disturbances."

But Russian President Vladimir Putin remained silent on these matters. Only toward the end of the 4-hour conference were protests mentioned.

Putin responded by accusing the opposition — not naming any names — of using the country's problems for self-promotion.

"I am ready to engage with anyone who is genuinely interested in making people's lives better, in solving the pressing issues our country is facing, and not using those issues to generate political PR for themselves," Putin said.

"Avoid cashing in on problems, offer solutions. Those who do deserve attention can expect an

honest dialogue with the authorities. That's the way we do things," he added.

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