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St. Petersburg Rejects Memorial Event to Slain Journalist Politkovskaya

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Rally in memory of Anna Politkovskaya, Moscow, 2013 **Vladimir Varfolomeev / Flickr (CC BY-NC 2.0)**

St. Petersburg city authorities have refused to authorize a commemorative event to murdered Russian journalist Anna Politkovskaya for the first time since she was killed 11 years ago, its organizers said Wednesday.

Politkovskaya was gunned down in her Moscow apartment building on Oct. 7, 2006. She was an outspoken critic of the Kremlin who built her reputation reporting the conflict in Chechnya for the Novaya Gazeta newspaper.

Authorities rejected the memorial event dedicated to Politkovskaya because of a previously scheduled event, a city official told Novaya Gazeta on Tuesday.

The refusal marks the first time in 11 years that St. Petersburg has not allowed the event, an organizer Iosif Skakovsky told the Ekho Moskvy radio station on Wednesday.

The local deputy who told Novaya Gazeta about the Petrograd municipality's rejection said the

memorial event will still go ahead near a monument to victims of political repressions called the Solovetsky Stone.

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Boris Vishnevsky said it was absurd to schedule an eight-hour youth crime prevention event at Solovetsky Stone. The local deputy said he appealed to the St. Petersburg human rights ombudsman for assistance to greenlight the event.

"This is not only a demonstration of a negative attitude toward the memory of Anna Politkovskaya," Vishnevsky said. "But also a traditional attempt to prevent a socially important public action under a bogus pretext."

He said around 300 people have attended the memorial event every year since 2006.

Five men were sentenced for Politkovskaya's murder in 2014, but the organizer of assassination has yet to be brought to justice.

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