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INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

# News From Russia: What You Missed Over the Weekend

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Maria Zakharova **Vyacheslav Prokofiev / TASS**

### Tit-for-Tat

Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova announced Sunday evening on the pro-Kremlin channel NTV that Moscow would retaliate against what it sees as U.S. "administrative measures and propaganda" against RT.

Under Russian media law, the Kremlin can take "analogous measures" against American journalists and media outlets in Russia, regardless of whether they are financed privately or by the government, she said.

The demand that the Kremlin's leading propaganda channel RT register as a foreign agent is seen as a "restriction" on RT's work, she said.

### Tête-à-tête

The business daily Kommersant has learned of plans for French President Emmanuel Macron to attend the 2018 St. Petersburg Economic Forum.

President Vladimir Putin has extended an invitation to his French counterpart, but Paris cannot confirm Macron's visit until after Russia's elections next year, according to the diplomatic source.

Russian officials hope a visit from Macron could reverse a negative trend in relations with the European Union at a time when sanctions will be reviewed.

### Low Turnout

Turnout was low on Oct. 7 for protests in support of jailed opposition leader Alexei Navalny on President Vladimir Putin's birthday.

Analysts attributed the sparse attendance in Moscow of only a few hundred to rainstorms, lack of a permit, and absence of a clear message.

The police monitoring group OVD-info reported that 290 people had been detained for taking part in the unauthorized rallies in 26 cities across Russia.

### Protesters Clash

The largest demonstration in support of opposition leader Alexei Navalny on Oct. 7 was in St. Petersburg on the historic Mars Field.

After the rally, about 1,800 protesters marched toward Vosstaniya Square, where they clashed with police.

At least 68 people were detained, including Navalny's staff, but many were released without charges after a warning.

### Ambulance Blocked?

The St. Petersburg Investigative Committee has opened a criminal case into claims that a woman died Oct. 7 due to a delayed ambulance.

Emergency workers reportedly attributed the hold-up to police blockades of demonstrators in support of Alexei Navalny.

The St. Petersburg independent news website Fontanka said protesters were surrounded by police on Liteyny Avenue for about 30 minutes, but this location was not on the ambulance route.

### Picketers Detained

Fourteen people, seven of whom were minors, were detained Oct. 8 at a protest near the State Duma or parliament building.

Mikhail Pulin, a National Bolshevik who has previously served a jail term, and other activists from the Association of Popular Resistance were detained.

### Kaspersky Pushback

Russian cybersecurity firm Kaspersky Laboratory has sent a cease-and-desist letter to the international IT company NovaStor claiming "false marketing information."

Last week, NovaStor sent marketing letters claiming that Kaspersky and other Russian competitors would read client data.

Sputnik International reported that some cybersecurity companies were advertising the advantages of their wares after the U.S. Department of Homeland Security asked state agencies on Sept. 13 to stop using Kaspersky products.

### Bomb Scares

More than 4,000 people were evacuated from six shopping centers in Moscow on Sunday after anonymous phone threats.

### Market Fire

A fire at the Sindika construction market on the Moscow Ring Road in the city's northwest forced 3,000 people to evacuate.

Two people were injured in the blaze which broke out in a house display and burned over 55,000 square meters.

### Putin Nothingburger

Russian state television broadcast a story this weekend claiming that a New York City restaurant was offering a "Putin Burger" in honor of the president's birthday on Oct. 7.

State features service Ruptly quoted a waitress at Lucy's Cantina Royale who said the giant, spicy burger weighed 1,952 grams in honor of Putin's birth year, 1952.

But when independent Russian journalist Alexei Kovalev checked the story, the restaurant's manager said there was no such special, and the waitress had "lied about filming a project for school."

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