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Russian Activists Beaten by Cossacks Go to Court

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Ilya Varlamov / varlamov.ru

Anti-government activists who demonstrated against President Vladimir Putin's inauguration earlier this month have asked for an investigation into beatings by law enforcement officers and Cossack volunteers.

The Cossack vigilantes were filmed beating "He's Not Our Tsar" demonstrators in Moscow on May 5 with traditional leather whips called nagaikas. Subsequent reports indicated that the Cossacks were on the Moscow City Hall's payroll and would be deployed to provide security at the FIFA World Cup in Russia next month.

Related article: Cossack Vigilantes to Patrol Russian Streets During 2018 World Cup, Media Report

"Thirteen people have been beaten by siloviki [security services...] And two were beaten by the

Cossacks with nagaikas," the Kommersant business daily cited the Rights Zone human rights movement spokesman Bulat Mukhamedzhanov as saying Monday.

While the movement hopes investigators will qualify the 13 cases as abuse of power with the use of force, Mukhamedzhanov said the two beatings by Cossacks "will most likely be treated as hooliganism."

Rights Zone head Sergei Petryakov said that the organization is filing appeals on behalf of 15 victims of beatings in Moscow, St. Petersburg, Krasnoyarsk, Krasnodar and Chelyabinsk.

"Most likely, there will be a formal runaround," the head of the Agora international human rights group Pavel Chikov told Kommersant, citing a single case in the past decade where a police officer received a suspended sentence for beating a protester.

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