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Open Russia Activists Detained in Far East Office Opening

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Open Russia (Otkrytata Rossiya) / Facebook

At least five Open Russia pro-democracy activists have been detained in a police raid on the opening of a new office in Russia's Far East.

Founded by exiled opposition politician Mikhail Khodorkovsky, Open Russia was blacklisted by Russian prosecutors as an "undesirable organization" last year. The attack came the day of celebrations for Russia Day, a national holiday which marks the beginning of the constitutional transition from the Soviet Union to the Russian Federation.

Related article: Khodorkovsky Launches New Media After Open Russia Ban

"We opened an Open Russia branch in Vladivostok. Eleven police officers stormed in at the end and detained five people," the group's chairman Andrei Pivovarov tweeted Tuesday.

One opposition party called a previous raid on Open Russia in February a scare campaign.

Open Russia spokeswoman Natalia Gryaznevitch wrote on Facebook that four male police officers and a female police colonel "grabbed me by the arms, pushed me into a car, and hauled me to a police station."

Khodorkovsky's news website MBKh Media cited one activist saying that "police officers literally began beating people up."

"Happy Russia Day," Open Russia founder Khodorkovsky wrote.

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