

Russian Police Reportedly Interrogate Schoolgirls Over Protest Activity

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A rally of supporters Alexei Navalny in Moscow (Anton Sergienko / RBC / TASS)

Russian anti-extremism police have reportedly questioned two high school students over taking part in anti-government demonstrations this month.

Mass rallies against state plans to raise the retirement age were held in dozens of Russian cities on Sept. 9, with young people making up the majority of the protesters. Police detained hundreds of people, including young children and the elderly, and were filmed beating participants with batons.

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An 11th grader who attended the Moscow rallies [said](#) a school psychiatrist summoned her during algebra class for questioning by a man who introduced himself as an officer of the Interior Ministry's anti-extremism center.

“Navalny’s staff had taught us how to recognize them,” Kamilla Brailovskaya, 17, wrote on Facebook, referring to opposition leader Alexei Navalny’s nationwide network of volunteers.

“They’re in plain clothes, shabby jeans, T-shirt tucked, a belt, and [carry] a small handbag the size of a pistol,” she wrote on Wednesday.

Though she initially asserted her constitutional right to remain silent, Kamilla said the officer took out “a folder the size of two ‘War and Peace’ volumes with screenshots and notes.”

“There’s my photo. Lying won’t work. ‘Yes, that’s me’,” she recounted, noting that the officer summoned her to the station the next day.

Kamilla’s classmate Valeria was also questioned by the officer, a third classmate Matvei [told](#) the MBKh news website on Thursday. He said one of Kamilla’s friends was detained and faces administrative charges for taking part in the Sept. 9 protests.

Kamilla’s mother Maria Simakova told the outlet her daughter would not appear at the police station without a written summons, and that their family had hired a lawyer in case the police decided to press charges.

“My daughter behaved divinely today and I’m very proud of her!” Simakova [wrote](#) on her Facebook page on Wednesday.

The reported interrogation took place a year after [leaked](#) classroom videos showed teachers and school directors admonishing students for being “brainwashed” by Navalny.

Following a series of anti-government protests in which teenagers played a leading role last year, the head of the Interior Ministry’s anti-extremism center [suggested](#) punishing parents and teachers for children’s protest activity.

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