

# Moscow Mayor Thanks Leader of Cossacks Accused of Whipping Opposition

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Moscow Mayor Sergei Sobyenin has issued a statement thanking the leader of a group of Cossacks that was accused of publicly flogging anti-government protesters earlier this year.

The Cossacks, an imperial cavalry force from Russia's southern steppes, have been [revived](#) in a number of patriotic organizations across Russia since the collapse of the Soviet Union.

Sobyenin on Friday thanked Andrei Shustrov, the head of the Central Cossack Battalion, for his "active participation in socially significant public events in Moscow," according to a statement [published](#) on the website of Moscow's City Hall.

Last May, Shustrov had reportedly been [part](#) of a group of Cossacks that had been filmed attacking protesters at a rally against President Vladimir Putin's inauguration in Moscow.

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“I was there with my family. I live in Moscow. So what?,” the Cossack leader [told](#) the Daily Storm news outlet days after the protest.

Moscow City Hall has reportedly funded Cossacks groups in recent years to [hold](#) training sessions on public safety as well as do “social work” [aimed](#) at the city’s homeless.

Cossacks were also [employed](#) by the authorities to patrol the streets during the 2018 football World Cup .

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