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Russian Taxi Drivers Launch Protest in Central Moscow Over Low Wages

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360tv.ru

A group of taxi drivers has joined a spontaneous protest in central Moscow after one of their colleagues announced a hunger strike over poor working conditions and low wages, as anger among drivers mounts against taxi aggregators.

Earlier this year, taxi drivers set off a smoke bomb outside the office of the Yandex.Taxi aggregator in Moscow and distributed leaflets calling the company "bloodsuckers" in a protest against the company's rising commission fees.

Related article: Angry Drivers Attack Yandex.Taxi Moscow Office Over Rising Fees

A taxi driver who launched the protest with a 5-day hunger strike from his parked car in central Moscow last Friday has been hospitalized after falling ill, the 360tv.ru news website reported Monday.

“I am not a killer. I am not going to work for 12-14 hours in a row, because it is not safe,” the driver, who said his name was Roman, was quoted as saying by the news outlet on Monday, hours before reportedly being taken away in an ambulance.

“Doctors say that a driver who works for more than 10 hours in a row poses the same [danger] as a drunk driver,” he added.

Ten of his colleagues who reportedly parked their cars to join the protest on the busy Nikitsky Boulevard were detained, 360tv.ru reported.

Andrei Titov, the head of a local association of taxi drivers, told the outlet that drivers have long been unhappy over the deterioration of working conditions.

“Drivers’ strikes have already taken place every year, with zero results,” he was cited as saying.

“No one sees them or hears them,” he added.

Russia’s largest taxi aggregator, Yandex.Taxi, merged with Uber last year, which brought the company an estimated monthly revenue of $131 million in Russia and five of its neighbors.

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