

Russia Outlaws Youth Protestors

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Anton Sergienko / TASS

Young Russians under the age of 18 who have led nationwide anti-government rallies in recent years are now banned from attending unauthorized protests under a newly signed law.

Russia's youth has spearheaded anti-Kremlin demonstrations since early 2017, drawn to the streets by opposition leader Alexei Navalny and his social-media savvy team of organizers. Scores of lawmakers submitted measures criminalizing child protesters shortly after rallies against President Vladimir Putin's inauguration in May, where authorities were seen [detaining](#) children as young as 12.

New amendments Putin [signed](#) into law Thursday impose 15 days of jail and fines of up to one million rubles (\$14,400) on organizers who "involve minors" in unauthorized rallies.

Related article: [Russia's Youth Takes the Lead in Countrywide Protests Against Putin](#)

The State Duma, which passed the child-protestors bill on Dec. 18, explained that minors need to be kept away from demonstrations “to prevent harm to their health.”

The Kremlin has regularly [accused](#) Navalny of “misleading” children, including with promises of cash payments, to take part in his protests.

Critics inside the Duma have [warned](#) that the law’s “very broad interpretation and application” carries risks that the authorities will “selectively” apply the new rules.

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