

Russian Church-Building Protester Files European Human Rights Suit

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Marina Moldavskaya / TASS

A resident of the Russian city of Yekaterinburg has filed a lawsuit with Europe's human rights court for his detention during rallies against the construction of a church on park grounds.

Daniil Pugin was one of dozens detained amid spontaneous and unauthorized [protests](#) at the proposed construction site last week. A state-sponsored poll published Wednesday showed that three-quarters of Yekaterinburg residents oppose the cathedral's construction in the riverside park.

Related article: [74% of Locals Oppose Controversial Church in Russia's Yekaterinburg – Poll](#)

In the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) suit, Pugin alleges that Russian authorities had violated his freedom of assembly, lawyer Alexei Glukhov [told](#) the Vedomosti business daily.

“We believe that the authorities decided from the very beginning to stop spontaneous peaceful actions by force,” Glukhov [wrote](#).

Pugin was sentenced to five days behind bars for petty hooliganism. The sentence was later reduced to four days.

The Yekaterinburg diocese of the Russian Orthodox Church criticized the state-funded survey, which showed 74 percent of residents opposing construction of the cathedral on park grounds, as biased.

“The official survey is still ahead,” it [said](#).

Yekaterinburg Mayor Alexander Vysokinsky has [said](#) that the poll's results are not decisive and that an official survey will decide the outcome of the cathedral's location, while Sverdlovsk region governor Yevgeny Kuyvashev said the results indicate the need to choose a new site for the church.

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