

News From Russia: What You Missed Over the Weekend

June 17, 2019



'Justice and Fairness to Everyone' rally **Andrey Nikerichiev / Moskva News Agency**

Moscow rally

Several hundred protesters gathered in Moscow on Sunday (June 16) for a small rally supporting investigative journalist Ivan Golunov and decrying abuse of power during his five-day arrest earlier this month on drug charges.

The rally was sanctioned by the authorities, unlike a previous rally in support of Golunov on June 12 that resulted in more than 500 detentions.

Witness protection

Russia's Interior Ministry has granted witness protection to Golunov, the Human Rights Postcards organization [told](#) Interfax on Sunday. Golunov had on Saturday given witness testimony for the Interior Ministry's investigation into his case.

Yekaterinburg church

The controversial location for a new cathedral in Russia's fourth-largest city of Yekaterinburg will be excluded from a public poll of possible construction sites, the Yekaterinburg City Council chairman [told](#) Interfax on Sunday.

Thousands of Yekaterinburg residents took to the streets last month to rally against the planned construction of the cathedral in a central park, which they say is one of the few green spaces left in the city.

Venezuelan fiction

Russia's ambassador to Venezuela has denied U.S. national security adviser John Bolton's claims that Moscow had signed a \$209-million arms sales contract with embattled Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro.

"This is another piece of fiction — which Bolton apparently needs to maintain the illusion that Venezuela is an imaginary threat, and Russia, of course, is to blame for this," Vladimir Zaemsky [told](#) the state-run RIA Novosti news agency on Sunday.

No meddling

An official from Russia's security council described as absurd accusations that Moscow used disinformation to sway voters towards right-wing parties in last month's European Union elections, the state-run Rossiyskaya Gazeta newspaper reported on Sunday.

An EU review into elections to its parliament, published on Friday, said there was evidence that both Russian and European online sources had sought to promote extreme views and polarize debate on issues such as migration and religion.

Putin and May

British Prime Minister Theresa May is considering a face-to-face meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin at this month's G20 summit in Japan in an effort to begin a thaw in relations before a new British leader comes to power, The Times newspaper reported.

Britain's relations with Russia fell to a post-Cold War low after the poisoning of ex-spy Sergei Skripal and his daughter in Salisbury in March 2018 with a nerve agent.

Includes reporting from Reuters.

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