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LGBT Activists Detained at St. Petersburg Pride Event

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Police in St. Petersburg have reportedly detained at least 11 LGBT activists, three of whom were taken away in an ambulance, at an unauthorized Pride event on Saturday.

Local administrations in recent years have either banned gay pride parades outright or backtracked on earlier promises to allow them, often citing a 2013 law banning "homosexual propaganda" toward minors. Recent polling has suggested that Russian attitudes toward equal rights for LGBT people were at a 14-year high and St. Petersburg has been named the country's most LGBT-friendly city.

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Around 50 activists had gathered with rainbow flags and banners in central St. Petersburg on Saturday despite the authorities' refusal to authorize the event.

National Guard troops encircled the small gathering and police warned those gathered of violating Russia's public assembly law, according to local media.

Eleven activists were detained at the Pride event, the OVD-Info police-monitoring group reported Saturday.

Three of the activists were taken away in an ambulance, the group reported.

The detentions follow the gruesome killing of LGBT activist Yelena Grigoriyeva in St. Petersburg last month, shortly after her name appeared on an anti-LGBT "death list." Authorities have arrested a suspect who had reportedly confessed to the killing.

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