

Moscow's 50,000-Strong Opposition Protest, in Quotes

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Violetta Nadbitova / MT

An estimated 50,000 people took to the streets of Moscow on Saturday in one of the largest protests in Russia since 2012.

They rallied against the authorities' blocking of opposition candidates from local elections next month and the heavy police crackdowns during recent demonstrations.

Chants calling on Russia to free its political prisoners could be heard along with chants in support of the rejected candidates. Attendees wore shirts and held signs with pictures of the [jailed](#) opposition candidates and of the individuals [facing](#) up to eight years in prison on "mass unrest" charges over previous protests.

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Following the authorized event, more than 200 people were [detained](#) in central Moscow.

Here are highlights from some of the day's most-quoted speeches:

— **Leonid Parfyonov**, prominent journalist:

“[Riot police is] acting like it owns the city: Going wherever it wants and roughing up whoever it wants.”

“The Higher School of Economics, all progressive and elite, is nearby. HSE student Yegor Zhukov, who has progressive beliefs, was [detained](#) at the [July 27] rally. How do you restore the harmony between progressive studies and loyalty?”

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— **Valeriya Gudkova**, wife of [jailed](#) opposition candidate Dmitry Gudkov: “I'll be coming home to an empty house today. Our son turned six without his dad. But this shall pass, we will survive, because we know we're right and you're right.”

— **Danila Poperechny**, stand-up comic:

“I dreamed of becoming a superhero as a child because they inspired me to fight for justice. I grew up and simply waited, hoping that justice would prevail on its own. Well, now I'm tired. And now we have to fight, if not for ourselves, then for our children who will live in this country.”

Embed:

— **Sergei Smirnov**, editor-in-chief of the Mediazona news website:

“The number of political prisoners is growing before our eyes. I urge you to support those who were jailed, attend their court hearings and write them letters. They need our support and solidarity.”

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— **Lyudmila Ulitskaya**, poet:

“We came with open faces,

While you have the Russian Guard and police,

And you have a great army,

But we have human dignity.

We're nerds and dummies,

You're KGB and bosses.

You're protected by powerful shields,

While we have nothing in our hands.

Embed:

Other than small children,

So why attack us in balaclavas?

We're here to talk, not to fight,

And there's no need to hit us hard

With fists and special batons,

Hold trials for the innocent,

Divide the people into two lots –

Into the simple lads and the Russian Guard.

We're nerds and dummies,

You're KGB and bosses...

There's a big country behind us,

Behind you, there's sinkholes and crows."

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