

Russian Police Throw Smoke Bomb, Detain Protesters After Local Election in Far East

September 12, 2019



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At least 17 protesters rallying against the results of a local election in Far East Russia have been detained Tuesday night after security officials threw a smoke grenade into the bus they were in.

Hundreds of protesters have demanded a re-do of Sunday's vote in the republic of Buryatia's administrative center of Ulan-Ude, where a pro-Kremlin candidate was elected mayor. Intermittent clashes broke out and several protesters have been detained since the spontaneous demonstrations began in Ulan-Ude on Monday.

Related article: [Protest Erupts in Far East Russia After Pro-Kremlin Candidate's Victory](#)

“People were sitting in a bus when a smoke grenade flew in. They smoked us out of the bus

and put us on our knees,” Interfax [cited](#) one of the participants as saying.

The regional Interior Ministry said in a statement that 17 people were detained. One of the activists told the U.S.-funded Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty news outlet’s regional affiliate that all but one of the detained protesters have since been [released](#).

Both the police and the region’s human rights commissioner have [claimed](#) that protesters used tear gas against police, resulting in one of the officers receiving an eye injury.

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Two people who were on the bus [told](#) the independent Novaya Gazeta newspaper that the police had thrown tear gas, not a smoke bomb.

Bair Tsyrenov, a communist member of the local legislative assembly, has called on supporters to attend new rallies that he [said](#) he plans to get approved by the authorities. The newly elected mayor, Igor Shutenkov, ordered to [seal off](#) the square outside the regional administrative building where the protesters had gathered.

The head of Buryatia on Tuesday [appealed](#) to protesters in a video address to accept the outcome of the vote, calling the police response “restrained and professional.”

Monday’s protest initially [broke out](#) in support of detained followers of Alexander Gabyshev, a shaman who has been [walking](#) on foot to Moscow to “expel” President Vladimir Putin.

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