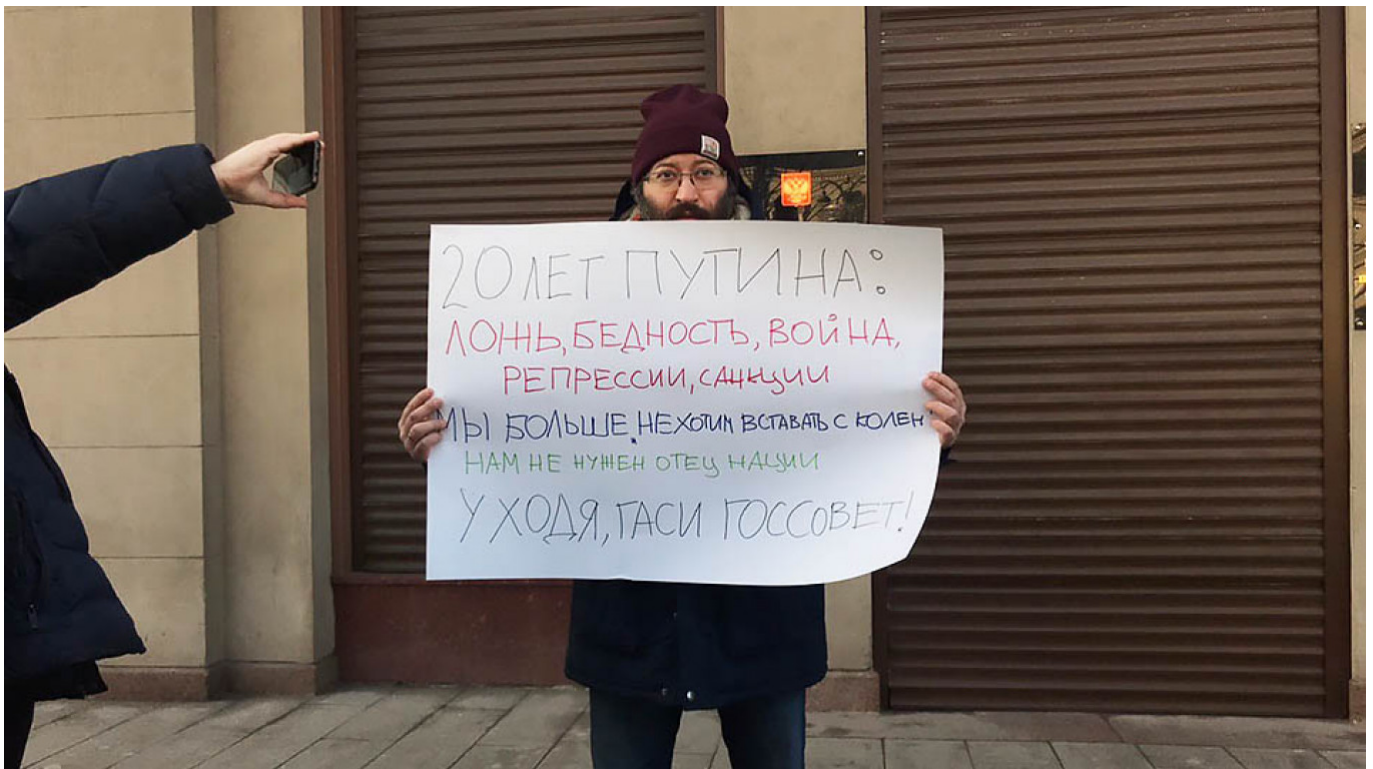


News From Russia: What You Missed Over the Weekend

January 20, 2020



On Saturday, Russians took turns holding one-person pickets outside the presidential administration building to express their disagreement with Putin's constitutional reforms. mstrok.ru

Constitutional defense

Over 1,000 people marched through Moscow on Sunday in an event a Kremlin critic tried to turn into a protest against President Vladimir Putin's constitutional shake-up, but many demonstrators chose to voice dissent about other issues instead. At least nine people have been reportedly [detained](#).

On Saturday, some Russians had taken turns holding one-person pickets outside the presidential administration building to express their disagreement with Putin's constitutional reforms.

Libyan truce

Foreign powers including Russia agreed to shore up a shaky truce in Libya, but the meeting

was overshadowed by oil field blockades by forces loyal to commander Khalifa Haftar that could cripple the country's crude production.

"We don't lose hope that dialogue will continue and the conflict will be solved," Putin, who attended the Libya summit in Berlin on Sunday, said. He said Russian and Turkish calls for a ceasefire had helped reduce fighting a week ago.

Skripal warning

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson warned Putin there would be no normalization of British-Russian ties until Moscow ends its "destabilizing activity" that threatens security.

Downing Street said Johnson met Putin on the sidelines of the Libya summit in Berlin, where he told the Russian leader not to repeat the 2018 chemical attack that almost killed former spy Sergei Skripal.

'On-ramp' for predators

Russia's biggest search engine Yandex appears to be a conduit for child sexual imagery due to government policies against cooperating with "undesirable" foreign organizations, Fortune magazine [reported](#).

Yandex is not part of a London-based Internet Watch Foundation (IWF) coalition that Google and Bing use to limit searches for child sexual exploitation imagery because of the Kremlin's alleged opposition to foreign NGOs, according to Fortune.

Frigid epiphany

More than 56,000 worshippers entered frigid waters in Moscow to mark the Russian Orthodox Epiphany on Sunday, the Russian capital's emergencies department [said](#).

Worshippers believe their sins are symbolically washed away through the age-old ritual commemorating the baptism of Jesus Christ in the Jordan River, or the Epiphany, which the Russian Orthodox Church celebrates on Jan. 19.

Blockade remembrance

Residents of St. Petersburg on Saturday held a march to commemorate the 77th anniversary of the breaking of the Siege of Leningrad. Lasting nearly 900 days (Sept. 8, 1941-Jan. 27, 1944), the siege of the city by Nazi forces killed at least 630,000 people and left the city in ruins.

Putin, who attended the commemorations, announced that all veterans of World War II and survivors of the Siege of Leningrad will receive a payment from the government to mark the 75th anniversary of Victory Day this May. St. Petersburg's government has reportedly [allocated](#) 1.5 billion rubles (\$24.3 million) for these payments.

Includes reporting from Reuters.

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