

Russian Opposition Plans Online Coronavirus Lockdown Protest

By [AFP](#)

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Protesters rallied against President Putin's proposed constitutional amendments outside the offices of Russia's Federal Security Service (FSB) on March 14, weeks before Moscow's coronavirus lockdown took effect. **Valery Sharifulin / TASS**

Russia's opposition has called for an online protest next week to press the Kremlin for financial aid for people struggling under the coronavirus lockdown.

During an online YouTube rally next Tuesday, Moscow councillors Yulia Galyamina, Ilya Azar and their allies also plan to seek an amnesty for prisoners and oppose President Vladimir Putin's plan to change the Constitution in a move that could allow him to stay in power until 2036.

Related article: [Hundreds Rally Against Coronavirus Lockdown in Southern Russia](#)

Putin has been forced to defer a key vote on the proposed amendment.

"We demand that the president and the Russian government adopt emergency measures to save people during the crisis," the organizers said in a manifesto posted on Galyamina's Facebook page.

The organizers invited supporters to send them "virtual" placards that will be shown live during the protest.

The coronavirus outbreak and a fall in oil prices have hit the Russian economy, and many have been left without jobs.

Putin has urged Russians to stay home and told their employers to continue paying their salaries but given the companies little tangible support.

Anger is growing at what many say is a lack of adequate support for ordinary people and for small and medium-sized businesses.

Some are also concerned that many medics and clinics complain of protective gear shortages.

Russia on Tuesday reported 52,763 coronavirus cases and 456 fatalities, and Putin has warned that the peak has not yet passed.

It was not immediately clear if top opposition leader Alexei Navalny planned to join the online rally.

But in a blog post on Monday, the 43-year-old politician said the government had enough resources and should in April support Russians with coronavirus payouts of 20,000 rubles (\$260) per adult and 10,000 rubles per child.

He urged Russians to join a public campaign to urge the Kremlin to distribute the money.

Citing data from Moscow's Higher School of Economics, Navalny said that a quarter of Russians have lost their income during the lockdown.

On Monday, hundreds of people defied social distancing recommendations in the city of Vladikavkaz in the Northern Caucasus to protest against the coronavirus restrictions and economic hardship, in one of the first major lockdown protests in the country.

OVD-Info, which tracks opposition protests, said around 2,000 people took part and 69 were detained.

Protest organizer Vadim Cheldiyev, who is an opera singer, has been detained for two months.

Also on Monday, Russians held online protests in several cities using a mobile application of the internet giant Yandex.

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