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Russia Investigates Toy Protests Against Vote on Putin's Term Limits

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The toy protests are an offshoot of the #MiniProtest social media campaign against Putin's constitutional reforms. **spb_vesna / Twitter**

Criminal investigators in St. Petersburg have attempted to question an activist who used children's toys to protest against a vote on constitutional amendments that would allow President Vladimir Putin to extend his rule into 2036.

Sonya Ulyasheva, a spokeswoman for the Vesna democratic movement, had posted photographs of the toy protests as on offshoot of the #MiniProtest social media campaign in which participants post photos of fruits and vegetables holding anti-amendments posters in public spaces.

"This plebiscite is more fake than us," reads one of the posters held by characters from popular cartoons like "Trolls," "Pokemon" and "My Little Pony."

Officers who identified themselves as members of a criminal investigation division arrived at Ulyasheva's home to inquire about her "civic stance," the police-monitoring website OVD-

Info reported Monday.

Ulyasheva told the liberal Ekho Moskvy radio station Tuesday that she was not home at the time.

“They detain everyone for any picket [because of Russia’s coronavirus outbreak]... while no one has canceled the vote on the Constitution, which creates a dissonance between the ban on public rallies and the vote,” Ulyasheva said.

“These toy campaigns further underscore this absurdity. We thought you couldn’t underscore the absurdity any more, but the police managed when they responded with a criminal probe,” she added.

Putin’s proposed changes to Russia’s basic law, which are expected to be backed in a nationwide vote next week, would allow him to seek two more six-year presidential terms in 2024.

Critics have accused officials of banning public campaigns against the amendments while running a de facto campaign in favor of the reforms.

Other opponents of the proposed constitutional amendments have shifted their campaigns online with TikTok videos, Instagram face filters and other creative methods of resistance, the TJournal tech website reported.

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