The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Russian Activists Demand End to Intimidation at Funeral of Journalist Who Set Herself on Fire

October 06, 2020



Irina Slavina set herself on fire in front of the Nizhny Novgorod police headquarters. **Mikhail Solunin / TASS**

Hundreds of Russians on Tuesday held a memorial procession for a journalist who died after setting herself on fire while rights groups demanded an end to the police intimidation that is believed to have triggered her self-immolation.

Irina Slavina, the editor-in-chief of the independent KozaPress news outlet, died Friday after setting herself on fire in front of the Nizhny Novgorod police headquarters. Her last social media post told her followers to "blame the Russian Federation" for her death, which happened a day after police raided her home for evidence of her involvement with the opposition.

Some 200 people attended Tuesday's funeral service, which was followed by a procession through Nizhny Novgorod toward the site of Slavina's death, the Meduza news website

reported.

Nizhny Novgorod region Governor Gleb Nikitin was among those who attended the funeral service, his spokesperson told the Podyom news outlet. Following Slavina's death, Nikitin vowed to "ensure that an investigation into the circumstances that led to this tragedy is carried out at the highest level."

Embed:

> Вот так выглядит шествие в Нижнем Новгороде. Видео: @MBKhMedia pic.twitter.com/P0JWTAxZzk
>
> — МБХ Медиа (@MBKhMedia) October 6, 2020

One of Slavina's colleagues called her death "the highest act of self-sacrifice" aimed at waking people up and calling attention to the authorities' treatment of independent journalists.

Also on Tuesday, a joint statement by the Memorial human rights group, Open Russia pro-democracy movement and Public Verdict foundation called on Russian lawmakers to revise the Criminal Procedure Code and put an end to police searches as a form of intimidation.

Slavina had written that police, who said she was a witness in a criminal case against a local activist, searched her belongings for evidence of her involvement with Open Russia.

Related article: 'Blame the Russian Federation for My Death,' Journalist Writes Before Self-Immolation

In recent years, she had been fined by the authorities several times under Russia's laws against "disrespect toward the authorities" and spreading "fake news," which her supporters say were forms of pressure for her journalism and political views.

Slavina's lawyer told CNN on Monday that she had been feeling pressure from the lawsuits and fines that had been filed against her.

While the Kremlin has said Slavina's death isn't a matter for its consideration, the presidential human rights council has called on federal investigators to look into the circumstances and investigate whether security officials could be charged with driving someone to suicide.

Original url:
https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2020/10/06/russian-activists-demand-end-to-intimidation-at-funeral-of-journalist-who-set-herself-on-fire-a71670