The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

As It Happened: Thousands Detained as Russians Stage Fresh Navalny Protests

January 31, 2021



A standoff between protesters and riot police in St. Petersburg. **Twitter / ars_ves**

Russians nationwide staged a second round of protests calling for jailed opposition leader Alexei Navalny's release despite a growing crackdown and threats of prosecution by the authorities.

Navalny's allies called for new protests to demand his release after tens of thousands took to the streets nationwide last Saturday in rallies that also protested Russia's elite, resulting in a single-day record of over 4,000 detentions. The Kremlin critic faces up to 3.5 years in jail in a trial that starts this week on charges of violating the terms of a 2014 suspended sentence while recovering from Novichok poisoning in Germany.

The days ahead of Sunday's protests were marked by an intensifying crackdown against Navalny's allies and family members, with his brother Oleg and lawyer Lyubov Sobol placed under pre-trial house arrest on charges of violating coronavirus restrictions by calling people to join protests. Authorities also issued an arrest warrant in absentia for Leonid Volkov, a top Navalny aide based in Lithuania, as part of a criminal case on inciting minors to attend

unauthorized protests.

Related article: Toilet Brushes and Blue Pants: Symbols of Russia's Protests

Moscow police had closed seven metro stations and limited pedestrian movement in the city center ahead of Sunday's protest, an unprecedented move. The Moscow rally was due to take place outside the headquarters of the Federal Security Service (FSB), which Navalny says carried out the near-fatal poisoning attack on the orders of President Vladimir Putin, before a last-minute change.

Some **5,646** people were detained in more than **80** cities, **1,861** of whom were in Moscow, according to the independent OVD-Info police monitor.

Here's a look at the events as they happened:

8:15 p.m.: Yulia Navalnaya has been released from detention and a protocol on violating protest rules has been drawn up against her, the Dozhd broadcaster reports.

6:15 p.m.: Prominent political scientist and former presidential human rights council member Yekaterina Schulmann has been detained in Moscow.

5:50 p.m.: At least 82 journalists were detained during Sunday's protests nationwide, OVD-Info reports.

5:40 p.m.: The Moscow metro has returned to normal operations, the city's transport department said.

5:34 p.m.: Yulia Navalnaya, Navalny's wife, is still in detention and has not been allowed to speak to her lawyer, her attorney told OVD-Info.

5:23 p.m.: Open Russia executive director Andrei Pivovarov and Navalny ally and Moscow municipal deputy Ilya Yashin have been detained.

5:07 p.m.: Video published by iStories shows a young couple holding hands while being detained in Moscow.

Embed:

> Любовь – это держать ее за руку во время задержания
>
> Видео: @istories_media pic.twitter.com/4ZrdDl7u5c
>
> — Важные истории (@istories_media) January 31, 2021

4:56 p.m.: In the southern Russian city of Volgograd, video shows protesters being detained by unidentified plainclothes individuals.

4:45 p.m.: Groups of protesters continue to march in columns and run from riot police throughout Moscow.

3:40 p.m.: Mass crowds have gathered throughout St. Petersburg despite heavy riot police and National Guard presence. In other parts of the city, a heavy police crackdown is seen.

Embed:

> Петербург, пересечение набережной канала Грибоедова и улицы Гороховой. Люди скандируют: «Россия будет свободной».
>
> Видео: Нина Авдеенко / «Новая». pic.twitter.com/4t9varXuJd
>
> — Новая Газета (@novaya_gazeta) January 31, 2021

3:31 p.m.: Police have cordoned off the Matrosskaya Tishina prison where Navalny is being held and are rounding up protesters there, the independent Dozhd broadcaster reports.

3:19 p.m.: At least 12 journalists have been detained in Moscow so far, the Open Media news website reports.

3:19 p.m.: A car with a golden toilet brush attached to its roof has been seen driving near the protests in Moscow. Protesters have carried toilet brushes — a reference to the $700 toilet brushes Navalny describes in his "Putin's Palace" investigation — throughout the rallies.

3:10 p.m.: Moscow police used a taser on a protester and carried him away after he lost consciousness, according to video published by the iStories investigative outlet.

3:05 p.m.: Video shows a standoff between protesters and riot police in St. Petersburg.

2:35 p.m.: Police in Kazan reportedly forced protesters to lie face-down in the snow and remove their face masks to be photographed, according to OVD-Info.

2:12 p.m.: A crowd of Moscow protesters have started marching toward Matrosskaya Tishina, the high-security jail where Navalny is being held. Meanwhile, Navalny's wife Yulia posted a photo of herself at the protest before being detained shortly after.

2:00 p.m.: U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken condemns the "harsh tactics against peaceful protesters and journalists by Russian authorities for a second week straight," calling on Russia to free those detained, including Navalny.

Embed:

> К тюрьме Матросская тишина в Москве подъехал микроавтобус с огромным золоченым туалетным ершиком. Водитель говорит, что это его

"рабочая машина" и с этой инсталляцией он ездит по городу. Смотрите спецэфир о протестах: https://t.co/oulwLoghP6 pic.twitter.com/61fMuuiMCG

— Настоящее Время (@CurrentTimeTv) January 31, 2021

1:53 p.m.: Police in Vladivostok are using stun guns, traumatic pistols and violent beatings against detained protesters, OVD-Info reports. Video shows St. Petersburg police using electric shock batons on protesters and pulling a gun in one instance.

Embed:

View this post on Instagram

A post shared by @yulia_navalnaya

1:37 p.m.: St. Petersburg police have used tear gas to break up protesters who tried to break out a group of fellow protesters from police custody, the local Fontanka.ru news website reports. Journalists wearing yellow press vests are also reportedly being detained.

1:29 p.m.: A standoff between protesters and police takes place in the city of Chelyabinsk, with protesters chanting "We are unarmed." Meanwhile, a video of Chelyabinsk police pinning a protester to the ground as he says "I can't breathe" spreads across social media.

1:24 p.m.: A large crowd has gathered at Moscow's Komsomolskaya Square, shouting slogans like "Putin is a thief" while police detain people.

Embed:

> Толпа на Комсомольской pic.twitter.com/5WkNmbw7jL
>
> — Проект (@wwwproektmedia) January 31, 2021

12:50 p.m.: Navalny's team announces that the rally will move to the square outside the Komsomolskaya metro station and Leningradsky railway station. As protesters walk to the new location, passing cars honk their horns in support.

12:47 p.m.: Yevgeny Stupin, a Moscow City Duma member from the Communist Party, is detained.

12:39 p.m.: Popular Russian rapper Oxxxymiron is at the St. Petersburg protest on his birthday, telling the independent Dozhd broadcaster that "My birthday wish to myself is to stop escaping my fears in the new year."

12:34 p.m.: Entrances and exits to the Krasnye Vorota and Sukharevskaya metro stations in Moscow have been closed, the MBKh Media news website reports.

12:28 p.m.: Police start detaining Moscow protesters attempting to hide in a nearby cathedral, the RBC news website reports.

12:27 p.m.: Hundreds of protesters have gathered on Pionerskaya Square in St. Petersburg.

12:00 p.m.: Moscow police have arrived at the new protest site at the Krasnye Vorota and Sukharevskaya metro stations and have begun detaining people, including one journalist.

11:47 a.m.: Protesters in Yekaterinburg are crossing the frozen Iset River in a move to escape riot police, according to The Moscow Times' correspondent.

11:44 a.m.: Video shows a violent police crackdown on protesters in the city of Kazan.

Embed:

> Chilling scenes on the streets of Kazan, Tatarstan, where a violent police cleanup is underway and protesters are trying to face down batons and shields.
>
> Protest monitor @OvdInfo reports 420 arrests in more than 25 Russian cities so far. pic.twitter.com/lzmKjo7v4R
>
> — Matthew Luxmoore (@mjluxmoore) January 31, 2021

11:34 a.m.: Video from Ufa in the republic of Bashkortostan shows protesters chanting "Akvadiskoteka!" in reference to a meme about the aqua-disco inside the $1.3 billion palace Navalny linked to Putin in a viral investigation this month. A video of Ufa police dragging and detaining an elderly woman spreads widely on social media.

Embed:

> В Уфе жёстко задержали пенсионерку, пять полицейских то поднимая, то роняя, волокли женщину в автозак
>
> Видео: Куштау онлайн pic.twitter.com/XoWDNHhvhk
>
> — МБХ медиа (@MBKhMedia) January 31, 2021

11:28 a.m.: The Moscow protest site has been moved from Lubyanka square to the Krasnye Vorota and Sukharevskaya metro stations while the St. Petersburg protest site has been moved from Nevsky Prospekt to Pionerskaya square, protest organizers announced.

11:22 a.m.: Moscow police have closed off Lubyanka square, the site of the FSB headquarters and the planned location of today's protest, and are only letting journalists onto the square.

11:09 a.m.: Police in Russia's second city St. Petersburg have reportedly closed off much of the city center, photos show, and are requiring passports to enter Nevsky Prospekt. Earlier this morning, several St. Petersburg-based activists said police searched their apartments.

10:49 a.m.: A large crowd has gathered in Russia's fourth-largest city of Yekaterinburg, according to The Moscow Times' correspondent. The Znak.com news website places the crowd size at 7,000 people.

Embed:

> Mass protests rocked Russia well beyond Moscow and St. Petersburg. Big crowd in

> Ekaterinburg chanting “Putin is a thief”. pic.twitter.com/vBy1zTRdLB
>
> — Uliana Pavlova (@pavlovauliana) January 31, 2021

10:27 a.m.: Security forces have begun to disperse the rally in Chelyabinsk with force after protesters broke through a police cordon, video footage shows.

9:59 a.m.: Observers report heavy riot police presence in central Moscow, both in the city center and in the residential neighborhood of Chistye Prudy.

9:47 a.m.: Local media in Novosibirsk estimate that 5,000 people attended Sunday's rally, a larger number than at the protest last weekend.

9:42 a.m.: A photo from the Siberian city of Krasnoyarsk shows riot police far outnumbering protesters.

Embed:

> Красноярск. pic.twitter.com/BzCks7Fztl
>
> — Партия Прогресса РБ (@ProgressRB) January 31, 2021

9:39 a.m.: Activists in the Siberian city of Irkutsk report that internet access has been shut off in the city for the first time in a move to prevent them from broadcasting the protest online.

8:27 a.m.: In Russia's Far East capital of Vladivostok, protesters rally on the ice of the Amur Bay after police blocked off their original meeting point. Video shows protesters chanting "My Russia is in prison!"

Embed:

> Люди скандируют: «Моя Россия сидит в тюрьме!»
> pic.twitter.com/EHOOLedMz5
>
> — Штаб Навального во Владивостоке (@teamnavalny_vdk) January 31, 2021

6:50 a.m.: Residents of the city of Yakutsk in northern Siberia hold a small rally despite temperatures of minus 43 degrees Celsius, video footage showed.

Embed:

> Жители Якутска собираются на акции несмотря на мороз — в городе сегодня -43 градуса. Видео: Команда Навального pic.twitter.com/JD6wnnZWRl
>
> — МБХ медиа (@MBKhMedia) January 31, 2021

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