Russian Covid Medic Says Fired Over Pro-Navalny Flashlight Photo

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"Since I work in the 'red zone,' I couldn't go outside and take pictures," Saidanvar Sulaimonov said of his hospital protest photo. **qropty / Twitter**

A Moscow coronavirus hospital medic [said](#) he has been fired for joining a flashlight protest in support of jailed opposition leader Alexei Navalny while wearing his protective gear.

Saidanvar Sulaimonov was among the tens of thousands to share photos of themselves holding up phone flashlights Sunday in a show of muted solidarity after weeks of police crackdowns on street protests. The Kremlin [said](#) there were no mass arrests Sunday because the protesters had not violated any laws.

Related article: [Navalny Supporters Stage Flashlight Protests, in Photos](#)

Sulaimonov wrote on Twitter early Monday that the converted Krylatskoye Ice Palace's Covid-19 hospital administration "quietly and peacefully" terminated him after 2.5 months of work as an orderly.

"Since I work in the 'red zone,' I couldn't go outside and take pictures," he wrote in a Twitter thread.

"I decided to [stage the pro–Navalny flashlight protest] inside the hospital."

Sulaimonov said a senior nurse "called me on the floor" after Russian news outlets shared a photograph of him wearing protective gear and flashing a light from a phone featuring a sticker of Navalny's logo.

"That's how I lost my job overnight because of my civic stance. This is what they do to all dissenters in Russia," Sulaimonov wrote.

At least 10 people were detained at Sunday's flashlight protests in Moscow, Simferopol and Novosibirsk. Nine more detentions were reported in Kazan, the only Russian city to have authorized protests in support of political prisoners.

Related article: [Putin Accuses West of Using Navalny to 'Contain' Russia](#)

Earlier Sunday, President Vladimir Putin suggested that widespread protests, which erupted following Navalny's imprisonment and a viral video investigation into Putin's alleged Black Sea palace, had been fueled by the West. Some 12,000 people were detained during the three demonstrations, with widespread allegations of police violence.

Navalny, 44, was arrested last month on his return from Germany, where he had spent months recovering from nerve agent poisoning he blames on Putin and the Russian security services.

A court then sentenced Navalny to nearly three years in prison on charges of violating parole in a 2014 suspended sentence for fraud that he calls politically motivated.

The anti–corruption campaigner is due to appear in court again Tuesday for a slander trial that could see him sent to prison for another 10 years.