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INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Russian Security Forces Teach Schoolchildren How to Detain Protesters

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The footage comes on the heels of a mass protest crackdown during rallies calling for jailed opposition leader Alexei Navalny's release. **Dmitri Lovetsky / AP / TASS**

Updated at 2:52 p.m. on Feb. 17 to add the Interior Ministry's statement.

Russian security forces have taught Siberian schoolchildren how to detain protesters in a simulated riot, according to video published by local television Tuesday.

The footage comes on the heels of a mass protest crackdown during rallies calling for jailed opposition leader Alexei Navalny's release. More than 10,000 were detained nationwide during those protests, with widespread allegations of police brutality against peaceful demonstrators.

Embed:

In the video from the Siberian city of Nizhnevartovsk, students playing protesters can be seen

throwing volleyballs at fellow students holding riot shields. The latter group then forms a passage for the students and one of the real officers to detain and carry away a "provocateur."

In another scene, students wearing riot police helmets can be seen practicing various maneuvers with shields and truncheons as officers watch.

"Politics have reached Russian schoolchildren as well. The opposition, which is densely filling its ranks with the youth, can be envied. The police, which represent the state, are taking the initiative into their own hands. This clearly shows how to defend the country's national interests," the Megapolis television station that aired the footage said.

The Nizhnevartovsk department of education later announced it has launched an internal inspection into whether or not the event complies with education law.

On Wednesday, Russia's Interior Ministry called the simulated protest involving minors "unacceptable" and handed warnings to police officials in the Khanty-Mansiisk autonomous district and in Nizhnevartovsk.

President Vladimir Putin's administration has also requested more information from the regional government, according to the Znak.com news website.

This is not the first time Russian security forces have made efforts to reach out to young people.

In 2019, in the republic of Tatarstan, eyewitnesses filmed security forces training to disperse demonstrators with schoolchildren posing as protesters. Uniformed men with shields "twisted and rebuffed the 9th grade students" who had been asked to attack the officers, according to the reports.

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