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2 Navalny Protesters Imprisoned for Police Assault

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Gavriil Grigorov / TASS

Two Russians who attended this winter's rallies in support of jailed Kremlin critic Alexei Navalny have been sentenced to two years in prison on charges of attacking police.

Tens of thousands took to the streets across the country in late January and early February after Navalny was detained upon his return to Moscow from poisoning recovery abroad.

Related article: Navalny Protester Sentenced to Jail for Attacking Police

According to investigators, Alexander Glushkov struck an officer twice on the back with his hand at the Jan. 23 protest in Moscow while Olga Bendas hit an officer repeatedly on the head and back and then took his baton.

Moscow's Tverskoy District Court found Glushkov and Bendas guilty of assaulting police officers and sentenced them both to two years in prison, the independent OVD-Info police

monitor reported late Tuesday.

Both defendants initially pleaded guilty, with Bendas agreeing to a plea deal. During the trial, Bendas refuted her original testimony and plea deal.

The defense intends to appeal the verdicts. Both were defended by OVD-Info lawyer Tatyana Okushko.

Russia's Investigative Committee, which probes major crimes, published a video showing footage of the assaults and Bendas and Glushkov apologizing for their actions.

Over 11,000 people were detained nationwide at the unauthorized pro-Navalny protests, with widespread claims of police brutality against peaceful protesters. More than 100 of those detained have since been criminally charged with hooliganism, violence against police officers, violation of coronavirus-related health restrictions and blocking roads.

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