

Rights Activists Dispute Russia's UN Report on Navalny Protests

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Lawyers from the independent OVD-Info police monitor warned that Russia's report could “mislead” the international community. **Peter Kovalev / TASS**

Russian human rights activists have criticized the country's official report to the United Nations regarding its detentions of protesters at this winter's nationwide pro-Navalny protests, the Kommersant business daily [reported](#) Wednesday.

Tens of thousands of Russians [protested](#) nationwide in January and February to call for Kremlin critic Alexei Navalny's release after he was detained upon his return to Russia from Germany, where he had spent months recovering from a near-fatal poisoning by a military-grade nerve agent. Independent monitors said over 11,000 protesters were detained, with widespread reports of police brutality, and over 100 were later convicted on various charges.

Russia's permanent representative to the UN had sent the report explaining the number of protesters it detained, the administrative and criminal charges levied against them and how the country protects freedom of assembly and expression in late April after leading Russian rights groups complained to the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights of

“massive violations of the rights of protesters.”

In an analysis of the report prepared for the High Commissioner, lawyers from the independent OVD-Info police monitor disputed Russia’s report as “not accurate” and said it may “mislead” the international community, Kommersant reported.

In their analysis, OVD-Info lawyers Alexander Lokhmotov and Denis Shedov refute Russia’s statement that the opposition did not try to authorize the rallies in advance, as is required by law.

They also disputed the report’s stated numbers of those convicted under a rarely used Criminal Code article punishing repeat protest violations, as well as the number accused of assaulting officers.

In its report, Russia said police detained 17,600 people at the protests and defended the record number of detentions as enforcements of Russian protest law.

The OVD-Info lawyers said that courts imposed punishments “for the very fact of participation in an assembly.”

Their analysis cites over 180 violations of conditions of detention such as police refusals to call an ambulance and protesters held in [detention centers](#) for migrants or in isolation wards.

They urged the UN High Commissioner to "draw conclusions unfavorable for the government of the Russian Federation."

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