

# Over 700 Detained in Russian Anti-Mobilization Protests — NGO

By [AFP](#)

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Police officers detain a man in St. Petersburg **AFP**

Russian authorities on Saturday detained more than 700 people at protests against the partial mobilization ordered by President Vladimir Putin this week, according to an independent monitoring group.

Police monitoring group OVD-Info counted at least 726 people detained in 32 cities across Russia, nearly half of them in Moscow, at rallies following the partial mobilization designed to bolster Russia's operation in Ukraine.

There was a large police presence in the central areas of Chistye Prudy in Moscow, an AFP journalist witnessed.

Most protestors walked by or were standing still — individually or in small groups — to avoid being spotted and detained by the police.

AFP saw police detaining about 20 people.

"We are not cannon fodder!" a woman shouted, while police officers took her away.

In Russia's second biggest city of St. Petersburg, AFP saw a police van with about 30 detainees.

Protesters in St. Petersburg also tried to be discreet — police swept away anyone deemed suspect.

Ilya Frolov, 22, was holding a sign saying "peace."

"I want to voice my opposition to what is happening...I don't want to go to war for Putin," he said.

"I'm against the war, and against mobilization. I'm afraid for young people," said 70-year-old Natalya Dubova.

After Putin announced partial mobilization on Wednesday, Russian authorities detained over 1,300 people.

AFP spoke to some of them, who said police gave them call-up papers in custody — ordering them to enlist in the very army they were denouncing.

The Kremlin defended the procedure on Thursday, saying "it isn't against the law."

Russian authorities have cracked down on criticism of the military operation in Ukraine, arresting thousands of protesters since the beginning of the conflict in February.

At Saturday's protest in St. Petersburg, police officers said through megaphones that protesters were "infringing covid rules."

But on Friday, hundreds of people gathered without being stopped in Moscow and in St. Petersburg, in a show of support for the offensive and the annexation of Russia-controlled areas.

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