

4 Protesters Arrested Over 'Mass Rioting' in Russia's Bashkortostan

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Protests in the town of Baymak during Fayil Alsynov's trial. t.me/NewsPrufy

Updated with court arrest order.

At least four people who protested the jailing of prominent Bashkir activist Fayil Alsynov could face up to 15 years in prison on charges of mass rioting in Russia's republic of Bashkortostan, the civil rights watchdog OVD-Info [said](#) late Sunday, citing local media.

Bashkortostan's Interior Ministry launched two criminal cases over protests held last week in the small town where Alsynov was sentenced to four years in prison for "inciting interethnic hatred," charges which the activist denies.

Authorities warned that participants of those protests could face up to 15 years in prison for "organizing and participating in mass unrest," or up to 10 years for "violence against a government official."

More than 30 protesters have been [detained](#) since Alsynov's sentencing, the Telegram news

channel Ostorozhno Novosti reported, adding that the charges against them are not yet known.

Related article: [Explainer: How an Activist's Arrest Sparked Protests in Russia's Bashkortostan](#)

According to OVD-Info, at least one of the four activists accused of “mass rioting” was placed in pre-trial detention over the weekend.

An Ufa court later on Monday [ordered](#) the arrest of the four individuals, who were named Azat Mirzin, Dayan Valeev, Rayat Davletbaev and Vilyur Karachurin, until March 17.

Last week, several protesters were sentenced to up to two weeks in jail on various misdemeanor charges, including violating protest rules.

The head of Bashkortostan Radiy Khabirov on Monday [dismissed](#) the protesters as “inexperienced silly little things” and accused high-profile activists of “contacts with various entities in the U.S. and the EU.”

“All of their actions benefit foreign powers in order to destabilize the situation in Russia,” Khabirov said in a video published on the social network Vkontakte.

The Kremlin has played down the discontent in the region, with President Vladimir Putin’s spokesman Dmitry Peskov saying last week he “would not agree with the wording ‘mass unrest’ or ‘mass protest.’”

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