

Hundreds of Cyclists Arrested in St. Petersburg Over Midnight Ride

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Police in St. Petersburg arrested at least 219 cyclists over the weekend after a mass late-night ride on the city's Vasilievsky Island, local media reported Sunday.

Around 400 riders had gathered near Alexander Volodin Square on Saturday night when residents [complained](#) of “brawling, shouting, walking on lawns and outrageous behavior,” according to the news website Fontanka.

Police initially said they pressed administrative charges of disturbing the peace against 109 cyclists. By Sunday afternoon, a lawyer representing some of the late-night ride participants told the Telegram news channel Rotonda that 219 cyclists would be held until Monday on [charges](#) of unlawful assembly.

One cyclist [told](#) the news outlet Bumaga that officers used physical force during the arrests and pepper-sprayed people being held inside an overcrowded police van. Another said he was released after paying a fine for disturbing the peace.

Videos circulated online showed officers violently restraining people and forcing them into police vans.

On Monday, Fontanka [reported](#) that police pressed criminal charges of disturbing the peace against the 33-year-old alleged organizer of the ride, who was not named. The man is reportedly a prominent BMX rider who organizes competitions and works at a car dealership.

“Dozens” of other cyclists were awaiting hearings later Monday, Bumaga reported.

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