

Altai Court Rejects Lawsuit Challenging Controversial Local Governance Reform

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Protesters in Gorno-Altaysk. [@this_is_Barnaul](#)

The Supreme Court of the Siberian republic of Altai on Monday rejected a lawsuit challenging a controversial municipal reform passed by the regional parliament in June, local media and activists [reported](#).

Hundreds of people gathered outside the court ahead of the ruling to protest the Kremlin-backed reform, which effectively [eliminates](#) local government bodies in rural communities and further concentrates power in the regional administration.

Videos posted by activists [showed](#) the crowd chanting “Shame on the judge” and “We are united, we are invincible” after activist and lawyer Dmitriy Todoshev, a plaintiff in the case, [announced](#) the decision.

Todoshev said he plans to appeal to a higher court. “Victory will be ours no matter what. I will fight till the end,” he told protesters, who presented him with a traditional Altaian hat and belt in a gesture of gratitude.

Altai, Russia's least populous ethnic republic, has just over 221,500 residents spread across more than 92,000 square kilometers (35,521 square miles). Its capital, Gorno-Altaysk, is home to just over 65,000 people, leaving most residents in rural villages directly impacted by the reform.

A rally against the reform in Gorno-Altaysk in June [drew](#) around 4,000 people, a rare public display of anti-government sentiment amid the government's tightening crackdown on dissent since the 2022 invasion of Ukraine.

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