

Hundreds of Drivers Call for Fair Elections

January 29, 2012



A car with a worm strapped to the back joining hundreds of cars driving around the Garden Ring Road during a rally for fair elections Sunday. The banner reads, "Yellow earthworm: Give back the stolen votes." **Igor Tabakov**

Hundreds of cars with white ribbons, banners and balloons drove around Moscow's Garden Ring Road on Sunday afternoon to demand fair elections and urge Prime Minister Vladimir Putin to step down.

The cars — ranging from cheap Russian makes to expensive foreign models — started rallying at 2 p.m. at the event, dubbed "White Ring," which urged people to participate in a Feb. 4 march in downtown Moscow.

White is the color adopted by the protest movement that emerged from December's disputed State Duma elections.

Along with standard posters like "Freedom" and "For Fair Elections," cars on Sunday carried banners with slogans like "Put Out" and "Stop the Botox," a reference to rumors that Putin

uses the substance for cosmetic procedures aimed at making him look younger.

One car flew a white banner between two wooden poles reading, "Yellow earthworm: Give back the stolen votes." Harnessed to the poles was a long orange pillow that vaguely resembled a worm.

Some members of the opposition have nicknamed Putin a yellow earthworm after he likened himself to Kaa, the large, wise python from Rudyard Kipling's "The Jungle Book," in his televised call-in show in December.

Some car passengers waved white pieces of paper out of car windows, while onlookers showed their support by holding up papers and waving.

The police said 300 cars participated in the rally, RIA-Novosti [reported](#).

But more than 2,200 people [signed up](#) for the event on Facebook. The Yandex Probki road monitoring service indicated traffic jams around the Garden Ring on Sunday afternoon — an unusual occurrence on the weekend day.

Original url:

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