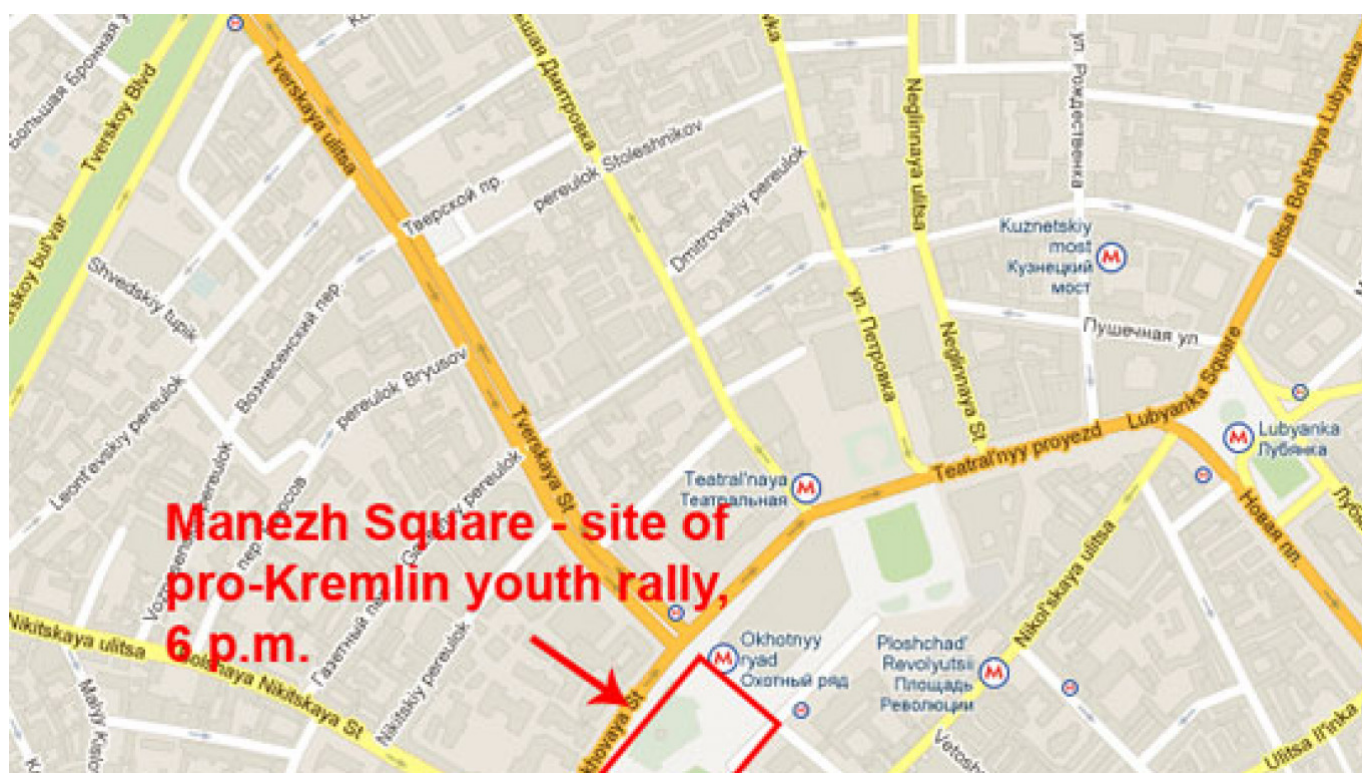


## Live Blog: Post-Election Rallies

By [Ezekiel Pfeifer](#)

March 05, 2012



Two major demonstrations are being held in downtown Moscow this evening in reaction to Sunday's presidential election result. The first to begin is a rally by pro-Kremlin youth organizations at Manezh Square next to the Kremlin starting at 6 p.m. An opposition event will be held at Pushkin Square beginning at 7 p.m. There is also an event planned by banned political party Other Russia, led by Eduard Limonov, and one by a newly formed opposition group called Breakthrough, which will attempt to form a circle of demonstrators around the Kremlin. The Moscow Times will be providing updates on all the events throughout the evening — refresh the page regularly to see the latest updates.

**10:51 p.m., Police Detaining Demonstrators at Triumphalnaya Ploshchad:** Interfax reported that police have begun detaining demonstrators who walked up Tverskaya Ulitsa from Pushkin Square to Triumphalnaya Ploshchad, the site of many past opposition rallies. Moscow Times journalist Nikolaus von Twickel, who is at the scene, tweeted that the cry of “Putin is a thief” was carried by demonstrators into the Mayakovskaya metro station (where Nikolaus “fled to defrost fingers”).

**10:36 p.m., Demonstrators Walking Along Tverskaya:** Moscow Times journalist Nikolaus von

Twickel wrote on Twitter, “Protesters moving up Tverskaya towards Mayakovskaya,” referring to a square on Tverskaya Ulitsa north of Pushkin Square. MT reporter Roland Oliphant posted a photo on Twitter of Interior Ministry troops on Pushkin Square, who he said were singing marching songs:



**10:29 p.m., Navalny Posts Photo From Police Van:** Opposition leader Alexei Navalny, detained by police after an opposition rally at Pushkin Square, posted a photo of fellow demonstrators inside a police paddy wagon:





Navalny posted a similar photo following his detainment at an unsanctioned march on Dec. 5.

**10:15 p.m., Opposition Leaders Detained at Pushkin Square:** Opposition leaders Ilya Yashin, Alexei Navalny and Sergei Udaltsov have been detained by riot police after an opposition rally at Pushkin Square, Kommersant-FM reported. The trio had occupied a fountain in the center of the square and refused to leave. Police forced remaining demonstrators off the square, then surrounded the fountain.

Moscow correspondent for Canadian newspaper The Globe and Mail Mark MacKinnon, tweeting from Pushkin Square, wrote: "Pushkin Square empty. Crowd walking away down Tverskaya Street chanting 'Russia without Putin.' Others heading for dinner."

**10:10 p.m., Report: Navalny Detained:** Lenta.ru journalist Ilya Azar said on Twitter that Alexei Navalny has been detained by police. Moscow Times journalist Roland Oliphant reporting from Pushkin Square: "About 20 people remain sitting and standing in the fountain, chanting, 'One for all and all for one!' OMON riot police are attempting to force people off the fountain and are running into the square to form a phalanx about four or five people deep. The square is pretty much entirely covered in the blue arctic camouflage of the OMON."

**9:53 p.m., Riot Police Create Cordon Around Pushskin Square:** Moscow Times journalist

Roland Oliphant, reporting from Pushkin Square, said Sergei Udaltsov is still on the fountain and refusing to leave. The crowd shouted "Shame! Shame!" as police moved to create a cordon surrounding the square. There are some people remaining inside the cordon.

Below, a photo of the fountain (by Roland Oliphant):



**9:33 p.m., Riot Police Closing Around Remaining Demonstrators:** Moscow Times journalist Roland Oliphant reports from Pushkin Square: "Riot police are trying to maneuver the last few hundred people off the square. Those remaining are concentrated around the fountain; police have formed a human chain around the south end of the square. It's kind of like a game of cat and mouse, with different groups of police maneuvering around, trying to force demonstrators out. They're not using batons or shields. It's a kind of standoff."

**9:21 p.m., Navalny Refusing to Leave Pushkin Square:** Anti-corruption blogger Alexei Navalny is standing in a frozen fountain on Pushkin Square and refusing to leave, while the remaining

crowd is chanting his name, reported Moscow correspondent for The New York Times Michael Schwartz on Twitter.

**9:16 p.m., 7 Demonstrators Detained at Pushkin Square:** Police have detained seven demonstrators on Pushkin Square for firing a flare after the rally had ended, Vedomosti reported on Twitter. Alexei Navalny has remained on the square, as has Left Front leader Sergei Udaltsov, journalist Oleg Kashin said on radio station Kommersant-FM.

Meanwhile, the concert at the pro-Putin event at Manezh Square has concluded and participants are heading for nearby metro stations, Vedomosti reported on Twitter. Police said earlier that the event had drawn 10,000 people.

**8:58 p.m., Udaltsov Repeats Vow Not to Leave Pushkin Square:** Opposition leader Sergei Udaltsov and a group of followers said they will not leave Pushkin Square and plan to erect tents there, Interfax reported. Some opposition leaders, including Alexei Navalny, have spoken in recent weeks of a need to create a tent city in order to exert pressure on the authorities to meet their demands of a rerun of parliamentary elections and political reforms. Udaltsov also said activists are currently creating what Interfax calls a “protest circle.” Udaltsov is known as one of the more confrontational of the opposition leaders.

Below, riot police lined up near the Pushkin movie theater (photo by Moscow Times journalist Kevin O'Flynn):



**8:47 p.m., Opposition Rally Over, Next One Planned for March 10:** The demonstration at Pushkin Square concluded with politician Vladimir Ryzhkov saying an application has been put in for an opposition rally on March 10, Novaya Gazeta reported. He also read a resolution that said the presidential election was not legitimate, due to the large number of violations



and the lack of access to the race by independent candidates.

There was apparently a brief war of words between members of pro-Kremlin youth group Nashi and opposition activists. Nashi members shouted, “This is our rally, we came for Putin!” After that, however, they left, and no physical confrontation occurred.

**8:39 p.m., Putin Meets With Supporters:** As supporters attend events in his support and the opposition an event protesting his election, Vladimir Putin is meeting with his supporters at his residence outside Moscow, making the rounds with a glass of champagne in hand, Interfax reported.

**8:32 p.m., Chirikova Speaks at Pushkin Square; Performances Continue at Manezh:** Environmental activist Yevgenia Chirikova spoke just now at Pushkin Square about activists' efforts against construction in Khimki Forest.

Meanwhile, musical performances continue at the pro-Putin event at Manezh Square, where the crowd is sparsely packed now, reports Moscow Times journalist Ken Martinez. He sent this photo of the scene, with the Historical Museum and the Kremlin in the background:



**8:21 p.m., Report: Navalny Says He Will Create 'Propaganda Machine':** Opposition leader Alexei Navalny just took the stage at Pushkin Square. Blogger Vitaly Shushkevich, writing on Twitter, quotes him as saying, “Who is the authority here? We are!” and “Starting tomorrow, we will create a universal propaganda machine that will tell the truth.”

Opposition politician Vladimir Ryzhkov estimated that there are 20,000 people at the event, Novaya Gazeta reported.

**8:12 p.m., Police Block Access to Opposition Event:** Police are not allowing more people to

enter Pushkin Square, said journalist and opposition-event organizer Sergei Parkhomenko, speaking on radio station Kommersant-FM. At about 7:50 p.m., police said there were 14,000 people at the event, Interfax reported. Other recent opposition events have been held at sites with larger capacity and have drawn tens of thousands.

**8:04 p.m., Update From Pro-Putin Event at Ploshchad Revolyutsii:** A quick update from a pro-Putin event at Ploshchad Revolyutsii, near Manezh Square and the Kremlin, from Moscow Times journalist Ken Martinez: “There is a guy beat-boxing on a stage. There are perhaps a few hundred people; there are groups of young people dressed in black standing around. Very little enthusiasm in the crowd. Organizers are giving out free food.” Below is a photo of the scene there, by Ken Martinez:



**8:01 p.m., Prokhorov Says He Is 'Alternative', Pushkin Rally Enters Top Twitter Trends:** Mikhail Prokhorov told Interfax before heading to the rally at Pushkin Square that he is an opposition figure. “I am both opposition, I am an alternative. I represent an alternative path of development, and therefore I'm going there [to the opposition rally].”

Meanwhile, the word “Pushkinskoi” has become one of the top worldwide trends on Twitter.

**7:51 p.m., 'Russian Spring Is Coming':** Blogger Vitaly Shushkevich quotes former prime minister and opposition politician Mikhail Kasyanov, speaking at Pushkin Square: “Spring is coming to us, our Russian spring!” Kasyanov was likely playing on the name Arab Spring given to the popular uprisings across the Middle East and North Africa over the last year.

**7:48 p.m., 50 Arrests at Lubyanskaya Ploshchad:** Lenta.ru reporter Ilya Azar, writing on Twitter from Pushkin Square: “[Left Front leader Sergei] Udaltsov said he won't leave the square until Putin leaves.”

Meanwhile, police have detained around 50 Other Russia activists at Lubyanskaya Ploshchad, RIA–Novosti reported.

**7:40 p.m., Prokhorov, Provocateurs at Pushkin Square:** Third–place presidential candidate Mikhail Prokhorov has just arrived at the opposition rally at Pushkin Square, blogger Dmitry Trenovskiy reported on Twitter.

Moscow correspondent for Canadian newspaper The Globe and Mail Mark McKinnon tweeted at about 7:20 p.m.: “Uh–oh. Crowd of pro–Putin thugs beside me in crowd on Pushkin Square. Trying to shout down opposition speakers.”

Blogger @politrash tweeted about the speech by Yabloko leader Sergei Mitrokhin: “‘Yes, Putin defeated us. Have to look the truth in the face.’ And then says that it was in an unfair fight.”

**7:29 p.m., Limonov Arrested at Lubyanskaya Ploshchad:** Other Russia leader Eduard Limonov was just arrested, as he predicted he would be, at Lubyanskaya Ploshchad, Moscow Times journalist Ken Martinez is reporting. Limonov is a veteran opposition figure and has been arrested dozens if not hundreds of times at unsanctioned protests.

Here, OMON riot police are seen pushing back Other Russia demonstrators (photo by Ken Martinez):



**7:23 p.m., Opposition Rally Underway, Pushkin Square at Capacity:** Pushkin Square, site of the opposition rally, is full and people are instead coming to stand on surrounding streets, reported blogger Dmitry Ternovskiy on Twitter. Ternovskiy posted a picture showing a long line of people waiting to enter the area marked off with police barriers. Opposition politician Vladimir Ryzhkov is speaking on stage; Twitter user @politrash quotes him as saying, “We



demand early parliamentary, and now presidential elections. Their authority is illegitimate.” Police said 5,500 demonstrators have gathered for the event, Kommersant-FM reported at 7:15 p.m.

**7:14 p.m., Arrests Made at Unsanctioned Lubyanka Event:** Arrests have just been made at the Other Russia event at Lubyanskaya Ploshchad, reports Moscow Times journalist Ken Martinez, who is at the scene. A police officer said, “Respected citizens, your event is not sanctioned,” then began grabbing people. There are at least 100 people, but at least a third are media, many of them with cameras. Every time police went to detain someone, a frenzy of media would immediately appear around them. At least three women from Other Russia have been detained and one photographer.

**7:02 p.m., Riot Police at Lubyanskaya Ploshchad; Police Detain Would-Be Manezh Terrorist:** Images from live feeds showing streets surrounding Lubyanskaya Ploshchad show dozens of OMON riot police officers gathered. An unsanctioned demonstration by political party Other Russia is planned for 7 p.m. there. Other Russia leader Eduard Limonov, a long-time opposition figure, has said the event is to “defend the honor of the opposition.” He also wrote on his LiveJournal blog that “naturally, I will be arrested.”



Meanwhile, police announced that they have detained a man who is accused of having planned terrorist attacks on Manezh Square for today and Tuesday, Interfax reported. He was arrested Friday after buying an explosive device from an undercover officer.

**6:54 p.m., Live Video Feeds:** News outlets Novaya Gazeta and Ridus and ruling political party United Russia have live video feeds of the rallies set up on their websites.

[Feed](#) from Novaya Gazeta of opposition rally at Pushkin Square

[Feed](#) from Ridus of pro-Putin rally at Manezh Square

[Feed](#) from United Russia of pro-Putin rally at Manezh Square

**6:47 p.m., Police Say 10,000 at Pro-Putin Rally:** are reporting that 10,000 demonstrators are on Manezh Square for the pro-Putin rally. Reports on Twitter from attendees said speakers are taking turns at the mic.

United Russia State Duma deputy and torrid Twitter user Robert Shlegel tweeted what was apparently a line from a speech by another United Russia deputy, Valery Trapeznikov: “I call on all those on neighboring squares: to work! To work! To work!”

Trapeznikov was apparently referring to opposition demonstrators gathering in nearby squares; his sentiment echoed one voiced on multiple occasions by Vladimir Putin, who has accused the opposition of not having accomplished any real work.

**6:36 p.m., Putin Supporters Spotted at Opposition Rally Site:** Novaya Gazeta reported that around 50 young men “of strong build” and dressed in black entered Pushkin Square through metal detectors set up by police. A police officer asked one of them who they were and was told they were Putin supporters, after which the officer walked away.

Opposition leaders have said they feared their opponents may send provocateurs to the rally to initiate violence from participants. Similar fears were expressed before other recent opposition events, but there were no significant incidents reported at any of the three major demonstrations, at Bolotnaya Ploshchad on Dec. 10 and Feb. 4 or at Prospekt Akademika Sakharova on Dec. 24.

**6:07 p.m., 5,000 Gathered for Start of Pro-Kremlin Rally:** Novaya Gazeta is reporting that around 5,000 demonstrators were gathered at Manezh Square at 5:40 p.m., some of them carrying Russian Postal Service flags and signs with the messages “Putin, hoorah!” and “Putin, onward!” Organizers said they expected up to 20,000 participants, Gazeta.ru reported today. Emceeding the event is United Russia deputy Andrei Isayev.

**5:54 p.m., Pro-Kremlin Groups to 'Resist the "Orange" Threat':** A coalition of pro-Kremlin youth organizations is holding an event on Manezh Square beginning at 6 p.m. Activists will “resist the 'orange' threat” “in case of provocations,” said a press release from the coalition, RIA-Novosti reported. Pro-Kremlin youth groups have in recent days been issuing warnings about an alleged threat of public violence on the part of opposition groups. The opposition plans to meet a few blocks away from Manezh, up Tverskaya Ulitsa on Pushkin Square.

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