

September March of Millions Permit Resought

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Municipal workers placing metal security barriers in front of the State Duma building on Wednesday morning. **Igor Tabakov**

Opposition activists have re-applied for a permit to hold a March of Millions rally on Sept. 15, three months after the first march drew tens of thousands despite tightened laws on demonstrations.

The upcoming march will be the first mass protest since the Pussy Riot verdict in mid-August and the latest in a series of mass protests since disputed State Duma elections in December.

On Tuesday, City Hall rejected an application for 50,000 protesters to march along Tverskaya Ulitsa, citing co-organizer Sergei Davidis' history of administrative violations.

Several laws passed earlier this summer have dramatically hiked fines for illegal demonstrations and barred people with multiple infractions from organizing events.

Activists re-applied on Wednesday after swapping activist Denis Bilunov in for Davidis, co-organizer Sergei Udaltsov, a leader of the Left Front opposition movement, wrote on Twitter.

"The route, number of participants, and slogans are unchanged," he said of the new application.

The first March of Millions, which took place on May 6, the day before President Vladimir Putin's inauguration, drew tens of thousands and ended in a brawl between demonstrators and riot police.

More than 400 demonstrators were detained, and criminal charges have been filed against 16 in connection with the violence, which opposition activists say was provoked by isolated provocateurs and police.

Kirov journalist Leonid Kovyazin, who had been on assignment videotaping the rally when he was briefly detained, became the latest figure on Wednesday, when investigators arrested him, searched his apartment and questioned his colleagues at Vyatsky Nablyudatel (Vyatka Observer), the newspaper said on its website.

The 16 suspects include rank-and-file opposition activists together with seemingly random people — raising questions about whether the arrests are a warning to the opposition to stay off the streets.

More than 2,500 people have already signed up on Facebook to attend the Sept. 15 rally.

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