

# Police Raid Navalny Supporter's Apartment, Saw Off His Door

By [The Moscow Times](#)

August 14, 2013

**The**  **Moscow Times**

In a high-profile scandal, police raided the apartment rented by a supporter of mayoral candidate Alexei Navalny late Tuesday after trying to break the door open with a chainsaw for many hours, with four activists detained and several people allegedly beaten up.

The raid took place after Nikolai Levichev, another mayoral candidate, filed a complaint saying that there were illegal campaign materials in Vasily Drovetsky's apartment on Chistoprudny Bulvar. The raid attracted unprecedented media attention, with dozens of journalists and protesters flocking to the scene.

The event followed an announcement by the Brothers of Navalny, an anonymous group that has recently held several protests in support of the opposition leader, urging Navalny supporters to gather on Chistoprudny Bulvar, the former site of the OccupyAbai opposition camp. Navalny's campaign said the detainees were members of the Brothers of Navalny.

Those detained are to be charged with disobeying a police officer's lawful orders, which carries a sentence of up to 15 days in prison.

Oleg Kozlovsky, one of the young men detained, and Navalny said that the police had acted illegally since they had no search warrant.

The Russkaya Planeta news site reported that the police had used several reasons to justify their actions. Apart from searching for campaign materials, they said they were looking for illegal immigrants.

Meanwhile, RIA-Novosti reported Tuesday that Emergency Situations Ministry employees attempted to break the door open because of a fire threat. The ministry subsequently repudiated the report, saying that the firefighters saw no sign of a fire and left without opening the door.

Levichev initially claimed that the materials produced in the apartment were in support of Sergei Mitrokhin, the Yabloko party mayoral candidate, but later apologized and turned accusations toward Navalny.

One of Levichev's staff showed journalists at the scene a sticker bearing the name of opposition candidate Alexei Navalny. He said that the sticker could violate election law because it did not carry any indication that it had been paid for by Navalny's campaign fund.

Pavel Nikulin, a reporter at Russkaya Planeta, told Ekho Moskvyy that he had been beaten up by Ruslan Tatarinov, a representative of Levichev, while opposition activist David Abramov said he and other Navalny supporters had been attacked by Levichev's men.

Levichev's campaign was not available for comment.

On Wednesday, Levichev also submitted another complaint about the materials to the Moscow Elections Commission, claiming that the apartment on Chistoprudny Bulvar was Navalny's "illegal campaign headquarters," RIA-Novosti reported.

Navalny's campaign said that its election materials fully complied with Russian law. The campaign staff do not know exactly what kind of stickers and leaflets were seized in the Chistoprudny Bulvar apartment but, based on media reports, they are not campaign materials, they said.

The campaign team said that the Brothers of Navalny operated "completely independently of the Navalny campaign staff."

The campaign also promised to provide legal support to the activists, saying that they "see nothing reprehensible, let alone illegal, in their activity."

Some of Navalny's supporters speculated that the raid was acting Mayor Sergei Sobyenin's revenge for Navalny's recent expose about the luxury apartment and business owned by Anna Sobyenina, the mayor's daughter.

"An apartment for an apartment," blogger Alexander Yerofeyev quipped on Twitter.

Original url:

<https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2013/08/14/police-raid-navalny-supporters-apartment-saw-off-his-door-a26754>