

Violence in Kiev Rages for Second Night

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Protesters throwing pieces of paving during and metal tubes at riot police during clashes at Bankova str, Kiev, Ukraine. **Mstyslav Chernov**

KIEV/MOSCOW — Fighting between protesters and riot police in the center of the Ukrainian capital continued Tuesday as the worst street violence the former Soviet country has seen since anti-government demonstrations began in November stretched into a second night.

Rioters threw Molotov cocktails, stones and fireworks at police lines, and law enforcement officers responded with plastic bullets, stun grenades and arrests.

Vehicles were also set alight during the clashes, which took place in temperatures of minus 10 degrees Celsius.

A wooden catapult built to bombard police lines was destroyed by riot police in an operation early Tuesday morning during which officers hurled stones at protesters to temporarily force them back.

Ukraine's Interior Ministry said Tuesday that 119 police officers have been hurt in the fighting, with injuries including broken bones, burns and poisoning. City officials said Monday that 104 protesters had been hurt and 44 hospitalized.

Police said Tuesday that 32 people have been detained on mass disturbance charges in an apparent running total since the clashes broke out Sunday.

Opposition activists have kept the heart of Kiev at a standstill since late November when they occupied the central Independence Square in response to a government decision to pull back from economic integration with the EU in favor of closer economic ties with Russia.

While initially focused on the EU decision, discontent in Ukraine has steadily taken on a more general anti-government character.

The latest violence, which has reached a previously unseen level of intensity, broke out Sunday evening after a mass rally that brought hundreds of thousands of people to downtown Kiev.

Demonstrators were angered last week after the Ukrainian parliament hurriedly passed a series of draconian anti-protest laws that were condemned by the opposition and international leaders as undemocratic.

Clashes continued throughout Monday and into Tuesday morning despite an appeal for calm and an offer of negotiations by President Viktor Yanukovich. Opposition leader Vitaly Klitschko has called for people from all over Ukraine to come to Kiev and help oust Yanukovich.

Riot police in the Ukrainian capital have formed lines by the Dynamo stadium, blocking mobs from reaching the city's government quarter. They have built large bonfires, apparently to keep themselves warm in the freezing conditions.

Meanwhile, protesters appeared to have extended their control of parts of central Kiev during the fighting.

There were reports Tuesday of confrontations between opposition activists and alleged hooligans, known as titushki in Ukraine, who are paid to provoke violence and vandalize property.

Klitschko said in a statement Tuesday that the government was paying people to take part in the disorder to discredit the opposition and provide a pretext for a crackdown.

The opposition leader's press secretary Oksana Zinovieva said in a post on Facebook on Tuesday morning that Klitschko, a heavyweight boxing champion, had personally detained, questioned and disarmed two titushki.

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