

Court Sentences Last Manezh Square Suspect Over Nationalist Riots

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The  **Moscow Times**

A Moscow district court on Monday sentenced the last of 10 people who were charged in connection with nationalist riots involving thousands of protesters at the capital's Manezh Square in 2010.

Pavel Vazhenin — a psychologist and yoga enthusiast, according to newspaper Kommersant — was convicted of hooliganism and assaulting an official on duty and sentenced to three years in prison, Interfax reported Monday.

Other charges of mass rioting and inciting hatred were dropped over the statute of limitations, the report said.

It is unclear whether Vazhenin, who denied all charges except for assaulting an official, is planning to appeal the sentence.

The so-called Manezh Square riots saw about 5,000 people, most of them ultranationalist football fans, clash with police at the foot of the Kremlin in December 2010.

The crowd was protesting the case of a fellow fan who was stabbed to death in a fatal brawl with natives of the North Caucasus — a predominantly Muslim region of Russia whose inhabitants frequently clash with Russian nationalists — insisting police was being paid off to cover up for the alleged murderer.

Six Caucasus natives were jailed over the fan's death in 2011 and nine people have been charged over the Manezh Square riots, though some have been given a suspended sentence.

Russian authorities have an ambivalent policy toward grassroots protests — while cracking down on the people who clashed with police at an anti-Kremlin rally in 2012, they have largely turned a blind eye toward a string of anti-migrant pogroms and protests that have taken place across the country in recent years.

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