

Ukrainian Activists Stage Russia Day Attack on Kharkiv Consulate

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June 12, 2015



Ukrainian activists in Kharkiv marked national Russia Day holiday by throwing eggs and paint at the local Russian consulate.

Ukrainian activists in the eastern city of Kharkiv marked Russia's June 12 national Russia Day holiday by throwing eggs and paint at the local Russian consulate on Thursday in protest against President Vladimir Putin administration's meddling in Ukraine.

Blue paint and egg yolks, intended to symbolize Ukraine's national colors, represented "congratulations by Kharkiv patriots to Putin," one of the activists, Dmytro Drobot, wrote on his Facebook page.

A video posted by Kharkiv's Hromadska Varta group, which organized the protest, showed Ukrainian police outside the building looking on calmly during the initial part of the rally, as demonstrators tossed paint at the consulate walls. But the gathering then erupted into a shoving match, as activists apparently tried to break their way through the police cordon.

The protest was also intended to denounce Ukrainian officials who arrived at the consulate to offer holiday congratulations to its Russian staff, Hromadska Varta said in an earlier post announcing plans for the action.

No injuries were reported during the protest, which proceeded without major violations of public order according to the Ukrainian Interior Ministry, news agency Interfax-Ukraine reported.

The ministry put the number of protesters at about 50, while a spokesperson for Russia's Embassy in Kiev said their ranks reached "about 100," Interfax-Ukraine reported.

"The gathering acted rather aggressively, ruined the plaque with the sign of the diplomatic mission by pommeling the building's facade with eggs and paint," the unidentified Russian spokesperson was quoted as saying. "In addition, they blocked the consulate with employees and guests inside."

Although Kharkiv experienced some clashes between pro-Ukrainian and pro-Russian activists early in the ongoing conflict between Ukrainian government forces and pro-Russian separatists in Ukraine's southeast, the city quickly emerged as predominantly loyal to Kiev, avoiding the separatist insurgency.

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