

European Court Rules in Favor of Anti-Kremlin Protesters

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The European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) ruled on Thursday that the Russian state violated the European Convention on Human Rights with regard to protesters who were arrested and sentenced in the aftermath of a 2012 anti-Kremlin march in Moscow that ended in mass clashes with the police.

The three plaintiffs — Leonid Kovyazin, Artyom Savyolov and Ilya Gushchin — were deprived of the right to a prompt trial and therefore had to spend an unlawful amount of time in pretrial detention, the court ruled. Savyolov was also deprived of the right to speedily appeal his detention, the ruling said.

Russia will have to pay 3,000 euros (\$3,400) to Savyolov and 2,000 euros each to Kovyazin and Gushchin in compensation, the court ruled.

The applicants' lawyer Dmitry Agranovsky said earlier that the defense was asking the court to force Russia to pay 100,000 euros in compensation, the RBC news website reported.

Kovyazin was arrested in September 2012 and spent almost eighteen months in detention before being released under amnesty. Savyolov and Gushchin were sentenced to 2 1/2 years behind bars in February 2014 and August 2014 respectively.

All three were charged with participating in mass disorders. Savyolov and Gushchin were also charged with using violence against police officers.

At least 30 people were arrested after a mass anti-Kremlin rally on the eve of President Vladimir Putin's inauguration on May 6, 2012 resulted in clashes with the police on Bolotnaya Ploshchad.

While protesters claim that their rally was peaceful until the police deliberately provoked some of the protesters by cordoning off their passage, the Russian government claims that the protesters planned to incite violence beforehand.

At least 10 people were sentenced to prison terms, RBC reported. Many protesters, including opposition leaders Sergei Udaltsov and Leonid Razvozzhayev, have filed their own complaints to the ECHR that are still pending.

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