

Putin Compares Anti-Corruption Protests to 'Arab Spring' and 'Euromaidan'

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Kremlin Press Service

Russian President Vladimir Putin has compared anti-corruption protests that erupted throughout Russia over the weekend to Tunisia's 2011 Arab Spring and Ukraine's 2014 Euromaidan revolution.

"I personally support the anti-corruption issue being at the center of public attention," Putin said, before going on to criticize "political forces" which use the issue to promote themselves in the run up to elections, the Republic news site [reported](#).

"This is a tool of the Arab Spring," he added. "We know very well what this leads to. This was the reason for the coup d'etat in Ukraine, and it plunged the country into chaos."

Referring to Sunday's protests, Putin also emphasized that anyone who breaks the law should be punished in accordance with Russian legislation.

The president's comments come four days after thousands of Russians across the country heeded the call of opposition leader Alexei Navalny and took to the streets to protest entrenched corruption in government. The rallies — undoubtedly the largest since 2011 — followed an investigation by Navalny's Anti-Corruption Fund, which alleged Russian Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev masterminded a vast corruption scheme.

Putin has seldom addressed the Russian opposition directly, so his comments on the protests will likely be perceived as signalling their political significance.

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