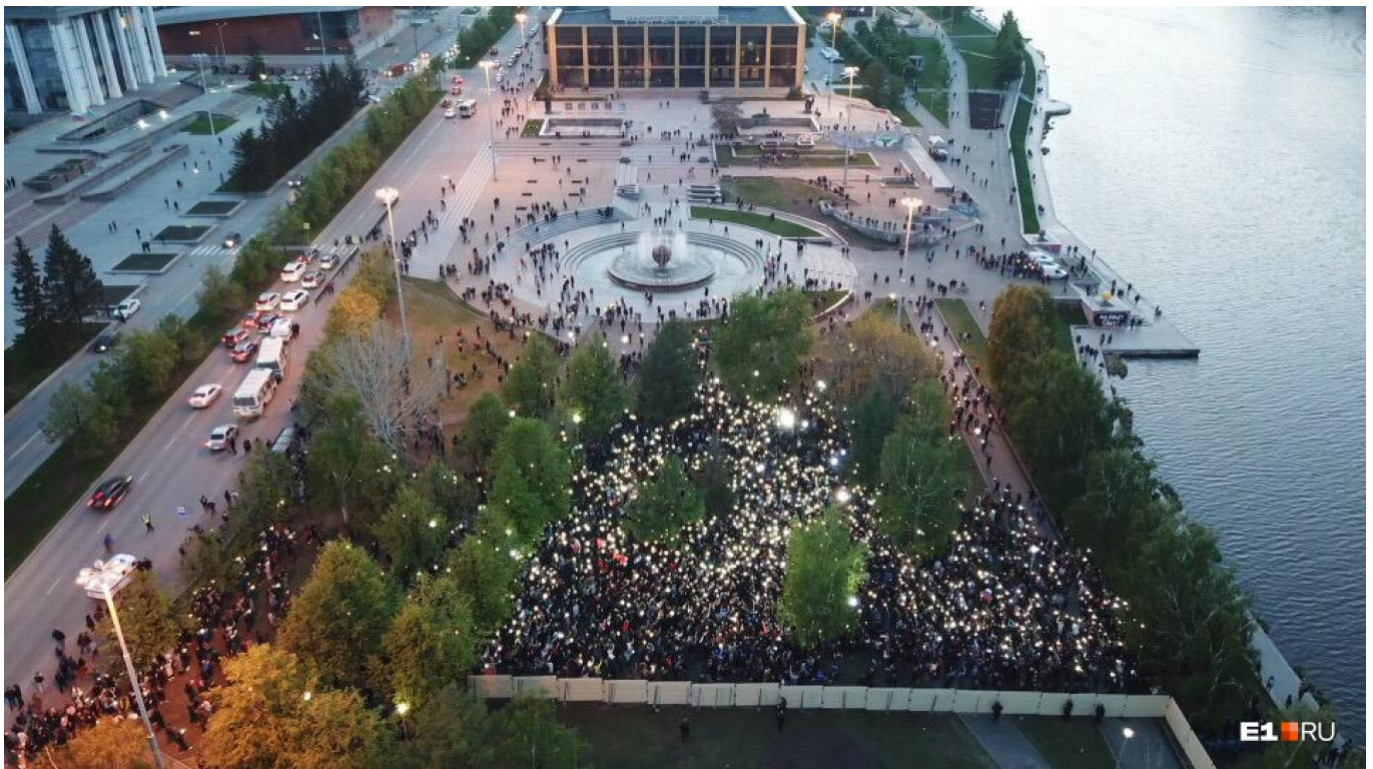


Russian Mayor Halts Church Construction Amid Protests, Clashes

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The mayor of Russia's fourth-largest city of Yekaterinburg has suspended construction of an Orthodox cathedral on park grounds as mass protests against the project continued for a fourth day.

Thousands of residents have taken to the streets against the city authorities' plans to replace a central park with a replica of a cathedral demolished in the Soviet era. Clashes erupted with vigilantes linked to the project's investors and riot police, while scores of protesters have been placed under arrest.

Related article: [Why Are Russians Clashing Over a New Cathedral in Yekaterinburg?](#)

President Vladimir Putin weighed in on the dispute Thursday with a proposal to poll the city's residents on whether they support or oppose the cathedral in place of the riverside park.

Yekaterinburg Mayor Alexander Visokinsky told protesters a few hours later that construction works will be suspended until the poll results are published, the Znak.com news website [reported](#).

The protests came to an end after the mayor's address, BBC [reported](#).

The public surveys are expected to be conducted in the next three weeks, Visokinsky was quoted by [66.ru](#) as saying.

A poll of 300 residents published by Yekaterinburg's Socium research agency earlier Thursday [said](#) that 52 percent of locals opposed the cathedral's construction, while 28 percent said they were in favor of it. Meanwhile, two-thirds of respondents said they were in favor of holding a referendum on the issue.

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