

Reporters Without Borders

<http://www.rsf.org/russie-journalists-beaten-and-arrested-07-03-2012,42033.html>

Europe/Ex-USSR - Russia

Post-election crackdown

Journalists beaten and arrested during post-election protests

7 March 2012

Reporters Without Borders firmly condemns the way the police treated journalists during post-election protests in Moscow and Saint Petersburg on 5 March, when eight journalists were arrested and two were beaten (one by police and one by a group of nationalists).

"It is clear that the purpose of this treatment was to silence journalists and prevent them from filming the protests," Reporters Without Borders said. "The media were clearly targeted. This must stop. Journalists who are being held arbitrarily must be released at once and the authorities must drop all charges against them", stated Reporters without borders.

Violence was used to arrest three journalists – *Moscow News* reporter **Pavel Nikulin**, *Ridus* correspondent **Maria Klimova** and *RIA* photographer **Andrei Stenin** – at around 7:40 p.m. on 5 March in Moscow's Lubyanka Square during an opposition demonstration against electoral fraud.

In the course of making the arrests, the police twisted Nikulin's wrist and pummelled his ribs, and dragged Klimova and Stenin by force to the police car in which all three were taken away. Nikulin was beaten over the head in the car. During the drive to Yakimanka police station, where they are still being held, they were almost suffocated by the exhaust fumes that accumulated in the back of the vehicle.

After arriving at the police station at around 8 p.m., they were allowed to talk to lawyers with the NGO Agora. During the night, Nikulin was able to see a doctor and was given a medical certificate attesting to his injuries. The three were due to appear in court this afternoon on a charge of disturbing public order.

Echo of Moscow radio reporter **Alexander Borzenko** had just begun to broadcast live from a gathering of nationalists near Moscow's Bolshaya Nikitskaya Street when an unidentified group threw him to the ground and then punched and kicked him repeatedly. He said his radio station had asked him to follow the group.

Kommersant photographer **Gleb Shyelkunov**, reporter **Arkady Batchenko** and leading opposition blogger **Alexey Navalny** were arrested at around 9 p.m. in Moscow's Pushkin Square. According to the information obtained by Reporters Without Borders, they were released the next morning but are facing a possible fine of 2,000 rubles (50 euros) on a charge of contravening regulations governing street demonstrations.

Two journalists were briefly arrested while covering similar demonstrations in Saint Petersburg. They were **Lev Lurie** of *Fontanka.ru*, who was arrested in Isaakiyevskaya Square, and *Novaya Gazeta's* **Boris Vishnevsky**.

The tension surrounding these elections has grown steadily in recent weeks. Reporters Without Borders voiced concern about the [many attempts to intimidate independent national media](#) in the run-up to the elections in a press release on 17 February, and calls for vigilance ahead of the

demonstrations scheduled for 8 and 9 March.

(Photo: RIA Novosti)
