
Russia: demonstrations and crackdowns on Navalny's supporters in many cities. Young people take to the streets shouting "freedom"

Ekaterinburg, Cheljabinsk, Novosibirsk, Bratsk, Irkutsk, Tomsk, Krasnojarsk, Ulan-Ude, Kemerovo, Perm, Vladivostok, Nižnij Novgorod, Moscow, and St. Petersburg. These are some of the cities in the Russian Federation - according to reports in the independent media "Mediazone" - where demonstrations in support of opposition leader Alexey Navalny took place today just as President Vladimir Putin delivered his State of the Nation address. Numerous protesters were reportedly taken into custody or arrested by police in several cities. Even "The Moscow Times" relays the news of 210 people arrested. Activists and supporters of the opposition leader were targeted, close to the so-called "Navalny's headquarters" scattered in 160 cities across the Russian Federation. "Freedom to Navalny" is the unanimous request of his supporters, who are worried about the opposition leader's health, now in the third week of a hunger strike. Lyubov Sobol and Kira Yarmysh, two of the dissident's closest allies, were also arrested. The President of the European Council said from Brussels: "The detention of supporters of Alexey Navalny in advance of planned protests in Russia today are deplorable. Authorities must respect the right to assembly". "I urge that the necessary and quality medical care be granted to Alexey Navalny – he added – and that he be released from prison".

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