

Memorial recognizes one more defendant in the ‘Case of 26 March’ – Dmitry Krepkin – as a political prisoner

Dmitry Krepkin is the third person to have taken part in the Moscow anti-corruption protest, ‘We don’t call him Dimon,’ that Memorial has recognized as a political prisoner on the basis of a review of the case.

Earlier we recognized Yury Kuly, sentenced to 8 months in an open-regime prison colony, and Aleksandr Shpakov, sentenced to 18 months in a general-regime prison colony, as political prisoners. Like Krepkin, the two were charged with committing an offence under Article 318, Section 1 (use of force against a public official, not threatening to life or health) of the Russian Criminal Code.

The trial of Krepkin has yet to take place. He is being held in a pre-trial detention centre. According to the investigation, Krepkin kicked the right thigh of an officer of the Fourth Battalion of the National Guard, M. V. Zvonarev, causing the latter physical pain. Krepkin himself asserts that he only kicked the officer’s baton. The charges are based on a screenshot from a video in which it is not possible to see clearly the movement of Krepkin’s feet. Moreover, there is no confirmation that Zvonarev was injured: he did not ask for medical assistance, nor did he write up a report on the alleged offence.

We believe that the events of 26 March must be considered from the point of view of whether members of the public were able to legally resist unlawful actions by the police. The court did not investigate at all the question whether law enforcement officers committed unlawful actions. Nor was the question investigated as to what degree resistance to these unlawful actions was illegal. Many instances were recorded of unjustified use of force by police during the peaceful anti-corruption demonstrations on 26 March 2017, both in Moscow and in other Russian cities. In Moscow alone more than 1,000 people were detained for the exercise of their constitutional right to peaceful demonstration. However, the law enforcement agencies conducted no investigations into these instances, nor did they recognize participants in the public protests as victims.

Dmitry Krepkin, according to his lawyer, was seriously assaulted at the time he was detained. An emergency medical centre found he had bruises all over his body, and a forensic examination concluded that he had received at least six blows by a blunt object.

We believe that Krepkin and other defendants in the case have been selectively deprived of their liberty, while there has been no investigation into allegations against police officers. Furthermore, we believe pre-trial detention is not proportional to the real danger of the alleged offences.

Memorial Human Rights Centre believes that the prosecution of participants in the peaceful demonstration of 26 March is politically motivated and intended to intimidate those who criticize the government.

Memorial considers Dmitry Krepkin to be a political prisoner and demands his immediate release.

We also demand that those representatives of the authorities guilty of violating the rights and freedoms of participants in the protests of 26 March be brought to justice.

Recognition of a person as a political prisoner, or of a prosecution as politically motivated, does not imply that Memorial Human Rights Centre shares or approves the individual’s views, statements or actions.

For more detailed information about the case of Dmitry Krepkin, see [here](#).

PayPal – an e-wallet for giving help to all Russian political prisoners helppoliticalprisoners@gmail.com.