

Boris Nemtsov

(Spent 15 days in prison)

On 31 December 2012, I went to Triumphalnaya Square with my oldest daughter Zhanna. We were participating – you will be amazed – in a sanctioned action in defense of Article 31 of the Constitution. And it was there that I was absolutely unconscionably detained, thrown into an avtozak [prisoner transport vehicle—Trans.], and taken to the “Tverskoe” OVD [police station—Trans.], where at around ten o’clock in the evening I was placed into a solitary cell.

I later found out that this had all been done on the instructions of either Putin or Surkov.

They had wanted to teach me a lesson; they wanted me to stop fighting with the crooks and thieves. Now mind you, they didn’t actually accomplish anything by this, but that’s okay...

I celebrated the New Year in a one and a half by three meter solitary cell, where naturally there was no bed, and indeed nothing at all: no window, no water, no mattress, no chair – just a bare floor. Instead of a pillow – boots under my head; instead of a blanket – a jacket. I spent 40 hours in this stone sack, factually a dungeon. When I needed to go to the toilet, I had to bang on the door in order to get them to take me out. On the day of the arrest, all I could hear through the door was the policemen making merry, celebrating the New Year at work. I can’t say that I felt myself to be the happiest person in the world at that moment.

Then, on 2 January, a shameful trial took place, presided by that textbook Putinite judge, Olga Borovkova, who didn’t want to hear a thing and simply gave me 15 days and left to continue celebrating the Christmas holidays, while I was taken to a special receiving unit on Simferopolsky Boulevard (during the court hearing, which lasted approximately five hours, justice of the peace Borovkova kept Boris Nemtsov, who had not slept in 48 hours, on his feet the entire time, never having permitted him to take a chair and sit down.

Calling the conditions of his detention in the cell in the “Tverskoe” OVD torture, Boris Nemtsov filed an application with the European Court. Judge Borovkova’s actions and the impossibility of getting a timely appellate court hearing were likewise appealed. “In January, it will have been three years that the application has been pending before the European Court after it gave it priority”, complains Boris Nemtsov about the leisurely pace of Strasbourg justice. – PTs)

A question from the Press Centre: What did you wish yourself on that New Year’s night in the solitary cell at the “Tverskoe” OVD?

“I wished myself the same thing that people wish everybody who is behind bars – release. What else could I have wished myself, lying on the floor? After all, on top of everything else there was almost no light there either, semi-darkness. So what can you do if you can’t read? Well, I was remembering some kind of verses by memory, I was thinking.

I don’t wish anybody to end up in a solitary cell on New Year. But to imagine that one can live like that for 10 years...I just can’t wrap my head around something like that. And to be honest, how it can be that Misha – may God give him health and release – has endured all this is something I can’t understand, even after having been behind bars just a mere 15 hours. I can only marvel at it.