

# URGENT ACTION

## ALLEGED FEMINIST SINGERS DUE TO FACE TRIAL

**Investigations have now been concluded against three young women alleged to be members of the feminist punk group, Pussy Riot, who sang a protest song in a cathedral. The three might face trial any time soon for charges of hooliganism.**

The indictment, seen by Amnesty International, charges the women with hooliganism on grounds of "hatred, planned and committed by a group of people" (article 213 of the Russian Criminal Code). If found guilty, **Nadezhka Tolokonnikova, Maria Alekhina and Ekaterina Samutsevich** could face up to seven years' imprisonment.

They are accused of openly demonstrating their lack of respect for the Orthodox Church and humiliating the feelings of believers as well having denigrated the "spiritual foundations of the state." The indictment repeatedly states that the action had been aimed as an insult against believers and a large proportion of the [Russian] nation. The indictment says that the action lacked any moral and ethical basis and was aimed against "the whole Orthodox world". The text of the indictment goes beyond Russian law (for example, in reference to "the spiritual foundation of the state") and goes beyond regulations of the Orthodox Church.

The three women deny any involvement in the protest in the cathedral. In addition, they challenge the allegation that the performance did aim to incite hatred. Three separate legal expertises on this matter have been sought. Two accepted that the action might have been offensive to some people but did not find evidence the women had aimed at inciting hatred. A third expertise reportedly claims that the women did incite hatred. The lawyers of the three women claim that the third expertise did not follow proper procedures so refuse to accept its authority.

Since the three women's arrest, some of their family members as well as one of their lawyers have received threats. There appears to be no investigation into the incidents.

### **Please write immediately in Russian or your own language:**

- Calling on the Russian authorities to drop the charges of hooliganism and immediately and unconditionally release Maria Alekhina, Ekaterina Samutsevich and Nadezhda Tolokonnikova;
- Urging the Russian authorities to immediately and impartially investigate threats received by the family members and lawyers of the three women and, if necessary, ensure their protection;

### **PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 23 JULY 2012 TO:**

Prosecutor of Moscow's Central Administrative District  
 Denis Gennadievich Popov  
 Prosecutor's Office of the Central Administrative District  
 ul. L.Tolstogo, 8, str.1  
 Moscow 119021, Russian Federation  
 Fax: +7 499 245 77 56  
 Email: [prokcao@mosproc.ru](mailto:prokcao@mosproc.ru)  
**Salutation: Dear Prosecutor**

Prosecutor General  
 Yurii Yakovlevich Chaika  
 ul. B.Dimitrovka, d. 15a  
 Moscow, GSP-3, 107048  
 Russian Federation  
 Fax: +7 495 692 1725  
 (if the fax number is answered by a live operator please say clearly "FAX")  
 Email: [prgenproc@gov.ru](mailto:prgenproc@gov.ru)  
**Salutation: Dear Prosecutor General**

### **And copies to:**

Head of the Investigative Department  
 Igor Victorovich Litvinov  
 Investigative Department of the Directorate of the Internal Affairs (YVD) for Central Administrative District  
 Ul.Sredniaia Kalitnikovskaia, 31  
 Moscow 109029, Russian Federation  
 Fax: +7 495 675 39 80  
 (if the fax number is answered by a live operator please say clearly "FAX")

**Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country.**

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date. This is the first update of UA 122/12. Further information: <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/EUR46/017/2012/en>

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### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Since its establishment in 2011, the feminist punk group Pussy Riot has conducted several performances in public places such as the Moscow underground, Moscow Red Square and on top of buses. In media interviews the group members stated that they protest, among other things, against stifling of freedom of expression and assembly in Russia, unfair political processes and fabrication of criminal cases against opposition activists.

Pussy Riot's performance in Christ the Saviour cathedral on 21 February 2012 led to a wide debate in blogs, social networks and media and resulted in actions being held both in support of and against the three arrested women. Various responses have been received from Russian officials and representatives of the Russian Orthodox Church. Initially, a representative of the Orthodox Church called for mercy for the protestors. However, subsequently the Church representatives called for harsh punishment and for the women to be prosecuted for inciting hatred on grounds of religion.

On 28 May, two supporters of the detained women, Vasili Bogatov and Arkadii Oleinikov, were sentenced to short-term administrative detention for having protested against the persecution of the young women outside of the Moscow City Court.

In June, a court in Novosibirsk fined artist Artem Loskutov for having put up posters with icons on billboards in Novosibirsk, which call for solidarity with the three young women.

Name: Maria Alekhina, Ekaterina Samutsevich and Nadezhda Tolokonnikova

Gender m/f: All female

Further information on UA: 122/12 Index: EUR 46/022/2012 Issue Date: 11 June 2012