

# URGENT ACTION

## PUSSY RIOT SINGER RELEASED, TWO JAILED

**On 10 October, the Moscow City Court gave Pussy Riot member, Ekaterina Samutsevich, a suspended sentence and released her conditionally. Jail sentences were upheld for fellow Pussy Riot members Maria Alekhina and Nadezhda Tolokonnikova.**

On 1 October, the first day of the appeal hearing, Pussy Riot member **Ekaterina Samutsevich** declared that due to “differences in positions” she wanted to sever the contract with the legal team representing her throughout the investigation and during the trial, and hire a new lawyer. The appeal hearing was then adjourned until 10 October.

Ekaterina Samutsevich’s new lawyer argued that her client “did not sing, pray or dance and did not even have a chance to put the guitar belt over her shoulder”. She further argued that the lower court “did not define Ekaterina Samutsevich’s role in the action, in spite of the fact that her actions differed very much from those of the other participants”. The appeal court took this into account and ordered that Ekaterina Samutsevich be given a suspended sentence with a probation period of two years. The time she has spent in custody will be counted; she will have to register with the police at certain times and will have various other restrictions of movement imposed on her. Her lawyer stated that “this was not the final victory”, and did not discount that they might appeal the decision.

The legal team of **Maria Alekhina** and **Nadezhda Tolokonnikova** is planning to appeal the upheld jail sentences. The two Pussy Riot members have already submitted relevant requests to the penal system in regards to ensuring they serve their sentences in the Moscow remand centre. This will ensure that they will continue to have proper legal representation, regular contact with their families and might be at less risk of potential ill-treatment and abuse.

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

- Welcoming the fact that Ekaterina Samutsevich was released, but expressing concern that it is a conditional release, and that all three Pussy Riot members should not have been prosecuted in the first place;
- Expressing dismay that Maria Alekhina and Nadezhda Tolokonnikova remain in jail and call on the authorities to release them immediately and unconditionally as they are prisoners of conscience, solely detained for the peaceful expression of their views;
- Calling on the authorities to ensure that while Maria Alekhina and Nadezhda Tolokonnikova are in custody, they are not ill-treated or intimidated by prison staff or inmates, and are not transferred to distant penal colonies;
- Calling on the authorities to respect the right to freedom of expression in the Russian Federation.

### PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 21 NOVEMBER 2012 TO:

#### Prosecutor General

Yurii Yakovlevich Chaika  
Ul. Bolshaya Dmitrovka d 15a  
Moscow, GSP-3, 107048  
Russian Federation  
Fax: + 7 495 692 1725, +7 495 987 5841  
(If the fax is answered by an operator,  
please say clearly “FAX”)  
Email: prgenproc@gov.ru

**Salutation: Dear Prosecutor General**

#### Director, Federal Penal Service

Gennadii Aleksandrovich Kornienko  
Federal Penal Service  
ul. Zhitnaya 14  
Moscow, GSP-1, 119991  
Russian Federation  
Fax: +7 495 982 19 50  
+7 495 955 59 12

**Salutation: Dear Director**

#### **And copies to:**

Russian Ambassador to your country  
(see details below)

**Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. Please insert local diplomatic addresses below:**

Name Address 1 Address 2 Address 3 Fax Fax number Email Email address Salutation Salutation

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date. This is the sixth update of UA 122/12. Further information:

<http://amnesty.org/en/library/info/EUR46/033/2012/en>

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### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Since it was formed in 2011, the feminist punk group Pussy Riot has performed several times in public places such as the Moscow underground, Moscow Red Square, and on the roofs of buses. In media interviews the group's members have said that they protest against, among other things, stifling of freedom of expression and assembly in Russia, unfair political process and fabrication of criminal charges against opposition activists.

Several members of Pussy Riot performed a protest song, Virgin Mary, redeem us of Putin, in Moscow's Christ the Saviour Cathedral in Moscow on 21 February 2012, with their faces hidden by balaclavas. The song calls on Virgin Mary to become a feminist and banish Vladimir Putin. It also criticises the dedication and support shown to Putin by some representatives of the Russian Orthodox Church. The performance was part of a broader pattern of protests against Putin and unfair elections in Russia.

Nadezhda Tolokonnikova, Maria Alekhina and Ekaterina Samutsevich, all in their twenties, were arrested in March and were charged with "hooliganism on grounds of religious hatred or enmity against a social group, planned by an organised group". The first two expert panels found no motive of "religious hatred or enmity" and only the third group of experts found such motive. During the investigation and at the trial stage the defence lawyers expressed their concern that on several occasions the fair trial procedure had been violated. They have also raised their concerns regarding reduction of the time allocated to the defence team and their clients to familiarise themselves with the case materials and to prepare their defence. The case was rushed to the court and the trial itself lasted only eight days. The hearing often continued from morning until 10pm. Taking into account that it would take about two to three hours for the defendants to be delivered to and from the court, they had no adequate arrangements to eat, could not get proper sleep, or prepare for the next hearing.

The prosecution had called for three years' imprisonment. On 17 August 2012, a court in Moscow sentenced the three women to two years in jail. Talking on the eve of the appeal hearing, Russian President Putin said that it was right that they had been detained. He also approved the court decision to sentence them to two years stating that he had nothing to do with it and that the case had been artificially "inflated". "They wanted this and they got this", said President Putin.

Pussy Riot's performance in Christ the Saviour Cathedral led to a wide debate on blogs, social networks and media, resulting in actions both in support of and against the three arrested women.

Artists, musicians, actors and directors in Russia and worldwide, including Sting, Madonna, Stephen Fry and Yoko Ono, have called for a release of the three women. Following the judgment, the Orthodox Church issued an official statement calling the trial and the judgement fair and just but asking the government to show mercy for the three women.

Dozens of mostly peaceful protesters were detained outside of the court building when the judgment was read out on 17 August 2012.

Names: Ekaterina Samutsevich, Maria Alekhina, Nadezhda Tolokonnikova  
Gender m/f: f

Further information on UA: 122/12 Index: EUR 46/039/2012 Issue Date: 10 October 2012