

# URGENT ACTION

## ALLEGED FEMINIST PUNK SINGERS DETAINED

**Three young women are being detained by the Russian authorities for allegedly performing a protest song in a cathedral as part of a feminist punk group 'Pussy Riot'. On 19 April, a Moscow court extended the detention of the women until 24 June.**

**Nadezhda Tolokonnikova** and **Maria Alekhina** were arrested on 4 March, and **Ekaterina Samutsevich** was arrested on 15 March. The three women, who are all in their twenties, have been charged with hooliganism under Article 213 of the Russian Criminal Code, for allegedly performing a protest song in Moscow's Christ the Saviour Cathedral on 21 February. If found guilty, they could be jailed for up to seven years. The three women deny any involvement in the protest in the cathedral. The defence has appealed against the extension of the three women's detention. The date of the appeal hearing has not yet been scheduled.

Since the three women's arrest, some of their family members as well as one of their lawyers have received threats. Even though the police and the Moscow Prosecutor's Office have been informed about these threats, there appears to be no investigation into the incidents. In addition, the tax authorities have reportedly blocked the bank account of the lawyers' association where the lawyer of one of the three women works. The lawyers think that this is intended to put pressure on the lawyers to withdraw from the case.

The protest song titled 'Virgin Mary, redeem us of Putin' was performed by several members of the 'Pussy Riot' group with their faces covered by balaclavas. The song calls on Virgin Mary to become a feminist and banish Russian President-elect Vladimir Putin. It also criticises the dedication and support shown to President-elect Vladimir Putin by some representatives of the Russian Orthodox Church. The performance was part of wider protests against Putin and unfair elections in Russia. This, and the anti-clerical, anti-Putin content of the song's message, appears to have been reflected in the severity of the charges that have been brought against the three women.

### 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 11 JUNE 2012 TO:

Prosecutor of the 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.

**AMNESTY  
INTERNATIONAL**



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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 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.

Shortly after the incident the press secretary of President-elect Vladimir Putin called the protest despicable and said it would be followed up 'with all the necessary consequences'. However, several officials, including the Minister of Justice and the Speaker of the upper House of the Russian Parliament spoke against the three women's imprisonment. Most recently, when asked about the Pussy Riot case, the outgoing Russian President Dmitry Medvedev refused to discuss whether the three women should be kept in pre-trial detention on the grounds that if he commented, it would be interference with administration of justice. He said, however, that in his opinion the members of Pussy Riot 'received what they hoped for – popularity.'

Name: Maria Alekhina, Ekaterina Samutsevich and Nadezhda Tolokonnikova  
Gender m/f: All female

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