

# URGENT ACTION

## DETENTION OF PUNK GROUP EXTENDED IN RUSSIA

**On 20 June the Taganskii District Court in Moscow extended the pre-trial detention of the three alleged members of a feminist punk group, Pussy Riot, until 24 July. Their lawyers are appealing against the decision. The three women could face trial in approximately two months' time.**

The judge overseeing the proceedings denied the women bail, agreeing with the investigator's claims that **Nadezhda Tolokonnikova, Maria Alekhina and Ekaterina Samutsevich** could potentially abscond, put pressure on witnesses and continue their criminal activity if released. The investigator further argued that their continuing detention would provide protection, claiming that the women could be attacked by "offended believers". The lawyers of the three women declared the decision to be unlawful and unsubstantiated and will be appealing it to the Moscow City Court.

During the hearing Nadezhda Tolokonnikova admitted to participating in the 'punk prayer' in Christ the Saviour Cathedral but refused to plead guilty to hooliganism. Maria Alekhina and Ekaterina Samutsevich called their charges unsubstantiated. Nadezhda Tolokonnikova also stated that officials of the Centre for Fight with Extremism threatened her, saying that if she did not plead guilty she would be given a prison sentence.

An action in support of the three women was organized on the day of the hearing in the Taganskii District Court. A number of supporters of the feminist punk group were detained by police, as were several counter-protestors; all were later released.

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

- Calling on the authorities to drop the charges of hooliganism and immediately and unconditionally release Maria Alekhina, Ekaterina Samutsevich and Nadezhda Tolokonnikova;
- Urging them to promptly, fully and impartially investigate any alleged incidents of pressure put on the three arrested women by members of the Centre for Fight with Extremism or any other officials.

### PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 24 July 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; +7 495 987 58 41  
(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 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 second update of UA 122/12. Further information:

[www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/EUR46/022/2012/en](http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/EUR46/022/2012/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 Moscow underground, Moscow Red Square and on the roves of buses. In media interviews the group members have stated that they protest against, among other things, stifling of freedom of expression and assembly in Russia, unfair political process and fabrication of criminal cases against opposition activists.

The protest song titled *Virgin Mary, redeem us of Putin* was performed in Christ the Saviour Cathedral in Moscow on 21 February 2012 by several members of the Pussy Riot group with their faces covered in 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 the broader political context of anti-Putin protests and protests against unfair elections in Russia.

Nadezhda Tolokonnikova, Maria Alekhina and Ekaterina Samutsevich, all in their twenties, were arrested in March and have been charged with hooliganism under Article 213 of the Russian Criminal Code for allegedly staging a protest song in Moscow's Christ the Saviour Cathedral on 21 February; if found guilty, they face a jail sentence of up to seven years.

Pussy Riot's performance in Christ the Saviour Cathedral led to a wide debate on blogs, social networks and media, resulting in actions being held both in support of and against the three arrested women. Various responses have been received from the Russian officials and representatives of the Russian Orthodox Church. Initially, a representative of the Orthodox Church called for mercy for the protestors. Subsequently however the Church representatives have called for harsh punishment and for the women to be prosecuted for inciting religious hatred.

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, Speaker of the Upper House of the Russian Parliament and the Head of the Presidential Council for Human Rights spoke against the three women's imprisonment.

On 28 May, two supporters of the detained women, Vasilii Bogatov and Arkadii Oleinikov, were sentenced to short-term administrative detention for protesting outside of Moscow City Court.

On 8 June, a court in Novosibirsk fined artist Artem Loskutov for putting up posters on billboards in Novosibirsk. The posters replicated the famous icon of the Holy Mother with Child and had an image of a woman in a red cloak and a purple balaclava with raised hands and a child depicted in the middle. The text, calling for members of Pussy Riot to be released, was written in the style of religious orthodox icons.

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

Further information on UA: 122/12 Index: EUR 46/026/2012 Issue Date: 26 June 2012