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Pussy Riot Member Invites Church Spokesman to Visit Her in Jail

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An alleged member of all-female punk group Pussy Riot has invited Orthodox Church spokesman Vsyevolod Chaplin to visit her in jail to hear her opinion on the band's unauthorized performance in Christ the Savior Cathedral last month.

Nikolai Polozov, a lawyer for the three women jailed for their alleged participation in the performance, met with Chaplin on Thursday to deliver a letter from Nadya Tolokonnikova asking him to come see her in prison, Polozov wrote on his Twitter account.

Chaplin confirmed receiving the invitation and said he would be willing to speak with Tolokonnikova.

"If one of the detained [women] has something to say, I will gladly listen and try, as a pastor, to help," Chaplin said, Komsomolskaya Pravda reported.

Earlier this month, Chaplin said he would visit the women every day if he thought it would help them spiritually.

Tolokonnikova and two alleged bandmates are in detention while awaiting trial on charges of hooliganism, which carries a sentence of up to seven years in prison, for a performance by Pussy Riot at Christ the Savior Cathedral on Feb. 21. Orthodox Church leaders have called for mercy on the women but have said they will not get involved in the criminal case against them.

The case has drawn outcry from opposition groups and prominent figures in the art world, including Perm gallery owner Marat Gelman. A mobile art exhibition called Party Riot Bus, the latest in a series of public demonstrations in support of the women, is scheduled for March 31, according to the event's Facebook page. The event will seek to draw attention to the case and to collect money for the women's lawyers.

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