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Patriarch Slams Female Punk Activists

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Russian Orthodox Church head Patriarch Kirill had harsh comments Saturday as he spoke for the first time about the all-female punk group that created a scandal with an impromptu performance at a Moscow cathedral last month.

"There are people who justify this abomination, who minimize it, who try to imagine it as some kind of a funny joke, and sadly, bitterly, it breaks my heart that among these people, there are those who call themselves Orthodox," the Patriarch said in a speech posted on his website.

Three members of the all-female punk group Pussy Riot have been arrested in the wake of an unsanctioned performance of a politically charged song at the Christ the Savior Cathedral, dividing public opinion about what should happen to the women, who could face up to seven years in prison.

Prominent opposition members have argued for their release and others have held rallies to show support.

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