

Punk Band's Legal Team Reveals Full Performance

By [Nikolaus von Twickel](#)

June 05, 2012



Members of Pussy Riot giving an interview in February, before the group's performance at Christ the Savior Cathedral.

Members of punk rock band Pussy Riot made no insulting remarks during their controversial performance in Christ the Savior Cathedral, so charging them with inciting religious hatred is far too severe, their lawyers argued Tuesday.

As proof they showed unedited footage of the impromptu Feb. 21 concert to reporters, in which the four young women briefly attempt a wild dance in front of the cathedral's iconostasis while church workers rushed to remove them.

The less-than-two-minute clip shows that band members, wearing brightly colored masks, dresses and stockings, did not even attempt to sing or make music and that their only audible utterances were faint cries of "Lord's Crap" — a popular Russian expletive.

A [video](#) that was published online after the performance gave the impression of an impromptu concert by adding footage from another church where band members played a guitar and a medley of an Orthodox hymn and a punk song, titled "Blessed Virgin – Throw Out Putin."

"There is absolutely no basis for charging them with inciting religious hatred," lawyer Mark Feigin said about the original footage. He added that the video would not be published yet because it was official evidence in a pending case.

Three band members — Nadezhda Tolokonnikova, Maria Alyokhina and Yekaterina Samutsevich — were subsequently arrested and have been in detention ever since. They face hooliganism charges motivated by religious hatred, which, if they are found guilty, could result in seven-year prison sentences.

The harsh treatment of the band members, some of whom have young children, has triggered international outrage, with human rights and opposition activists calling for the performers' immediate release.

Investigators said Monday that they have completed their preliminary investigation, meaning that defense lawyers can start reviewing the evidence.

Feigin said Tolokonnikova and Alyokhina will have been in detention for four months June 24, after which they will have to be freed under law if not officially charged. He added that while it is unclear if or when charges will be made or a trial will begin, he does not expect their release soon.

"The authorities will do anything to keep them behind bars," he said.

Nikolai Polozov, another lawyer for the band members, said the attorneys had prepared a complaint to the European Court of Human Rights.

Original url:

<https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2012/06/05/punk-bands-legal-team-reveals-full-performance-a15274>