

Pussy Riot Case Sent to Court

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Members of the all-female Pussy Riot punk group pose for a picture wearing their characteristic bright colors. Three members of the group face up to seven years in jail on charges of hooliganism.

The Prosecutor General's Office has forwarded to a Moscow court the criminal case against three members of punk group Pussy Riot, jailed on suspicion of taking part in an impromptu performance inside Christ the Savior Cathedral.

The women will be tried on hooliganism charges, as expected, and face up to seven years in prison if convicted.

The materials for the case have been forwarded to the Khamovnichesky District Court, the prosecutor's office said in a statement Thursday. A trial date has not yet been set.

The statement said the women "entered into a premeditated conspiracy to commit disorderly conduct motivated by religious hatred and hostility."

The women "caused significant damage to the sacred values of the church ... and in a

blasphemous manner disgraced the ancient foundations of the Russian Orthodox Church," the statement said.

The defendants deny participating in the Feb. 21 performance of a song with the lyrics "Mother of God, Cast Putin Out!" in the cathedral. Four women wearing masks sang in the church. The fourth suspect remains at large.

The defendants, two of whom have small children, have remained in custody since shortly after the performance, prompting outrage from human rights proponents and the opposition. State and church officials have repeatedly condemned Pussy Riot's actions.

Amnesty International declared the women "prisoners of conscience" in April, and the women have filed an appeal with the European Court of Human Rights.

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