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Court Extends Detention of Pussy Riot Women Until January

By The Moscow Times

July 19, 2012

A Moscow court on Friday extended into next year the detention of three women suspected of performing a song criticizing President Vladimir Putin in a Moscow church.

At a closed hearing at Khomovnichesky District Court, Judge Marina Syrova approved a motion by state prosecutors to keep the women in pretrial detention until Jan. 12, 2013, more than nine months after they were arrested. Their lawyers pledged to appeal the decision.

Prosecutors have argued that the three women — Nadezhda Tolokonnikova, 22, Maria Alyokhina, 24, and Yekaterina Samutsevich, 29 — are flight risks and could commit fresh crimes if let go.

Lawyers for the prosecution on Friday made a more sensational claim, arguing that Pussy Riot's "rock prayer" had inspired terrorist attacks on Muslim leaders in Tatarstan on Thursday and that therefore the women should not be freed, defense lawyer Violetta Volkova

said, Gazeta.ru reported.

The women face up to seven years in prison if convicted on hooliganism charges. A trial date is expected to be announced at another hearing Monday.

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