

British MP Flies In for Pussy Riot Trial

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Labour MP Kerry McCarthy alongside former British Deputy Prime Minister John Prescott.

A British member of parliament flew in to Moscow to support three Pussy Riot punk rockers accused of hooliganism for a performance criticizing President Vladimir Putin in Moscow's main cathedral.

Kerry McCarthy, foreign affairs representative for the Labour Party, now in opposition, tweeted developments in the Pussy Riot court hearing throughout proceedings Monday morning.

Defense lawyer Violetta Volkova told the Rapsi legal news agency that diplomats and members of parliament from Germany and the United States were also in attendance.

The female defendants in the Pussy Riot case — Maria Alyokhina, 24, Yekaterina Samutsevich, 29, and Nadezhda Tolokonnikova, 22 — face up to seven years in prison on charges of hooliganism motivated by religious hatred.

Observers predict that Moscow's Khamovnichesky District Court will hand down its verdict before the end of the week.

On Monday, the sixth day of the trial, defense lawyers for the seventh time called on Judge Marina Syrova to quit the case, accusing her of bias in favor of the prosecution.

"The judge refuses to allow the defense to present evidence in the case, turns down all appeals and doesn't even listen to them [defense lawyers]," Interfax cited Volkova as saying.

Another lawyer, Andrei Taratukhin, complained that he was heckled as he left the courtroom Friday, when a crowd of aggressive people shouted "Shame!" and "Executioners" at him.

McCarthy's court appearance comes after international celebrities including U.S. actor Danny De Vito have spoken in the Pussy Riot rockers' defense and prominent Russian cultural figures wrote a letter to the Supreme Court urging their release.

Pop star Madonna, who will perform in Moscow this week, is also expected to comment on the trial.

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