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Archived Live Blog: Verdict to Be Announced in Pussy Riot Trial

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Protesters against Pussy Riot holding placards outside Khamovnichesky District Court on Friday. The poster at middle reads "Put Pussy Behind Bars!" **Anton Belitsky**

A verdict is expected to be announced Friday in the trial of three members of punk group Pussy Riot, charged with hooliganism for their alleged participation in an unsanctioned performance denouncing President Vladimir Putin in Christ the Savior Cathedral in February. The trio faces up to seven years in prison if convicted.

Protests have been announced in over 50 cities worldwide in support of the women.
The rallies are set to coincide Friday with the announcement of the verdict, scheduled to be read by judge Marina Syrova at Khamovnichesy District Court at 3 p.m. In Moscow, demonstrators plan to gather outside the courthouse at 2 p.m. in a show of support for Pussy Riot.

We will have live updates on this page all day Friday on the protests, the verdict and reaction.

Refresh the page to see the latest entries.

6:11 p.m., Fights, Yelling Outside Courtroom: Following the announcement that the three Pussy Riot members had received two-year prison sentences, fights broke out near the Khamovnichesky District Court building, a correspondent for Russian News Service radio reported. Some people yelled "Go to prison!" while others took up the traditional cry of the defendants' supporters, "Free Pussy Riot!"

New York Times intern Ilya Mouzykantskii tweeted: "And here we go. 6 people just dragge[d] kicking and screaming into riot van."

6:01 p.m., Defendants Receive Two-Year Prison Sentences: Nadezhda Tolokonnikova, Maria Alyokhina, and Yekaterina Samutsevich have been sentenced to two years in prison each on charges of hooliganism motivated by religious hatred.

5:56 p.m., Judge Says Prison Sentence Necessary: Judge Marina Syrova said the women may be corrected "only with a real [prison] sentence."

Bloggers took particular note earlier of Syrova's describing one of the defendants' "mixed psychological disorders," including, according to Time magazine correspondent Simon Shuster writing on Twitter, "individualism, stubborn expression of opinions, unwillingness to cede positions."

5:51 p.m., Pussy Riot Song Being Played Near Court Building: Journalists tweeting from the Khamovnichesky District Court room say the sounds of a punk song, apparently authored by Pussy Riot, are drifting in through the window. Correspondent for newspaper The Independent Shaun Walker, located outside the courtroom, tweeted: "INCREDIBLE punk impromptu performance from 3rd floor balcony!!!! Music, balaclavas, violence!!! Police confused."

5:44 p.m., Judge Reading Verdict for Third Hour: Judge Marina Syrova is continuing to read the guilty verdict in the case, explaining the grounds for finding the women guilty by citing expert testimony and evidence of people who claim moral injury from the Pussy Riot performance.

5:06 p.m., Kasparov Bit Policeman, Report Says: Opposition leader Garry Kasparov, who was detained earlier by police, bit an officer, the head of the public chamber of the Moscow bailiffs service, Anton Tsvetkov, told Interfax. The policeman has gone to receive a medical examination, the news agency said.

In the courtroom, judge Marina Syrova continues to read the guilty verdict in the case against three members of Pussy Riot.

4:41 p.m., Almost 30 Demonstrators Detained Outside Courthouse: Almost 30 protesters have been arrested outside Khamovnichesky District Court, Kommersant-FM reported on Twitter. Earlier, police detained opposition leaders Garry Kasparov and Sergei Udaltsov.

4:33 p.m., 'The Dances Were Not Church Dances': One of those who claim moral injury whose testimony is being cited by judge Marina Syrova said the dances of the Pussy Riot women during their Feb. 21 performance were "not church [dances] and insulted Orthodox believers."

Guardian correspondent Miriam Elder, one of the few journalists who made it into the courtroom itself instead of a separate room in which the trial is being broadcast on a television screen, wrote on Twitter that it's uncomfortably hot at the hearing.

“It's about 103F in the courtroom if you're watching the livefeed and wondering why everyone is sweating,” she tweeted.

4:21 p.m., Excerpts From the Verdict: Judge Marina Syrova is currently reading evidence of people offended as Orthodox believers by the Feb. 21 performance by Pussy Riot in Christ the Savior Cathedral. As legal news agency Rapsi notes, in the testimony of all the victims, it is noted that the women were dressed in bright, provocative clothing, which is “prohibited in church.” Rapsi also cited the testimony of one of the cathedral security guards, who said the Pussy Riot women during their performance yelled “Virgin Mary, become a feminist!”

4:06 p.m., Judge Still Reading Verdict: Judge Marina Syrova is gradually reading out the guilty verdict in the case, citing testimony given by the defendants and the plaintiffs in the case, including that provided by witnesses of the Feb. 21 performance. It is expected that Syrova will conclude by announcing the women's sentence.

Prosecutors asked the judge to sentence the women to three years in prison. The hooliganism charges that the trio faces carry a sentence of up to seven years in prison.

3:52 p.m., Confrontations Reported Outside Courthouse as Verdict Announced: Police are aggressively detaining demonstrators outside Khamovnichesky District Court as people shout “Free Pussy Riot!” according to New York Times employee Ilya Mouzykantskii.

“As word gets round outside court of guilty verdict, incredibly rough arrests and loud chants #freepussyriot,” Mouzykantskii wrote on Twitter.

Earlier, Interfax reported that police detained opposition figure Garry Kasparov outside the courthouse.

Meanwhile, opposition leader Alexei Navalny pointed out on Twitter that the defendants remain in handcuffs inside the translucent “aquarium” where they sit while the verdict is read, while eight policemen stand around the box.

3:40 p.m., Judge Says Pussy Riot Women 'Expressed Manifest Disrespect to Society': Interfax cites the verdict currently being read by the judge: “Members of the group Pussy Riot ... criminally colluded to commit a flagrant violation of social order, expressing manifest disrespect to society.” The verdict says that the women, motivated by “religious hatred and hostility . . . committed provocative and insulting actions in a religious building with the involvement of a wide range of religious citizens.”

3:26 p.m., Trio Convicted of Hooliganism Motivated by Religious Hatred: Khamovnichesky District Court has convicted Nadezhda Tolokonnikova, Maria Alyokhina and Yekaterina Samutsevich on charges of hooliganism motivated by religious hatred, Interfax reported. The sentence has not yet been announced.

3:12 p.m., Defendants Brought Into Courtroom; Lawyer Predicts Prison Sentence: The three women on trial have been brought into the courtroom, opposition leader Alexei Navalny

tweeted from the courthouse.

The verdict was scheduled to be read at 3 p.m. One of the women's lawyers, Mark Feigin, told Interfax upon his arrival to the court building that he predicts the women will be convicted and receive prison sentences.

Meanwhile, leftist opposition leader Sergei Udaltsov has been detained outside the court building, Interfax reported.

2:37 p.m., 'Dangerous' Crush Outside Courthouse; Officials, Navalny Bypass Line: Journalists writing on Twitter from the Khamovnichesky District Court building describe a tightly packed crowd of a few hundred people waiting to be let in to witness the verdict.

BBC Russia correspondent Juri Maloverjan wrote on Twitter: "Near the doors of Khamsud is a real crush. Dangerous to one's health."

Reporters will watch the verdict be read not in the courtroom but from a separate room in the courthouse on a television screen so as to accommodate everyone who wants to get in, court spokeswoman Daria Lyakh told Rapsi legal news agency earlier this month.

Meanwhile, opposition leader Alexei Navalny and a German parliamentarian were let into the courthouse without waiting in the line of journalists, Maloverjan tweeted, news that prompted some Twitter users to tease Navalny.

"Navalny got through without waiting in line at Khamsud. He definitely would not have gotten through to the lunch line at our university," wrote user @trusova_tn.

2:20 p.m., Pussy Riot Women Arrive in Court: The three defendants in the case — Pussy Riot members Nadezhda Tolokonnikova, 22; Maria Alyokhina, 24; and Yekaterina Samutsevich, 30 — have arrived to Khamovnichesky District Court ahead of the scheduled announcement of the verdict in the case at 3 p.m., court spokeswoman Daria Lyakh told Interfax.

One of the women's lawyers, Violetta Volkova, has also arrived in court, Interfax reported.

Meanwhile, several protesters have been detained outside the courthouse, the news agency reported. One of those detained was wearing a green balaklava similar to those worn by Pussy Riot, the report said.

2:06 p.m., Navalny Arrives to Courthouse as Protest Set to Start: Opposition leader Alexei Navalny has joined a few hundred journalists, police and demonstrators outside the Khamovnichesky District Court building, Time magazine correspondent Simon Shuster wrote on Twitter.

A rally in support of the Pussy Riot women was scheduled to begin at 2 p.m. outside the courthouse. Guardian correspondent Miriam Elder wrote on Twitter a few minutes ago: "Still waiting. The protest is meant to start now but all I see is shoulders."

1:28 p.m., Activists Top Moscow Statues With Balaklavas: All over Moscow on Friday morning, activists put colorful balaklavas — part of the Pussy Riot group's trademark outfits — on the heads of statues, from those of deeply revered poet Alexander Pushkin to scientist

and Moscow State University founder Mikhail Lomonosov. According to Novaya Gazeta, credit for the action was claimed by a group calling itself the "Moscow street division of the international movement Anonymous," apparently referring to the prominent computer hackers.

Among the statues dressed in a face mask was that of Abai Kunanbayev, whose first name was adopted for the name of an opposition camp based near the statue on Chistoprudny Bulvar earlier this year.

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