

Kremlin Council and Madonna Speak Up for Pussy Riot

By [The Moscow Times](#)

August 29, 2012



Presidential Human Rights Council chairman Mikhail Fedotov, far right, at a meeting with President Vladimir Putin, center, in July.

The Kremlin human rights council has questioned the guilty verdict and two-year prison sentences given to three members of punk provocateurs Pussy Riot.

The council said in a statement late Tuesday that "criminal law was used to deal with actions that entail administrative liability only" in the case. Members also questioned why the court did not impose suspended sentences on two of the three women who have small children.

Council members expressed dismay over the decision to keep Nadezhda Tolokonnikova, Maria Alyokhina and Yekaterina Samutsevich handcuffed in a bullet-proof glass cage during the of the verdict.

"We are confident that civil society has the right to demand that Russian justice be governed

by truth and mercy," the council said.

The council is an independent advisory body appointed by the president, and its recommendations are not binding. All of its members were appointed under former President Dmitry Medvedev.

The Pussy Riot musicians were found guilty of hooliganism motivated by religious hatred earlier this month after performing a "punk prayer" against Putin in Moscow's Christ the Savior Cathedral.

The women on Monday filed an appeal of the verdict, which is expected to be heard within the following 10 days.

Meanwhile, one of the band's most high-profile supporters, Madonna, told a concert of 20,000 people in Philadelphia about the Pussy Riot arrests on Tuesday tonight.

"Never forget how lucky you are to live where you live and to have the freedom that you have," said Madonna, who performed in Moscow and St. Petersburg this month.

She also said that about 80 gay men were jailed in St. Petersburg because of their sexual orientation. It was not clear what arrests she was referring to.

Madonna told the crowd that the arrests were unfair, and they booed in her support. Then the 53-year-old told the U.S. audience: "Don't get fat and lazy and take that freedom for granted."

(AP, MT)

The author of St. Petersburg's anti-gay law, Vitaly Milonov, expressed concern over an upcoming December concert of Lady Gaga in the city, calling her "a hooligan."

✖✖ "When reckless football fans come to the city, the authorities watch them carefully. This [Lady Gaga] is a hooligan of a different type — a business hooligan," Milonov told Interfax on Wednesday. "And I want the concert organizers to issue an official warning saying that minors must not be allowed to attend the show."

Related articles:

- [St. Pete Activists Sue Madonna for Supporting Gays](#)
- [Guilty Verdict Puts the Heat on Putin](#)
- [Madonna Is a Stage Prop in Pussy Riot Trial](#)

Original url:

<https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2012/08/29/kremlin-council-and-madonna-speak-up-for-pussy-riot-a17376>