

Topless Protesters Surprise Putin in Germany

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Warning 18+: This video of Femen protesters greeting President Vladimir Putin during his visit to Germany contains nudity and written profanity.

Up to several hundred protesters, including three bare-breasted women, greeted President Vladimir Putin at the start of his two-day visit to Germany on Monday, when he also met with Chancellor Angela Merkel and participated in the opening of the Hanover Messe industrial trade show.

The crowd of protesters, which media variously [estimated](#) at between several dozen and several hundred people, harangued Putin over Pussy Riot's jailing, restrictions on gays, and the unsolved killings of journalists, as well as the Kremlin's tacit support of Syrian President Bashar Assad.

But the most eye-catching protest involved three topless protesters from the radical feminist group Femen, one of whom got within arms-length of Putin and Merkel, startling the German leader, while an apparently unfazed Putin gave the woman a "[two thumbs up](#)" gesture.

"I liked the stunt," he later told reporters. Putin said he didn't hear what the women said and suggested that bodyguards, who whisked them away, could have been "a bit gentler." "I didn't even see if they were blondes or brunettes or dark-haired," he said, Kommersant [reported](#).

A Kommersant reporter at the scene [offered](#) a different account. "They heard and saw everything," Oleg Zinkovsky told Kommersant-FM radio. Photographs show that the women had "[expletive] dictator" written in Russian and English on their torsos.

The street protesters, too, apparently failed to get their message across. Putin spokesman Dmitry Peskov dismissed the demonstrations as a "normal tradition in Germany" and said the Russian delegation had not even seen them, [Itar-Tass reported](#).

Femen's stunt was "ordinary hooliganism," and participants should be punished, he told Reuters.

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