

Court Denies Alyokhina Parole

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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A Russian court on Thursday refused to grant parole to a member of Pussy Riot serving a two-year prison sentence for protesting in Moscow's main cathedral with a "punk prayer" against President Vladimir Putin.

The judge ruled against Maria Alyokhina, supporters tweeted, saying she did not qualify for parole because she had violated prison rules, including by refusing to make her bed or to wear a headscarf while sewing and by writing letters during mealtimes.

Earlier, a prison official took Alyokhina's place on a grainy video link from the jail not far from the courthouse and said the band member had refused to watch the hearing.

On Wednesday, Alyokhina said she started a hunger strike and ordered her lawyer to quit the proceedings to protest against the court's refusal to let her attend in person. A state lawyer was appointed to defend her at the court in Berezniki, a town in the Ural Mountains about 1,000 km (600 miles) northeast of Moscow.

Former Beatle Paul McCartney called for Alyokhina's release on his website, adding his voice to a growing list of celebrities who say the punishment of members of Pussy Riot was disproportionate.

Alyokhina's lawyer Irina Khrunova suggested it was illegal for the judge to appoint a lawyer to defend her client against her wishes and said she would appeal against the parole decision.

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