

More Than 1 in 3 Russians Think Pussy Riot Belong Behind Bars

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Nadezhda Tolokonnikova and Maria Alyokhina attending a court hearing on the Bolotnaya case. **Twitter / Anastasia Rybachenko**

Almost 40 percent of Russians disapprove of the amnesty that in December cut short the prison sentences of two Pussy Riot members, a poll reported.

A further 25 percent said they did not care if the women were released from prison or not, while 33 percent said they supported the move, the survey by state-run pollster VTsIOM published Monday showed.

The highest rates of disapproval among the 38 percent who disagreed with the liberation of Nadezhda Tolokonnikova and Maria Alyokhina were from small towns and villages, which is not surprising given regional disdain for urban subcultures, said Dmitry Orlov, director of the Agency for Political and Economic Communications, Izvestia reported.

Residents of St. Petersburg and Moscow were most supportive of the amnesty, with 56 percent of the city dwellers agreeing with the women's early release. Thirty-eight percent of all respondents who supported the move were categorized as highly educated.

In what appears to show a growth of negative feeling toward the group, the percentage of respondents saying that Pussy Riot's original two-year prison sentence was fair or too soft increased from 46 percent in 2012, the year the group was convicted of hooliganism for performing a "punk prayer" in Christ the Savior Cathedral, to 66 percent in 2014.

The VTsIOM survey was carried out from Jan. 18 to Jan. 19 among 1600 people in 130 towns and villages across 42 different Russian regions.

The poll carried a margin of error of 3.4 percent.

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