

Admitted Russian Agent Maria Butina's First Comments Following Release

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RT / Youtube / Screenshot

Russian national Maria Butina arrived in Moscow on Saturday after serving 18 months in American prison after admitting to working as a Russian agent.

Butina pleaded guilty in December last year to one count of conspiring to act as a foreign agent for Russia by infiltrating a gun rights group and influencing U.S. conservative activists and Republicans.

Here's a look at what Butina has said of her experience to state-backed media since returning home:

To the state-backed RT news [channel](#):

- "What happened to me definitely shows that America is losing its justice system. It actually has been lost, not just for me as a Russian but for the average American too."
- "I didn't have any secrets, I was just a student believing in peacebuilding between the two

countries."

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— "The United States says that there's all this gender equality going on, but look — if I were not the way I look like, if I were not a woman, there would be no sex story. This is so sad because this is sexism."

— "I did plea to [being] a foreign agent because I was in solitary confinement and facing 15 years knowing that statistically, Americans plea in more than 90% of cases. Why do they do that? Because if you go to trial, you're going to lose that trial. Especially me, a Russian, on trial in Washington, D.C., in the middle of anti-Russian hysteria? I would have gotten all 15 years. My choice was obvious."

— "I will still believe that peace between the United States and Russia is possible, because it will be based on civil diplomacy, not on the relationships of the governments. And I do believe there are wonderful Americans. I had wonderful attorneys and I have great friends who have supported me through all this time."

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— "I will be talking about the conditions of my imprisonment because a country should be measured on how it treats its prisoners. They treat their prisoners very bad, much worse [than] me, but if I never talk about this it means I betrayed all these girls who asked me to be their voice."

In an [interview](#) with pro-Kremlin talk show host Vladimir Solovyov:

— "Of course, I've never worked for him [Russian official Alexander Torshin], no one has paid me and never sent me anywhere. This is absurd."

— "When you move to America, there is one law that I have violated — you need to come there and disown Russia, say that it was bad there, but praise what you see here. I never did this because I love my country, but I respect America."

— "The justice system in America is absent; it's called selective justice. ... And this is not about us, this is about them."

— "The judge at the trial said, "It took me five minutes to figure out that there is absolutely no basis in your invented story."

— "I think that this thing isn't about me personally, and not even about Russia. It's an inner conflict between Republicans and Democrats."

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