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Russian Police Detain Pussy Riot Members, Thwarting Photoshoot

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Police detained 13 Pussy Riot members after responding to reports of an alleged gas leak at the site of the photoshoot, Nadya Tolokonnikova said. **nadyariot / Instagram**

Police in St. Petersburg have detained members of Pussy Riot for the second consecutive day Monday, disrupting the anti-Kremlin group's attempts to shoot a music video.

The brief detention of Nadya Tolokonnikova and 12 other members during a photoshoot comes a day after police allegedly raided Pussy Riot's music video shoot. Tolokonnikova tweeted that police accused the group of "extremism" and "gay propaganda" with the music video.

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Публикация от □□□□□ □□□□ □□ (@nadyariot) 10 Фев 2020 в 12:12 PST

Video of the 13 members' detention late Monday appeared on Pussy Riot member Pyotr Verzilov's social media accounts. Police responded to reports of an alleged gas leak at the site of the photoshoot, Tolokonnikova explained hours later when everyone was released.

"When police arrived, there was no carbon monoxide leak, but they found us instead and decided to take us," Tolokonnikova said.

Meanwhile, police said they found no violations of the law during Sunday's disrupted music video shoot at St. Petersburg's Lenfilm Studio, Interfax reported Monday. Tolokonnikova said the disruption cost Pussy Riot $15,000 and called on followers to donate money to recover the costs.

Tolokonnikova and two other members of Pussy Riot rose to international fame after they were jailed for a controversial performance in a Moscow church in 2012. Europe's human rights court awarded them damages in 2018.

That year, four Pussy Riot members including Verzilov stormed the football pitch during the FIFA World Cup final to demand freedom of expression. Verzilov was hospitalized after suddenly losing his sight weeks later.

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