

Russia Fines Pussy Riot Activists for Hanging Pride Flags

By [AFP](#)

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Pussy Riot members draped rainbow flags on several government buildings in Moscow on Putin's 68th birthday. **Pussy Riot**

Russian courts on Monday fined two Pussy Riot activists for hanging rainbow flags on several government buildings last month to mark President Vladimir Putin's birthday.

On Oct. 7 — Putin's 68th birthday — members of the anti-Kremlin punk group draped the flags associated with LGBT pride on buildings in Moscow including Russia's Supreme Court and the headquarters of the Federal Security Service (FSB).

Related article: [Pussy Riot Flies LGBT Flags From Gov't Buildings to Mark Putin's Birthday](#)

Two Moscow district courts handed Pussy Riot activists Maria Alyokhina and Veronika Nikulshina fines of 15,000 rubles (\$198/166 euros) and 10,000 rubles (\$132/111 euros)

respectively for their roles in the stunt, lawyer Sergei Telnov told AFP.

"We will definitely appeal these decisions in Moscow and if they don't overturn them in the European Court of Human Rights," Telnov said, noting that the Moscow courts charged the activists with violating Russia's legislation on mass gatherings.

"Unfortunately these decisions are no longer surprising," he added about the courts' rulings, which he said violated the European Convention on Human Rights' guarantees of free expression and assembly.

Pussy Riot on its Facebook page last month described the protest action as a "birthday gift" to Putin and published a list of demands.

They called on Putin, among other things, to abolish Russia's "gay propaganda" law which de-facto outlaws LGBT activism.

Alyokhina and Nikulshina were the latest Pussy Riot activists to be punished for their roles in the protest action.

Last month Alexandra Sofeyeva was handed 30 days in prison, while another of the group's members Vasily Krestyaninov was fined 15,000 rubles.

Earlier this year Putin described marriage as "a union of a man and a woman" and lawmakers included an effective ban on gay marriage as part of a raft of changes to Russia's Constitution.

In Putin's latest stint in the Kremlin beginning in 2012 he has overseen a turn to more traditionalist policies, with groups promoting fundamentalist Orthodox Christian views gaining increasing legitimacy.

That year, two Pussy Riot members were sentenced to two years in a penal colony for hooliganism after their performance in a cathedral protesting against close ties between Putin and the Russian Orthodox Church.

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