

Pussy Riot's Lucy Shtein Sentenced for Navalny Protest 'Virus Violations'

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Lucy Shtein is one of 10 opposition figures accused of violating Covid-19 restrictions by promoting the protest that called for Navalny's release. **Moskva News Agency**

Pussy Riot member and Moscow municipal deputy Lucy Shtein has been sentenced to one year of so-called “restricted freedom” for promoting a protest that called for jailed Kremlin critic Alexei Navalny’s release.

Shtein is one of 10 opposition figures accused of violating coronavirus restrictions on mass events by calling for the unauthorized protest on Jan. 23 that saw thousands take to the streets in Moscow. The Pussy Riot member, who has been under house arrest for over six months, [believes](#) the criminal charges in the “sanitary case” were politically motivated.

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Moscow’s Preobrazhensky district court found Shtein guilty of “inciting violations of sanitary restrictions,” the Kommersant business daily [reported](#) Wednesday, citing the court’s press

service.

The “restricted freedom” sentence bans her from leaving her residence between 10 p.m. and 6 a.m., changing her place of residence without prior notice, attending mass events and leaving Moscow without the authorities’ consent.

She will also be required to check in with criminal inspectors twice a month.

“My case is a drop in the ocean, but such drops are what make up the destruction of human rights in Russia,” she [said](#) in her final court statement.

State prosecutors had originally requested a sentence of two years of “restricted freedom.”

Earlier this month, close Navalny ally Lyubov Sobol was sentenced to 1.5 years of “restricted freedom” for the same charges, while Navalny’s brother Oleg was [handed](#) a one-year suspended sentence.

Unconfirmed media reports [said](#) Sobol fled Russia before her restrictions went into force.

Fellow Pussy Riot member and Shtein's partner Maria Alyokhina is awaiting her sentence as part of the “sanitary case.”

The charges come amid an unprecedented crackdown on Navalny’s movement, with his political and activist networks both being outlawed as “extremist” groups in June and dozens of affiliated websites being blocked.

Navalny himself is serving a 2.5-year prison sentence for breaking probation terms, a verdict that he says was politically motivated following his nerve-agent poisoning last August.

Investigators this month charged him with a new crime that could see his prison term extended by up to three more years.

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