

Pussy Riot's Maria Alyokhina Sentenced Over Navalny Protest Calls

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Preobrazhensky district court press service / Moskva News Agency

Veteran Pussy Riot member Maria Alyokhina has been sentenced to one year of “restricted freedom” for promoting January protests in support of jailed Kremlin critic Alexei Navalny, the Apologia of Protest legal aid group [reported](#) Friday.

Alyokhina is one of 10 opposition figures accused of violating coronavirus restrictions on mass events by calling for the Jan. 23 protest that saw thousands take to the streets in Moscow and dozens of other Russian cities.

Related article: [A Decade After Pussy Riot's 'Punk Prayer,' Maria Alyokhina Still Has Plenty to Protest About](#)

Moscow's Preobrazhensky district court found Alyokhina guilty of “inciting violations of sanitary restrictions,” citing her tweet that called for the Jan. 23 protest, Apologia of Protest reported, citing lawyer Daniil Berman.

Under the so-called “restricted freedom” sentence, Alyokhina is forbidden from leaving her apartment from 10 p.m. to 6 a.m., leaving Moscow or attending mass events. She will also be required to check in with criminal inspectors twice a month.

Alyokhina, who has been under house arrest since Jan. 29, pleaded not guilty to the charges.

The Pussy Riot member is best known for her role in the group’s “Punk Prayer,” the provocative February 2012 protest in neon balaclavas at Moscow’s Christ the Savior Cathedral. She and fellow member Nadya Tolokonnikova spent two years in a prison colony over the performance.

In her final court statement, Alyokhina said that in the nearly 10 years that have passed since her first criminal case, “a criminal offense for one’s politics is no longer shocking content, but has become part of the morning news.”

Apologia of Protest said it plans to appeal the verdict.

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

Last month, fellow Pussy Riot member and Alyokhina’s partner Lucy Shtein received a similar [sentence](#) in what is commonly referred to as the “sanitary case.” Cose Navalny ally Lyubov Sobol was sentenced to 1.5 years of “restricted freedom” on the same charges, while Navalny’s brother Oleg was handed a one-year suspended sentence.

The “sanitary case” verdicts 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.

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