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# Pussy Riot's Maria Alyokhina Named Russian Fugitive

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Maria Alyokhina. **Sergei Savostyanov / TASS**

Russian authorities declared Pussy Riot member Maria Alyokhina a fugitive on Tuesday, after she refused to appear at a Moscow court hearing.

Alyokhina was sentenced in absentia to 21 days in jail after officials claimed the artist had violated a court-mandated curfew.

Alyokhina's name appeared on the Russian Interior Ministry's database of wanted figures Tuesday, and her whereabouts are currently unknown.

Writing on Instagram, the artist said that her latest sentence was linked to the removal of her electronic trail bracelet, which Alyokhina cut off in protest against Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

She claimed officers saw the move as a "malicious violation" of the parole terms she'd been given in September 2021, when she was found guilty of encouraging others to break Covid-19

restrictions. Alyokhina was charged with the offense shortly after calling for Russians to protest in support of jailed Kremlin critic Alexey Navalny in January 2021.

The veteran-activist was initially sentenced to 12 months of "restricted freedom," with a court order forbidding Alyokhina to leave her home at night, depart Moscow, or attend mass events.

Alyokhina is just one of at least 10 opposition figures to be found guilty of breaching coronavirus restrictions after publicly supporting unauthorized opposition protests that saw thousands take to the streets of Moscow on Jan. 23. They include fellow Pussy Riot bandmate and Moscow municipal deputy Lucy Shtein, who fled the country after removing her own tracking bracelet.

Alexey Navalny is also serving a two-and-a-half-year prison sentence for parole violations, as part of a court case that human rights groups have condemned as politically-motivated.

He was sentenced to another nine years in jail on March 22 on charges of fraud.

Maria Alyokhina is best known for her role in Pussy Riot's "Punk Prayer," the provocative 2012 protest which saw the band stage an anti-Kremlin performance inside Moscow's Christ the Savior Cathedral. She and fellow member Nadya Tolokonnikova, who has since fled Russia, spent two years in a prison colony following the protest.

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