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Pussy Riot Member Niyazova Released From Custody in Poland

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Aysoltan Niyazova. **Screenshot TV2media / YouTube**

Polish authorities on Monday released Pussy Riot member Aysoltan Niyazova from custody after detaining her over the weekend at the request of Turkmenistan.

Her release was confirmed by fellow Pussy Riot member Lucy Shtein in comments to the exiled news website Novaya Gazeta Europe. According to the outlet, prosecutors considered Niyazova's humanitarian residence permit in Lithuania and a 2022 court ruling in her favor in Croatia in deciding on her release.

The Moscow Times reached out to Pussy Riot for comment.

Polish board guards detained Niyazova on Saturday on the basis of an Interpol "red notice" first issued by Turkmenistan in 2002. She is accused by the authorities there of embezzling funds from the country's Central Bank.

Niyazova has been repeatedly detained on that request.

In 2011, Switzerland refused to extradite her to Turkmenistan but transferred her to Russia, where she spent six years in prison on embezzlement charges. Slovenia released her after 10 hours in custody, while Croatia freed her after two days in 2022.

Novaya Gazeta Europe said that her father, Kurbanburad Niyazov, supported Turkmenistan's opposition and died in prison, and that Niyazova has long linked her own persecution to her political views. The outlet also noted that she has never held Turkmen citizenship.

The Central Asian country, a former Soviet republic, is one of the most repressive states in the world, according to international human rights organizations.

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