

Moscow Woman Released From Jail After Orthodox Church Intervenes in Easter Cake Hookah Case

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Ksenia Belousova. [@mediazzzona](#) / Telegram

A Moscow woman jailed for making a hookah out of a traditional Orthodox Easter cake was released from custody on Friday after a high-level judicial body overturned her three-year prison sentence.

The immediate release of Ksenia Belousova by the presidium of the Moscow City Court follows an unexpected push for leniency from the Russian Orthodox Church, which had [announced](#) plans last month to petition the court on her behalf.

In May, a judge [sentenced](#) Belousova to three years and 25 days in prison after finding her guilty of offending the feelings of religious believers. The charges stemmed from a video she posted on Instagram showing a hookah with a bowl shaped like a *kulich*, a traditional Russian Easter pastry.

She was initially sentenced to 200 hours of community service, but the judge combined the conviction with a three-year probation sentence that Belousova received in August for drug possession to mandate real prison time.

The Moscow City Court's presidium [reversed](#) that decision on Friday, decoupling the two cases. The court reinstated the original 200 hours of community service for the Easter cake incident and ordered that she serve her drug-related probation separately.

Vakhtang Kipshidze, a spokesperson for the Russian Orthodox Church, said that the church welcomed the court decision.

"We believe that the Russian justice system demonstrated humanism, a traditional value of our society, and took into account Belousova's... letter of repentance to our Church," Kipshidze [told](#) the news outlet Podyom.

Earlier, the exiled news outlet Mediazona reported that Belousova's father is a distinguished police officer, while her brother is a decorated soldier currently fighting in the war against Ukraine.

Belousova had said in court that she "occasionally donates to charities," including those that support Russia's war effort in Ukraine.

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