The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

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

July 03, 2026



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.

Original url:
https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2026/07/03/moscow-woman-released-from-jail-after-orthodox-church-intervenes-in-easter-cake-hookah-case-a93160