

Russia Ombudsman May Appeal Pussy Riot Verdict

Topic: Punk Group Pussy Riot Case

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© RIA Novosti. Andrey Stenin Lukin said he is ready to challenge the sentence of Pussy Riot members

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Pussy Riot Members Get Two Years in Jail

Russian human rights ombudsman Vladimir Lukin said on Thursday he is ready to challenge the two-year sentence for three members of punk group Pussy Riot unless it is commuted.

Three punk group members, Nadezhda Tolokonnikova, 22, Maria Alyokhina, 24, and Yekaterina Samutsevich, 30, were jailed on August 17 over a “punk prayer” in Moscow’s largest cathedral in a trial that attracted both mass media attention and sharp international criticism.

“If the sentence stays as is, the ombudsman has a right to appeal it at higher levels, which I will consider,” Lukin said.

The verdict has yet to come into force, he noted.

“I hope that a higher court will give more careful consideration to the case,” he said, adding that he regarded Pussy Riot’s act “not as a crime but an administrative misdemeanor.”

He said, however, he personally disapproves of their act.

“I consider it tactless and silly,” he said.

An edited clip of Pussy Riot’s protest posted online showed the group alternately high-kicking and crossing themselves at the altar of the Christ the Savior Cathedral, the accompanying “Holy S**t” song urging the Virgin Mary to “drive out” President Vladimir Putin and railing against the powerful Orthodox Church’s preelection support for the former KGB officer.