

Bare-Breasted Ukrainian Protester Held in Vatican

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A topless protester from the Ukrainian women's rights group Femen was arrested at the Vatican after revealing her breasts and railing against the "sexist policies" of the Catholic Church.

Video on the group's web site showed the blond-haired woman — identified as Alexandra Shevchenko — drop to her knees in St. Peter's Square at the end of Sunday's Mass, hold up a sign reading "Freedom for Women" and remove her black see-thru top as police converged on her.

The officers quickly wrestled the screaming Shevchenko to the ground and took her into custody.

Femen said on its site that Shevchenko was supposed to be joined by two others but they had been detained earlier by Vatican police who had been tipped off about the impending protest.

All three were held for four hours before being released. The group said the purpose of its

protest was to crusade against the Vatican's "sexist policies."

"The papal patriarchal propaganda continues to promulgate a medieval idea of a woman's social and cultural place," the group [said](#) on its site. "We stand for the rights of free women."

The group has become notorious for staging similar topless protests around the world.

A day earlier, topless members of the group painted in the colors of the Italian flag joined several thousand people demanding the resignation of Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi, who is embroiled in a sex scandal while his government flounders in the debt crisis sweeping Europe.

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