

# Pussy Riot Supporters Detained After Flash Mob

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Eighteen activists wearing colorful balaclavas gather on the steps of Christ the Savior Cathedral, holding letters that jointly make the slogan "Blessed Are the Merciful."

Correction appended

A peaceful flash mob at Moscow's Christ the Savior Cathedral organized by supporters of three female Pussy Riot rockers facing hooliganism charges ended in five detentions outside the cathedral on Wednesday.

Eighteen activists wearing colorful balaclavas gathered on the cathedral's steps, each holding a letter of the alphabet, which jointly made the slogan "Blessed Are the Merciful," well-known blogger Rustem Adagamov [tweeted](#).

The flash mob comes two days before a decision is expected to be announced in the trial against the Pussy Riot members, who are accused of taking part in a February performance at

Christ the Savior Cathedral denouncing President Vladimir Putin.

While the activists in Wednesday's flash mob held up their message, men in plain clothes, apparently the cathedral's security guards, attacked the activists and reporters, Adagamov wrote.

Witnesses identified [one of the attackers](#) as Vladimir Potankin, one of the cathedral's security guards and a plaintiff in the Pussy Riot trial, civil journalist Timur Khorev [tweeted](#).

The attackers called the slogan “Blessed Are the Merciful,” a quote from the Bible, “obscene” and said it “besmirched” the cathedral, Khorev wrote.

Police detained five activists for several hours without explanation.

They will be tried tomorrow at Moscow's Khamovnichesky District Court on misdemeanor charges of breaking rules for staging rallies, one of the detained activists, Alexandra Anfilova, tweeted.

Following recent changes to the law on holding public events, the activists can be fined up to 20,000 rubles (\$630), instead of the previous maximum of 1,000 rubles, or sentenced to up to 40 hours of community service.

Activists and human rights groups around the world have taken actions in support of Pussy Riot in recent days.

On Tuesday, Michelle Ringuette, Amnesty International's head of campaigns and programs, tried to submit petitions in support of Pussy Riot to the Russian Embassy in Washington, but a senior adviser at the embassy refused to read them and threw them on the pavement, Interfax reported. The embassy had not publicly commented on the incident by late Wednesday.

In Helsinki, three women painted the message “Free Pussy Riot” on their breasts and bared them in front of the Russian embassy Wednesday afternoon, Interfax reported. Police examined their documents and ordered them to leave the area around the embassy.

In [Vienna](#), two men, including painter Thomas Draschan, unfurled a banner reading “God Loves Pussy Riot” and “Free Pussy Riot” in the St. Nicolas Cathedral for Orthodox believers on Tuesday, Draschan wrote on Facebook. During their protest, the men climbed the solea, a part of the church off-limits to the public on which Pussy Riot members held their February performance in Christ the Savior Cathedral.

*Correction: An earlier version of this story included erroneous information from an Interfax report that Finnish authorities had opened a criminal case into Teivo Teivainen, professor of world politics at Helsinki University, for trying to hold a pro-Pussy Riot performance outside an Orthodox church in Helsinki. Teivainen on Thursday denied ever trying to hold a pro-Pussy Riot performance. Finnish prosecutors said no charges have been filed and that they were unaware of any attempted performance.*

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