

Court Rejects Civil Suit Against Pussy Riot

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Video of Pussy Riot's Feb. 21 performance in Christ the Savior Cathedral.

A Moscow court has sided against a Novosibirsk woman who sued members of punk band Pussy Riot for allegedly causing her headaches and high blood pressure with their unsanctioned performance of a song in Christ the Savior Cathedral.

Kuntsevsky District Court on Friday rejected Irina Ruzankina's request of 30,000 rubles (\$950) in moral damages for harm incurred as a result of watching a video of Pussy Riot's February performance, Interfax reported.

Three members of Pussy Riot were sentenced last month to two years in prison for participating in the "punk prayer" denouncing President Vladimir Putin. The judge who ruled in the case said the conviction was based partly on the testimony of people who said

they had suffered moral harm from watching a video of the performance.

Ruzankina said that after watching a video of the song online on Feb. 26, she got a headache and her blood pressure shot up, Ruzankina's lawyer Inessa Ryabinina said in court, Interfax reported.

Ruzankina also experienced "deep moral suffering" from watching the video, her lawsuit said, the news agency reported. Another of her lawyers, Konstantin Zinovyev, told the court Friday that the Pussy Riot women's "improper" clothing had especially offended Ruzankina.

Pussy Riot lawyer Nikolai Polozov called the suit an "abuse" of the court and said no one had suffered from the performance, Interfax reported.

World-famous musicians, human rights groups and Western governments have expressed support for Pussy Riot, calling the jail sentence given the three members disproportionate to their actions. Before the women's criminal trial, Russian Orthodox Church officials had called for them to be punished.

In recent weeks, pro-church activists have lashed out at Pussy Riot supporters, while backers of the band have claimed responsibility for acts of vandalism, including the felling of Orthodox crosses, meant to protest the prison sentence given the three group members.

Ruzankina's lawyers said they would decide whether to appeal Friday's ruling on Wednesday, when the court is set to release the full text of the decision.

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