

Putin Suggests Pussy Riot Member Anti-Semite

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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The  **Moscow Times**

President Vladimir Putin provoked angry criticism from bloggers Friday when he suggested to German Chancellor Angela Merkel that one of the jailed women from the Pussy Riot punk band was anti-Semitic. ☒

Putin made his comments after Merkel made clear she saw the two-year sentences the women were serving for a raucous protest against him in a church as excessive. ☒

"Does she know that before that, one of them had hanged an effigy of a Jew and said Moscow needed to get rid of such people?" he told Merkel and other German and Russian delegates at a forum held as part of the chancellor's visit to Moscow. "We cannot support people taking anti-Semitic positions." ☒

Putin appeared to be referring to a mock execution staged in a Moscow-area supermarket in 2008 by an activist group called Voina (War), in which Pussy Riot members Nadezhda

Tolokonnikova, now jailed, and Yekaterina Samutsevich took part. Activists got non-Slavic migrant workers and other minorities to pretend to be hanged from rafters in an aisle.

Pyotr Verzilov, Tolokonnikova's husband and a founder of Voina, said the performance was meant to draw attention to bias in Moscow against minority groups. ☒

"The main question is whether some Putin aides misinformed him ... or he is aware of the facts and is deliberately misinforming Angela Merkel," Verzilov said. ☒

Popular Russian blogger Rustem Adagamov, who goes by the name Drugoi, posted a message addressed to Merkel saying Putin "deliberately, or by some unfortunate misunderstanding, misled you."

(Reuters, MT)

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