

Court Turns Down Pussy Riot Appeal

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Pussy Riot's Alyokhina in the defendant's cell at her hearing Wednesday. **Sergei Karpukhin**

BEREZNIKI, Perm Region — A Russian court has turned down the attempt by an imprisoned member of the Pussy Riot feminist punk band to defer serving her sentence until her preschool son becomes a teenager.

Maria Alyokhina on Wednesday asked the court to let her serve the rest of her two-year sentence after her 5-year-old son turns 14, arguing that separation from her child now will do irreparable psychological damage.

"I'm in a situation where I have to prove here that my son needs me, which is obvious," she said. Alyokhina told the court that while she wants her sentence deferred, she refused to plead guilty. "No one will force me to say I'm guilty. I have nothing to repent for."

Alyokhina was convicted last year along with two other band members of hooliganism motivated by religious hatred for an anti-President Vladimir Putin stunt in Moscow's main cathedral. One of the women had her sentence suspended on appeal.

Judge Galina Yefremova rejected the petition, saying the court that sentenced Alyokhina had already taken the child's existence into account.

Sentence deferrals are uncommon. In fact, there are several prison colonies for female convicts with small children who raise their babies behind bars.

In the most publicized precedent, a woman in eastern Siberia who drove her car onto a sidewalk, killing one woman and leaving another confined to a wheelchair, had her sentence deferred in 2010 because she had just had a baby.

The woman, who did not admit guilt or apologize to the families of the victims, was a daughter of a senior local official, sparking suspicions of selective justice.

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