

Language Specialists to Look Into Pussy Riot Member's Libel Suit

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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A court has ordered language specialists to examine online statements made by a lawyer sued for libel by her former client, feminist punk rocker Yekaterina Samutsevich.

Samutsevich, a member of the Pussy Riot band that gained notoriety after their February 2012 "punk prayer" in Moscow's main cathedral, is seeking 2 million rubles (\$60,000) in compensation from her former lawyer, Violetta Volkova.

Samutsevich wants her former attorney to refute what she says are libelous statements that "negatively characterize" her personality and "degrade her honor and dignity."

A conclusion is expected no later than February 22.

Samutsevich and fellow band members Nadezhda Tolokonnikova and Maria Alyokhina were sentenced to two years in jail after an internationally condemned trial. The band members,

who were represented by Volkova and two other lawyers, rejected the hooliganism charges as "absurd" and "illegal."

Samutsevich later fired Volkova and hired a new attorney who maintained that her client did not actually participate in the prayer because security guards at the Christ the Savior Cathedral had prevented her from joining the other two near the altar. After an appeal hearing last October, Samutsevich had her jail term reduced to a suspended sentence and was released in the courtroom.

Volkova has accused Samutsevich of "striking a deal" with prosecutors and betraying other band members by admitting that the "prayer" was a crime that she could not take part in. "First of all, this is a deal with [her] conscience," Volkova wrote in January in her blog on the website of Ekho Moskvyy radio. "This is the kind of deal that saved only one of the participants but drowned the others."

Samutsevich complained to the Moscow region bar association in April, saying Volkova should be penalized for "substandard service," RAPSI reported.

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