

Estonian 'Spy' to Be Defended By Former Pussy Riot Lawyer

September 11, 2014



Feigin defended members of the band Pussy Riot over an impromptu "punk prayer" performance in Moscow's Christ the Savior Cathedral.

An Estonian man in Russian custody on suspicion of espionage was officially charged on Thursday, as the Estonian Foreign Ministry announced it had enlisted the help of the "best possible" lawyers to defend him in court.

Eston Kokhver, who was detained by Russian authorities on Sept. 5, faces up to 20 years in prison if convicted.

The news came as Estonia's Foreign Ministry announced that former Pussy Riot lawyers Mark Feigin and Nikolai Polozov would be serving as Kokhver's defense.

Both Polozov and Feigin are best known for having defended members of the band Pussy Riot over an impromptu "punk prayer" performance in Moscow's Christ the Savior Cathedral in 2012.

Foreign Minister Urmas Paet announced the news of the two men's appointment late Wednesday, noting that "the best possible legal defense" had been chosen in light of the "extremely complicated situation."

Kokhver was taken into Russian custody last week under circumstances that remain unclear. Estonian officials say Kokhver was abducted from Estonian soil in a well-planned "trap" by Russia's Federal Security Service, or FSB.

Russia's Federal Security Service, however, says Kokhver was detained in Russia's Pskov region while engaging in espionage.

Estonian officials said Russian border guards admitted in writing immediately after the incident that they had crossed over into Estonian territory, but Russian authorities have denied the claim.

On Wednesday, Estonia's border guard service published what it said was a scanned copy of the incident report written immediately after Kokhver's detention, which purports to show both the Russian and Estonian side agreeing that the incident occurred on Estonian territory.

A copy of the report was not available on the agency's website Thursday, but supposed images of the document were circulated in Estonian and Latvian media, including on Latvian website Delfi.lv.

Kokhver was investigating a smuggling operation involving agents from Russia's FSB at the time of his detention, Estonian police chief Elmar Vaher said in earlier comments to Estonian news website ERR News.

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