

Pussy Riot Pitch Invaders Freed From Jail – Lawyer

By [Reuters](#)

August 01, 2018



One of the Pussy Riot member Veronika Nikulshina (Alexander Zemlianichenko / AP / TASS)

Four members of Russia's anti-Kremlin Pussy Riot punk band who staged a pitch invasion during the football World Cup final have been released from police custody after being detained for 16 days, their lawyer said on Wednesday.

The group served a 15-day sentence for running onto the pitch wearing police uniforms during the second half of the game between Croatia and France on July 15, briefly halting play in a stunt they said was meant to promote free speech.

They were due to be freed on Monday, but were immediately detained after being released and held for a further day before being finally let go late on Tuesday, Nikolai Vasilyev, their lawyer, said.

It was unclear whether they will face further charges of disobeying the police and of holding a

public event without prior permission, which the police had unsuccessfully tried to pin on them, Vasilyev said.

Related article: [European Court Awards Damages to Pussy Riot for 2012 Church Performance](#)

Those offenses carry maximum jail terms of 10 and 15 days.

The group's brief pitch invasion at Moscow's main stadium in front of President Vladimir Putin and other high-ranking officials marked a rare security breach in the Russia-hosted World Cup.

The group said the stunt was meant to promote freedom of speech and was a protest against what they regarded as the corrupt policies of FIFA, football's global governing body.

Pussy Riot came to national prominence in 2012 when its members were jailed for staging a protest against Putin in a Russian Orthodox cathedral in Moscow. The group has since become a symbol of anti-Kremlin protest action.

Original url:

<https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2018/08/01/pussy-riot-pitch-invaders-freed-from-jail-lawyer-a62411>