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Anger over Pussy Riot sentence

20th August, 2012

http://www.breakingnewsenglish.com/1208/120820-pussy_riot.html

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THE ARTICLE

From http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1208/120820-pussy_riot.html

Countries around the world have expressed anger and disappointment over the two-year jail sentence given to members of the Russian punk band Pussy Riot. The three women were handed the punishment for protesting against Russia's president Vladimir Putin in Moscow's Christ the Saviour Cathedral. They also criticised the church in Russia for what they see as its support for Mr Putin. Their "punk prayer" called on the Virgin Mary to "Drive away Putin" and said the "Church praises the rotten dictators". The judge said the women "committed an act of hooliganism, a gross violation of public order showing obvious disrespect for society". He added their actions were "sacrilegious" and "blasphemous".

A European Union statement described the two-year sentences as being "disproportionate" to the crime and that it added to the intimidation of opposition activists in Russia. It read: "Together with the reports of the band members' mistreatment during pre-trial detention and the reported irregularities of the trial, the verdict puts a serious question mark over Russia's respect for international obligations of fair, transparent and independent legal process." Washington said: "While we understand the group's behaviour was offensive to some, we have serious concerns about the way that these young women have been treated by the Russian judicial system." The Russian church has asked for a shorter sentence.

WARM-UPS

1. PUSSY RIOT: Walk around the class and talk to other students about Pussy Riot. Change partners often. Share your findings with your first partner.

2. CHAT: In pairs / groups, decide which of these topics or words from the article are most interesting and which are most boring.

anger / disappointment / punishment / punk / prayer / dictators / hooliganism / intimidation / opposition activists / detention / obligations / offensive / concerns

Have a chat about the topics you liked. Change topics and partners frequently.

3. PUNISHMENT: Complete this table with your partner(s). Change partners and share what you wrote. Change and share again.

Punishment for...	Punishment?	Why?
Criticising a national leader		
Defacing a holy book		
Hooliganism		
Blasphemy		
Treason		
Protesting in the streets		

4. FREE SPEECH: Students A **strongly** believe you cannot say whatever you want; Students B **strongly** believe you can. Change partners again and talk about your conversations.

5. FREEDOMS: Rank these and share your rankings with your partner. Put the most important at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- free speech
- press freedom
- religious freedom
- freedom to protest in public
- freedom of information
- freedom to marry someone you choose
- freedom to carry a gun
- freedom to travel anywhere you want

6. RUSSIA: Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with Russia. Share your words with your partner(s) and talk about them. Together, put the words into different categories.

BEFORE READING / LISTENING

From http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1208/120820-pussy_riot.html

1. TRUE / FALSE: Read the headline. Guess if a-h below are true (T) or false (F).

- | | |
|--|-------|
| a. A punk rock group in Russia have been sent to prison for 2 years. | T / F |
| b. The band were jailed for saying bad things about Russia's president. | T / F |
| c. The band praised Russia's church in its "punk prayer" song. | T / F |
| d. The judge said the women took part in acts of hooliganism. | T / F |
| e. The European Union (EU) said the jail term was too short. | T / F |
| f. The EU is satisfied that the trial followed international standards. | T / F |
| g. Washington said that some feel the band's behavior offended people. | T / F |
| h. Russia's church has asked for a longer sentence for the band members. | T / F |

2. SYNONYM MATCH: Match the following synonyms from the article.

- | | |
|---------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. expressed | a. corrupt |
| 2. punishment | b. imprisonment |
| 3. criticised | c. conveyed |
| 4. rotten | d. relatively too large for |
| 5. obvious | e. denounced |
| 6. disproportionate | f. insulting |
| 7. activists | g. penalty |
| 8. detention | h. protestors |
| 9. obligations | i. clear |
| 10. offensive | j. duties |

3. PHRASE MATCH: (Sometimes more than one choice is possible.)

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1. two-year jail | a. of hooliganism |
| 2. three women were handed | b. mistreatment |
| 3. committed an act | c. and "blasphemous" |
| 4. a gross | d. to the crime |
| 5. their actions were "sacrilegious" | e. offensive to some |
| 6. disproportionate | f. sentence |
| 7. the intimidation of | g. sentence |
| 8. reports of the band members' | h. violation of public order |
| 9. the group's behaviour was | i. opposition activists |
| 10. asked for a shorter | j. the punishment |

WHILE READING / LISTENING

From http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1208/120820-pussy_riot.html

GAP FILL: Put the words into the gaps in the text.

Countries around the world have (1) _____ anger and disappointment over the two-year jail (2) _____ given to members of the Russian punk band Pussy Riot. The three women were (3) _____ the punishment for protesting against Russia's president Vladimir Putin in Moscow's Christ the Saviour Cathedral. They also criticised the church in Russia for what they (4) _____ as its support for Mr Putin. Their "punk prayer" (5) _____ on the Virgin Mary to "Drive away Putin" and said the "Church praises the (6) _____ dictators". The judge said the women "committed an act of hooliganism, a (7) _____ violation of public order showing obvious disrespect for society". He (8) _____ their actions were "sacrilegious" and "blasphemous".

see
handed
added
expressed
gross
called
sentence
rotten

A European Union statement described the two-year sentences as being "disproportionate" to the (9) _____ and that it added to the intimidation of opposition (10) _____ in Russia. It read: "Together with the reports of the band members' mistreatment during pre-trial detention and the reported (11) _____ of the trial, the verdict (12) _____ a serious question mark over Russia's respect for international obligations of fair, transparent and independent legal (13) _____." Washington said: "While we understand the group's behaviour was (14) _____ to some, we have serious concerns about the way that these young women have been (15) _____ by the Russian judicial system." The Russian church has asked for a (16) _____ sentence.

irregularities
process
activists
shorter
puts
treated
crime
offensive

LISTENING – Listen and fill in the gaps

From http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1208/120820-pussy_riot.html

Countries around the world (1) _____ and disappointment over the two-year jail sentence given to members of the Russian punk band Pussy Riot. The three women (2) _____ punishment for protesting against Russia's president Vladimir Putin in Moscow's Christ the Saviour Cathedral. They also criticised the church in Russia for what they see (3) _____ Mr Putin. Their "punk prayer" called on the Virgin Mary to "Drive away Putin" and said the "Church (4) _____ dictators". The judge said the women "committed an act of hooliganism, (5) _____ public order showing (6) _____ society". He added their actions were "sacrilegious" and "blasphemous".

A European Union statement described the two-year sentences as being (7) _____ crime and that it added to the intimidation of opposition activists in Russia. It read: "Together with the reports of the band members' mistreatment during (8) _____ and the reported irregularities of the trial, (9) _____ serious question mark over Russia's respect for international (10) _____, transparent and independent legal process." Washington said: "While we understand the group's behaviour (11) _____, we have serious concerns about the way that these young women have been treated by the (12) _____." The Russian church has asked for a shorter sentence.

AFTER READING / LISTENING

From http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1208/120820-pussy_riot.html

1. WORD SEARCH: Look in your dictionary / computer to find collocates, other meanings, information, synonyms ... for the words 'punk' and 'prayer'.

punk	prayer

- Share your findings with your partners.
- Make questions using the words you found.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

2. ARTICLE QUESTIONS: Look back at the article and write down some questions you would like to ask the class about the text.

- Share your questions with other classmates / groups.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

3. GAP FILL: In pairs / groups, compare your answers to this exercise. Check your answers. Talk about the words from the activity. Were they new, interesting, worth learning...?

4. VOCABULARY: Circle any words you do not understand. In groups, pool unknown words and use dictionaries to find their meanings.

5. TEST EACH OTHER: Look at the words below. With your partner, try to recall how they were used in the text:

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• anger• handed• support• drive• act• added	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• added• during• serious• respect• offensive• shorter
--	--

PUSSY RIOT IMPRISONMENT SURVEY

From http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1208/120820-pussy_riot.html

Write five GOOD questions about Pussy Riot's imprisonment in the table. Do this in pairs. Each student must write the questions on his / her own paper.
When you have finished, interview other students. Write down their answers.

	STUDENT 1 _____	STUDENT 2 _____	STUDENT 3 _____
Q.1.			
Q.2.			
Q.3.			
Q.4.			
Q.5.			

- Now return to your original partner and share and talk about what you found out. Change partners often.
- Make mini-presentations to other groups on your findings.

PUSSY RIOT IMPRISONMENT DISCUSSION

STUDENT A's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student B)

- a) What did you think when you read the headline?
- b) What springs to mind when you hear the word 'punk'?
- c) What do you think about what you read?
- d) Is it any business of other countries to comment on sentences passed in Russian courts?
- e) Should the women have been punished at all?
- f) Does the imprisonment of the three Pussy Riot members deal a blow to free speech in Russia?
- g) Is what Pussy Riot did an act of free speech or a criminal act?
- h) What do you think of the "punk prayer"?
- i) Should people keep political protests out of places of worship?
- j) Is "showing obvious disrespect for society" a punishable offense?

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PUSSY RIOT IMPRISONMENT DISCUSSION

STUDENT B's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student A)

- a) Did you like reading this article?
- b) Do you think the two-year sentence is "disproportionate" to the crime?
- c) Do you think the sentence "added to the intimidation of opposition activists in Russia"?
- d) What do you think of the jailed Pussy Riot musicians?
- e) Many international rock stars have come out in support of Pussy Riot. Do you think this will have any effect in Russia?
- f) What has this incident done for Vladimir Putin's reputation?
- g) How do you think events will unfold from now?
- h) Do you think the Russian church was right in asking for a shorter sentence?
- i) What advice would you give to Pussy Riot?
- j) What questions would you like to ask the Pussy Riot women?

LANGUAGE – MULTIPLE CHOICE

From http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1208/120820-pussy_riot.html

Countries around the world have expressed anger and disappointment (1) _____ the two-year jail sentence given to members of the Russian punk band Pussy Riot. The three women were (2) _____ the punishment for protesting against Russia's president Vladimir Putin in Moscow's Christ the Saviour Cathedral. They also criticised the church in Russia (3) _____ what they see as its support for Mr Putin. Their "punk prayer" called on the Virgin Mary to "DRIVE (4) _____ Putin" and said the "Church praises the rotten dictators". The judge said the women "committed an act of hooliganism, a (5) _____ violation of public order showing obvious disrespect for society". He added their actions were "sacrilegious" and "(6) _____".

A European Union statement described the two-year sentences as (7) _____ "disproportionate" to the crime and that it added to the intimidation of opposition (8) _____ in Russia. It read: "Together with the reports of the band members' mistreatment during pre-trial (9) _____ and the reported irregularities of the trial, the verdict puts a serious question mark over Russia's respect for international obligations of fair, (10) _____ and independent legal process." Washington said: "While we understand the group's behaviour was (11) _____ to some, we have serious concerns about the way that these young women have been (12) _____ by the Russian judicial system." The Russian church has asked for a shorter sentence.

Put the correct words from the table below in the above article.

- | | | | | |
|-----|------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| 1. | (a) under | (b) around | (c) through | (d) over |
| 2. | (a) headed | (b) backed | (c) handed | (d) armed |
| 3. | (a) before | (b) for | (c) to the fore | (d) for now |
| 4. | (a) away | (b) up | (c) in | (d) around |
| 5. | (a) gloss | (b) dross | (c) gross | (d) floss |
| 6. | (a) blaspheming | (b) blasphemer | (c) blaspheme | (d) blasphemous |
| 7. | (a) is | (b) being | (c) was | (d) be |
| 8. | (a) activists | (b) actors | (c) activities | (d) activates |
| 9. | (a) impunity | (b) detention | (c) rashness | (d) seedling |
| 10. | (a) glassy | (b) translucent | (c) transparent | (d) sheer |
| 11. | (a) offensive | (b) defensive | (c) pensive | (d) expensive |
| 12. | (a) administered | (b) feted | (c) remedied | (d) treated |

WRITING

From http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1208/120820-pussy_riot.html

Write about **Pussy Riot** for 10 minutes. Correct your partner's paper.

[illegible]

HOMEWORK

1. VOCABULARY EXTENSION: Choose several of the words from the text. Use a dictionary or Google's search field (or another search engine) to build up more associations / collocations of each word.

2. INTERNET: Search the Internet and find out more about Pussy Riot. Share what you discover with your partner(s) in the next lesson.

3. PUSSY RIOT: Make a poster about Pussy Riot. Show your work to your classmates in the next lesson. Did you all have similar things?

4. FREE SPEECH: Write a magazine article about the Pussy Riot case. Include imaginary interviews with someone who believes the band was wrongly imprisoned for practicing their right of free speech and someone else who believes they were rightly imprisoned for being "sacrilegious" and "blasphemous".

Read what you wrote to your classmates in the next lesson. Write down any new words and expressions you hear from your partner(s).

5. LETTER: Write a letter to Pussy Riot. Ask them three questions about their imprisonment. Give them three pieces of advice. Read your letter to your partner(s) in your next lesson. Your partner(s) will answer your questions.

ANSWERS

TRUE / FALSE:

- a. T b. T c. F d. T e. F f. F g. T h. F

SYNONYM MATCH:

- | | |
|---------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. expressed | a. conveyed |
| 2. punishment | b. penalty |
| 3. criticised | c. denounced |
| 4. rotten | d. corrupt |
| 5. obvious | e. clear |
| 6. disproportionate | f. relatively too large for |
| 7. activists | g. protestors |
| 8. detention | h. imprisonment |
| 9. obligations | i. duties |
| 10. offensive | j. insulting |

PHRASE MATCH:

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1. two-year jail | a. sentence |
| 2. three women were handed | b. the punishment |
| 3. committed an act | c. of hooliganism |
| 4. a gross | d. violation of public order |
| 5. their actions were "sacrilegious" | e. and "blasphemous" |
| 6. disproportionate | f. to the crime |
| 7. the intimidation of | g. opposition activists |
| 8. reports of the band members' | h. mistreatment |
| 9. the group's behaviour was | i. offensive to some |
| 10. asked for a shorter | j. sentence |

GAP FILL:

Anger over Pussy Riot sentence

Countries around the world have (1) **expressed** anger and disappointment over the two-year jail (2) **sentence** given to members of the Russian punk band Pussy Riot. The three women were (3) **handed** the punishment for protesting against Russia's president Vladimir Putin in Moscow's Christ the Saviour Cathedral. They also criticised the church in Russia for what they (4) **see** as its support for Mr Putin. Their "punk prayer" (5) **called** on the Virgin Mary to "Drive away Putin" and said the "Church praises the (6) **rotten** dictators". The judge said the women "committed an act of hooliganism, a (7) **gross** violation of public order showing obvious disrespect for society". He (8) **added** their actions were "sacrilegious" and "blasphemous".

A European Union statement described the two-year sentences as being "disproportionate" to the (9) **crime** and that it added to the intimidation of opposition (10) **activists** in Russia. It read: "Together with the reports of the band members' mistreatment during pre-trial detention and the reported (11) **irregularities** of the trial, the verdict (12) **puts** a serious question mark over Russia's respect for international obligations of fair, transparent and independent legal (13) **process**." Washington said: "While we understand the group's behaviour was (14) **offensive** to some, we have serious concerns about the way that these young women have been (15) **treated** by the Russian judicial system." The Russian church has asked for a (16) **shorter** sentence.

LANGUAGE WORK

- 1 - d 2 - c 3 - b 4 - a 5 - c 6 - d 7 - b 8 - a 9 - b 10 - c 11 - a 12 - d

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