

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MOSCOW – AUGUST 24, 2012

- **Garry Kasparov was acquitted on charge of participating in illegal rally outside of Pussy Riot courthouse on August 17, 2012. This one of the first-ever such acquittals in the Putin era.**
- **Kasparov still faces the accusation of assaulting a police officer. No charges have been filed and overwhelming evidence has been published contradicting officer's allegation.**
- **Kasparov will pursue charges for illegal arrest and assault by the police and for libel against the officer who accuses Kasparov of biting him on the 17th.**

After nine hours in a Moscow courtroom, Garry Kasparov was acquitted of the charge he violated the law against illegal protests. Hours of witness testimony and video of Kasparov's arrest refuted the official police reports that Kasparov was chanting slogans or resisting arrest. Kasparov's attorney presented dozens of media reports from the day of the arrest that contradicted the official police timeline of Kasparov's arrest and detention.



STATEMENT BY GARRY KASPAROV

First I want to say that this acquittal is not the end of the saga. While waiting for the judge's decision, I again visited the investigator who is in charge of the assault accusation against me and my own charges of illegal arrest and assault against the police and of libel against officer Ratnikov. The authorities must decide whether to pursue the cases and whether or not to combine these cases into one. They are examining the evidence, much of which was accepted in my trial today.

I will press forward with the criminal charges against the police. My acquittal can only strengthen my defense in the criminal case and my complaints. A court has decided that they arrested and assaulted an innocent man. This is no small event. It is perhaps the first time ever in Putin's Russia that someone has been acquitted of these charges in this way. (Ironically, I was one of the first convicted under the strong new anti-protest laws, when I was jailed in 2007.) Today the judge made it clear that the police testimony was not to be trusted. She also allowed our video evidence and witnesses for the defense to an unprecedented degree.

It remains to be seen if this admirable decision was of her own conscience or if it indicates something within the institution. If it was solely the judge's decision, we will find out soon if the district attorney's office appeals the verdict. They have ten days to do so. Or it is possible the authorities decided they had received enough negative publicity for one week and are attempting to show the world that Russian justice actually exists. If this is the case, it will take much more than one trial of one well-known individual with the world watching. The real test will be the many similar cases to come. We must keep watching and fighting, to keep the pressure on!

This is why I feel obliged to press criminal charges over my abuse at the hands of the police. Friends and colleagues across Russia have been convicted by false testimony just like that I faced today in court. Having this acquittal in my hands means I must push forward. Only success in punishing the officers responsible can help protect others from injustice. I was fortunate to be able to bring resources to bear and to have global support in my cause. My family and I are so grateful. I am deeply indebted to the many journalists who came forward on their own to provide videos, photos, and their personal testimony. In a country where journalists are subjected to heavy pressure, and often violence, this was a significant risk.

This result demonstrates the power of solidarity. This means more than donating money and your voice. It is a shared sentiment that freedom matters everywhere, for every person, not only in your own country. It is essential to stay involved. The more people pay attention and bring pressure from the grassroots, the more cases will end the way mine did and the fewer will result like that of Pussy Riot. Find a way to make a difference!

Garry Kasparov

LINKS

- Video and English transcript of Kasparov speaking to reporters outside of the court after his acquittal. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tN0735Imx6k>
- Kasparov's Facebook page, for regular updates. <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Garry-Kasparov/243791258306>
- Donate to the Foundation for Democracy in Russia, a non-profit founded by Kasparov to provide legal defense and other aid to the anti-Putin movement in Russia. <http://www.theotherussia.org/support-the-other-russia/>