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Rapper Slams Police After His 'Apology'

By Sergei Chernov

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Rap musician Ivan Alexeyev, right, aka Noize MC, regularly broaches a variety of social issues in his rap lyrics.

ST. PETERSBURG — Rapper Noize MC, who was jailed for 10 days for "disorderly conduct" during his set at an outdoor festival after the local police took offense at his mocking them with a song and improvised rap, has released a new song that lambastes the police and calls Russia a "police state."

In the song rush-released last week — almost immediately after the artist's release from jail — Noize MC, whose real name is Ivan Alexeyev, sarcastically thanks the police for the inspiration and 10 days spent in "paradise," while the video demonstrates endless and extremely diverse instances of Russian police brutality — from two policemen stopping and beating a lone cyclist to the recent outburst of police violence at the July 31 demonstration in St. Petersburg.

The powerful protest song has two names, "10 Days in Paradise" and "10 Days (Stalingrad)" — in a reference to Volgograd's Stalin-era name — and describes Russia as a "police state"

and Volgograd as its "capital."

The song, posted at NoizeMC.ru, features a sarcastic "apology" — a brief, videoed rap that Alexeyev read from a piece of paper distributed by the Volgograd police's press service while he was in prison.

In an interview with Gazeta.ru, Alexeyev explained that he wrote and performed the "apology" rap under pressure, when he was threatened with having his charges changed to "insulting a policeman," an offense punishable by up to one year of "correctional labor," but the sarcasm was lost on the police — as well as on some of the public, as he later discovered.

The "apology" rap in its entirety has been included in "10 Days" as the chorus. Alexeyev's arrest brought a rare show of unity from other musicians, with hundreds signing a letter in his support.

One of the first to sign the letter was Alexei Nikonov of punk band Posledniye Tanki v Parizhe, or "Last Tanks in Paris," which is renowned for its anti-establishment stance.

"I signed it because it represents solidarity among musicians because the police have no right to introduce censorship," he said Thursday. "Many people want to censor things, and now even rank-and-file policemen have started doing so. That's not right."

The letter also called for the policemen responsible for the musician's arrest to be punished and for the police to be banned from interfering in cultural events, pointing out that censorship is forbidden by the Constitution.

Explaining why he signed, Mikhail Bozyrkin from rock group Televizor said "otherwise we'll have to authorize our lyrics before every concert like we had to in the 1980s."

A popular musician on the Russian rap scene, Alexeyev achieved nationwide recognition with his song "Mercedes 666," dedicated to a February traffic accident in Moscow involving the car of LUKoil vice president Anatoly Barkov that left two women dead.

The song blamed Barkov for the incident and accused him of having police — who initially blamed the women for the crash — cover up for him. No one has been charged with wrongdoing in the accident.

Noize MC was forced to cancel a concert in Chuvashia's capital on Friday, Gazeta.ru reported.

The musician's producer, Grigory Zorin, said concert promoters notified him that Noize MC's appearance at the Kofemolka festival in Cheboksary had been canceled as the band was boarding a train in Moscow, according to Gazeta.ru.

The promoters refused to specify who gave the order, saying only that it had come "from on high" and that they had been threatened that "their heads would be eaten off," Zorin said.

(MT)

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