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Singer Kobzon Denied U.S. Visa for Farewell Tour

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Iosif Kobzon

Crooner and State Duma Deputy Iosif Kobzon has been denied a visa to visit the United States for a farewell singing tour.

Kobzon confirmed Wednesday that his visa application had been rejected and that he was giving up plans to perform in the United States, but added that he was not angry.

“I have no hard feelings against America. I am hurt that as a lawful citizen of Russia my state cannot support me. The state is weak, but what can I do,” he told Russian News Service radio.

He added that his wife's and children's visa applications had also been denied. A U.S. Embassy spokesman said the embassy does not comment on individual visa applications, RIA-Novosti reported.

Kobzon, a Soviet-era singer dubbed "Russia's Frank Sinatra" and a lawmaker with the ruling United Russia party, has been denied entry to the United States since 1995, when his visa was

revoked by American authorities on suspicion of mafia ties.

Kobzon, who is ill with cancer, announced earlier this year that he would apply for a visa to travel on a last concert tour of the United States for his Russian-American fans. His promoter even organized a petition signed by 4,000 Russian-Americans to Secretary of State Hillary Clinton.

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