

# 3 Countries Boycott Kremlin Music Fest Over Ukraine

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**The  Moscow Times**

Three countries will boycott Moscow's annual Spasskaya Tower international military music festival due to the Ukraine crisis, according to an interview with the Moscow Kremlin's commandant published in Rossiiskaya Gazeta Tuesday.

"Unfortunately, because of the announced sanctions, we have had to make changes in our festival's program," commandant Sergey Khlebnikov said. "Participants from three countries, who had expressed their willingness to come to Moscow, wrote apology letters to request our understanding of the reasons why they had to decline to participate."

Khlebnikov did not specify which three countries were boycotting the event. A request for information made by The Moscow Times on Tuesday was not answered in time for publication.

The festival — which bears the name of tower above the Kremlin's main gates — is sponsored by Russia's main weapons exporter and state oil companies LUKoil and Transneft.

Since its inception in 2006, some 100 musical ensembles from 40 countries, including the U.S., Norway and South Africa, have taken part in the festival, which this year will take place on Red Square between Aug. 30 and Sept. 7.

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