

Russian Tour of 'Blasphemous' U.S. Metal Legends Cannibal Corpse Canceled

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America's best-selling death metal band Cannibal Corpse has seen most of its shows in Russia canceled on technicalities among protests by Christian fundamentalists.

The latest cancellation, which took place on Sunday in St. Petersburg hours before the show, left death metal fans clashing with riot police, a reporter with Ekho Moskvyy radio wrote on Twitter.

Police denied that any rioting had taken place but said 18 people were detained for misconduct, local online news site Fontanka.ru said Monday.

Cannibal Corpse was scheduled to play eight shows in Russia throughout September and October, but five were canceled on technicalities and one, in Nizhny Novgorod, over a sudden raid by drug police.

Enraged fans took to social networks to blame Christian fundamentalists for putting pressure on local authorities, though no officials confirmed this theory.

Adding some credence to that version of events, however, authorities in the southern city of Krasnodar reportedly allowed Cannibal Corpse to play on the condition that the band remove all its "extremist" songs from the playlist.

The campaign against the band was spearheaded by controversial Christian activist Dmitry "Enteo" Tsorionov, who previously protested shows by Slayer and Marilyn Manson.

Tsorionov, notorious for having physically assaulted supporters of Russian punk band Pussy Riot, slammed the death metal patriarchs on social networks as "blasphemous" and "satanic."

This is not the first time extreme metal bands have fallen afoul of authorities and hard-line Christians in Russia, which has embraced ultraconservative policies in the past few years.

In May, legendary Polish satanist metal band Behemoth was expelled mid-tour over visa issues — also after protests by Christian fundamentalists.

In June, the Marilyn Manson show in Moscow was canceled after a bomb threat was called in at the venue. The band's fans blamed Tsorionov, though he denied involvement.

Cannibal Corpse, founded in 1988 and boasting sales of more than a million albums in the U.S., is known for a blend of distorted guitars, growling vocals and ultra-offensive gore-filled imagery in both the lyrics and album-cover art.

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