

Rock Star Makarevich Wins Human Rights Prize From Moscow Helsinki Group

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Andrei Makarevich

Russian rock legend Andrei Makarevich has been given a human rights award by the Moscow Helsinki Group just weeks after winning a libel case against a Russian newspaper that skewered him for his stance on Ukraine.

The award "for defending human rights using culture and art" was due to be presented to the Mashina Vremeni ("Time Machine") frontman at a ceremony at Moscow's Sakharov Center on Tuesday, according to the news site Colta.ru.

Makarevich's outspoken criticism of Moscow's policies in neighboring Ukraine landed him in hot water earlier this year, with many branding him a "traitor" after Izvestia published a report claiming he'd performed for Ukrainian troops, who are fighting pro-Russian separatists in the country's east.

Last month, Makarevich won 500,000 rubles (\$10,700) in a libel case against the publication over the report, which he said had confused Ukrainian troops with Ukrainian children.

He said after winning the case that he intended to donate the money to the children in Svetlogorsk, Ukraine, for whom he had performed over the summer.

The Moscow Helsinki Group gives out prizes annually to figures recognized for developing the human rights movement within the country and promoting awareness of rights issues.

Other winners this year included Lev Shlosberg, a regional lawmaker from the Russian city of Pskov who was attacked after reporting on the deaths of Russian soldiers who were reportedly killed fighting in Ukraine; Svetlana Gannushkina, a prominent human rights activist and head of the Civil Assistance group; and Ekho Moskv radio station host Natella Boltyanskaya.

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