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Ukraine Will Boycott Eurovision 2017 If Russia Wins

By The Moscow Times

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Russia's Sergey Lazarev performs 'You Are The Only One' during the first Eurovision Song Contest semifinal in Stockholm, Sweden.

If the Russian participant wins the 2016 Eurovision Song Contest, Ukraine will boycott the competition next year, the Interfax news agency reported Friday, citing general director of the National Television Company of Ukraine Zurab Alasania.

“If a man named Lazarev [the Russian participant Sergei Lararev] wins, I think that next year UA:Pershy [Ukraine's national television channel] will again refuse to participate in the contest,” Alasania wrote on his Facebook page.

Ukraine, which made its first Eurovision appearance in 2003, missed the song contest last year due to financial difficulties and political turmoil caused by the conflict in eastern Ukraine.

Alasania also announced that the Ukrainian contestant Jamala had made it to the final of the contest. Her song about the deportation of Crimean Tatars by Soviet leader Josef Stalin in 1944, caused controversy in Russia.

The song comes amid serious tensions between Kiev and Moscow that occurred in 2014 over Russia's annexation of the Crimean Peninsula and involvement in the war in Ukraine's Donbass region.

Symbolically, the main fight for victory will unfold this year between Jamala and the Russian contestant Sergei Lazarev, representing Russia with the song “You Are The Only One.”

The bookmakers forecast that Lazarev will get the top spot, with Jamala as the runner-up.

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