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Host of Russian 'Jerry Springer' Reportedly Quits As Show Becomes Politicized

August 03, 2017



Andrei Malakhov **Screenshot / 1.tv / The Moscow Times**

The long-time host of Russia's most popular talk show on state television is reportedly quitting his job due to political pressure.

Channel One host Andrei Malakhov is planning to switch to its main competitor, Rossia-1, Russian media reported this week.

His show "Pust Govoryat" (Let Them Talk) — the Russian equivalent of the Jerry Springer Show — has traditionally focused on juicy topics surrounding interfamilial spats and celebrity scandals.

But since a change in management and ahead of presidential elections next year, it has turned increasingly political, two Channel One employees told the BBC's Russian Service on condition of anonymity.

In recent months, the show has aired programs on Oliver Stone's "The Putin Interviews," and two episodes on the murder of Denis Voronenkov, the former Russian parliamentarian who fled to Ukraine and harshly criticized the Russian authorities.

According to BBC's sources, Malakhov, who has hosted the show for sixteen years, disagrees with the editorial shift.

"Let Them Talk" is one of Russia's most watched television programs, with its viewership far outranking news programs, and even Russian President Vladimir Putin's Direct Line, statistics cited by BBC Russia show.

The average viewership is roughly 3.5 million, according to statistics from TMK-Media.

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