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Russian Celebrities Join Flashmob in Support of Jailed Ukrainian Filmmaker Sentsov

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Oleg Sentsov (Valery Matytsin / TASS)

Russian celebrities have joined a global flashmob in support of jailed Ukrainian filmmaker Oleg Sentsov, who has been on a hunger strike for over three weeks in a campaign demanding the release of Ukrainian political prisoners in Russia.

Sentsov, who is in year three of a 20-year sentence on charges of plotting terror attacks in Crimea after its annexation, announced an indefinite hunger strike in May. The filmmaker's supporters launched the #SaveOlegSentsov hashtag days later to attract global attention "to free the Kremlin's hostages."

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Famous Russian actors and directors, including Oscar contender Andrei Zvyagintsev, joined the campaign with videos in support of Sentsov, many of which include readings of the filmmaker's autobiographical stories.

"An exchange of political prisoners would be an ideal escape from this dead-end our entire society is in," Zvyagintsev said in an addresses published by the Meduza news website Sunday.

Maxim Vitorgan, the husband of 2018 presidential candidate Ksenia Sobchak, recited Sentsov's story about his childhood dog in a video published by the MBkh news website. Sobchak said she had reached Sentsov via video link-up last week in a failed attempt to convince him to stop the hunger strike.

Ukrainian media reported that people in over 70 cities across the world came out in support of the convicted filmmaker under the #SaveOlegSentsov hashtag.

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