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Russian Rock Bands Boycott Music Festival Over Defense Ministry Ties

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Courtesy of the Nashestviye festival

At least six bands have dropped out of playing at one of Russia's largest open-air music festivals this summer in a protest against its "militarization" and cooperation with the country's Defense Ministry.

The Nashestviye festival has attracted major Russian bands and hundreds of thousands of fans for nearly two decades, with 80 performers billed at this year's Aug. 3- Aug. 5 show outside Moscow. Since 2013, the festival has featured tanks and recruitment stands of the Defense Ministry.

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This week, six bands canceled their performances at the festival over what they said was an about-face by organizers, who had reportedly promised that the festival would have no

military presence.

“Our main condition was no propaganda of militarism on the territory of the festival,” the Pornofilmy band said in a social media post announcing their decision to drop out of the festival’s line-up.

“Pacifism and anti-militarism are not empty words for us,” the Elysium band explained on Facebook.

The Ukrainian band Poshlaya Molly said “where there’s music, there’s no place for weapons” in its cancelation announcement.

One of the festival’s organizers, Andrei Matveev, defended the festival’s relationship with the Defense Ministry in a 2015 interview with Forbes Russia, arguing that “audiences like a military show.”

Meanwhile, Monetochka, a rising 20-year-old pop sensation, announced Wednesday that she had also canceled her appearance at the festival.

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