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Russian Rappers Hold Solidarity Concert for Detained Musician, Blast Censorship

November 27, 2018

Pjotr Sauer / MT

A group of popular Russian hip hop artists staged a concert in Moscow on Monday night in support of a rapper who was detained last week in what critics called the latest expression of censorship against independent Russian artists.

The rapper, who performs under the stage name Husky, was detained in southern Russia on Nov. 21 after local authorities raided a venue in which he had been scheduled to perform over alleged "extremist activity." Husky was released on Monday after a public outcry, hours before the solidarity concert was scheduled to take place in Moscow. Russian artists have spoken out against increasing pressure from the authorities in recent months, which has included bans on music videos and songs over indecent lyrics and alleged extremism.

Embed:

Посмотреть эту публикацию в Instagram

Публикация от Тёма Баранов (@tioma.baranov) 26 Ноя 2018 в 11:43 PST

“Artists are blamed for society’s problems because that is easier than addressing the [actual] problems,” Oxxxymiron, a popular Russian rapper and freestyle artist, wrote on Instagram in announcing Monday’s solidarity concert for Husky, which also featured the artists Noize MC and Basta as headliners.

Opposition leader Alexei Navalny, who attended the concert with his family, tweeted that the authorities had released Husky several hours before the event because they didn’t want for it

to “turn into a manifestation for freedom of speech and creativity.”

Embed:

Посмотреть эту публикацию в Instagram

Публикация от Алексей Навальный (@navalny) 26 Ноя 2018 в 9:03 PST

The editor-in-chief of the Kremlin-run RT news network, Margarita Simonyan, later said on Twitter that “two or three members” of President Vladimir Putin’s administration had ordered for Husky to be released before the concert.

Monday's show concluded with a litany of other famous Russian rappers joining on stage, including Face, who made headlines earlier this year for comparing Russia to a prison camp in his latest album, and Roma Zhigan, who had previously said he wanted to record a song with Putin.

Meanwhile, on Tuesday morning, a popular hip hop artist who goes by the stage name Allj canceled his concert scheduled for Nov. 28 in the Siberian city of Yakutsk over threats.

"We are worried about provocations, about an uncontrolled crowd and threats of attacks during the concert and after," the show's organizers wrote on Instagram.

Prior to the announcement, the Yakutsk Department of Education had advised schoolchildren to avoid Allj's concert, the state-run TASS news agency reported.

"The performer's repertoire may cause children, in particular, to want to use drugs, tobacco and alcohol and to take part in gambling," the agency cited the authorities as saying in a letter.

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