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Kremlin Propagandist Calls Detained Rappers Russian Patriots, Raps on Air

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Dmitry Kiselyov / Veati

A Russian state television pundit known for his pro-Kremlin views raised eyebrows this weekend by speaking out in support of young Russian rappers who say they have been targeted by a government crackdown on freedom of expression.

Over the past month, an increasing number of young Russian artists have said they were being pressured to cancel their concerts by the authorities over allegations of extremism. Last Monday, a group of popular Russian hip hop artists staged a concert in Moscow in support of a rapper who was detained in southern Russia after a raid on his concert.

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Dmitry Kiselyov, who has been called the Kremlin's "top propagandist" and is known for his anti-Western views, unexpectedly spoke out in favor of Russian rappers on his popular Vesti

Nedeli news show on Sunday.

“Rappers... should not be demonized. They are just people with different views,” Kiselyov said on the show.

He then featured music video clips by the Russian rappers Husky, Basta and Face — who all participated in last week's concert in Moscow in support of freedom of expression— and noted that they expressed love for Russia and “are not alien to patriotism.”

During the show, Kiselyov also read out a poem by the famed Soviet poet Vladimir Mayakovsky, who he said had been a real rapper — a claim first made by Russia’s Culture MInister Vladimir Medinsky in October.

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