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Putin Orders Government to Support Pop Music

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Concert in support of the rapper Husky in Moscow, November 26 **Pjotr Sauer / MT**

President Vladimir Putin has instructed the government to draw up a plan to support popular music months after young independent artists were pressured to cancel shows in Russian cities.

A number of young Russian artists said the authorities had forced them to cancel concerts over allegations of offensive lyrics or extremism. After the brief arrest of a popular rap artist late in 2018, Putin told government officials "to take charge of" rap music "if it's impossible to stop it."

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This week, Putin ordered his deputy chief of staff Sergei Kiriyenko to submit a list of "priority actions" to support music and visual arts by Sept. 1.

“Organize a discussion with members of the expert community and expert groups on forms of state support for contemporary popular music, including genres in demand among the youth,” Wednesday’s directive reads.

The decision follows up on Putin’s meeting with his advisory council on culture and the arts on Dec. 15. Some popular rappers in Russia had also met with State Duma lawmakers to address the concert cancellations a week earlier.

In 2017, the opposition accused the Kremlin of using pop and rap music videos to discourage young Russians from attending anti-corruption protests.

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