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Russia Adds Popular YouTuber to 'Terrorist and Extremist' List

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Yury Khovansky has more than 4 million subscribers on YouTube. **yurykhovansky / instagram**

Russia has added a popular YouTuber and comic to its list of "terrorists and extremists" ahead of his criminal trial over a song that mocked the deadly 2002 Moscow theater hostage crisis.

Yury Khovansky, who boasts more than 4 million subscribers, was arrested in St. Petersburg this summer over what appeared to be a leaked performance of the song in which he ironically approves of the Oct. 2, 2002, attack on Moscow's Dubrovka Theater during a sold-out showing of "Nord-Ost."

Related article: Russian YouTuber Charged With 'Justifying Terror' Over Theater Siege Song

Khovansky's name appeared on the state financial watchdog Rosfinmonitoring's database of groups and persons with links to terrorist activities Tuesday.

The designation means that authorities can block Khovansky's bank accounts and banks can deny him loans and credit cards, human rights lawyer Pavel Chikov told The Moscow Times. Khovansky will also be de facto blacklisted among employers, Chikov added.

His name appears on Rosfinmonitoring's list alongside jailed Kremlin critic Alexei Navalny's Anti-Corruption Foundation (FBK) — which has released high-profile investigations into corruption among Russia's elite and sparked mass anti-government rallies in recent years — and his Citizens' Rights Protection Organization.

Khovansky, 31, faces up to 7 years in prison on charges of justifying terrorism if found guilty.

Some 130 hostages in the Dubrovka Theater died and all 40 attackers were killed in the controversial rescue operation that ended the 2 ½-day siege by a Chechen insurgent group.

Khovansky said on social media in February that he regretted performing the Nord-Ost song and blamed a rival blogger for leaking it.

A website that tracks Rosfinmonitoring's database of terrorists and extremists says it consisted of 9,500 names as of Tuesday, many of whom find themselves blacklisted without a court order.

Rosfinmonitoring explains on its website that it has the legal authority to blacklist "terrorists and extremists" ahead of a court ruling.

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