

Rapper Morgenshtern Leaves Russia After Top Investigator's Drug Dealing Claims – Reports

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A court fined Morgenshtern in June over what it deemed to be “drug propaganda” in his songs. **Sergei Vedyashkin / Moskva News Agency**

Popular rapper Morgenshtern has left Russia after the country’s top investigator accused him of drug dealing, the Ura.ru news website [reported](#) Wednesday.

Alisher Valeev, who goes by the stage name Morgenshtern, reportedly boarded a train from the western Russian border city of Smolensk to Minsk, the capital of neighboring Belarus, with his wife and bodyguards.

Earlier Tuesday, Investigative Committee chief Alexander Bastrykin [claimed](#) that “blogger Morgenshtern essentially sells drugs on social media.”

“And we sit and argue in the abstract that human rights cannot be violated and the state needs to move over,” Bastrykin said at a legal conference via videoconference.

Valeyev's lawyer Sergei Zhorin [said](#) he can "neither confirm nor deny" news of his client's alleged departure. Zhorin previously expressed alarm over Bastrykin's comments, which he said could lead to criminal prosecution.

The Kremlin distanced itself from the controversy surrounding Bastrykin's claims, saying the Investigative Committee has the "[prerogative](#) to level accusations supported by evidence and arguments."

Related article: [Russia to Probe Rapper's Criticism of WWII Victory Parade](#)

Valeyev's touring manager [told](#) the Daily Storm news website that the rapper is in Belarus for a private concert, but didn't comment further.

Ura.ru cited its source as saying that they didn't rule out that Valeyev would continue on to Europe instead of returning to Russia afterwards.

If confirmed, Valeyev would be the latest figure to leave Russia under threat of criminal charges against the broader backdrop of an exodus of Kremlin critics.

The "enfant terrible" of Russia's pop scene has drawn the ire of conservative artists over the course of his career.

A court fined Morgenshtern in June over what it deemed to be "drug propaganda" in his songs.

Morgenshtern was also the subject of an Investigative Committee [probe](#) for questioning Russia's annual commemoration of the Soviet victory in World War II after veterans' groups deemed the comments to be offensive.

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