

Ukraine's Eurovision Selection Withdraws Over Crimea Controversy

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Alina Pash / instagram

A Ukrainian singer who was chosen to represent her country in this year's Eurovision Song Contest has withdrawn from the event following controversy over her visit to Russia-annexed Crimea, she announced Wednesday.

Alina Pash, a singer and rapper from western Ukraine, won selection as Ukraine's Eurovision entry with the song "Shadows of Forgotten Ancestors" last week. Even before she was chosen for the contest, she received intense criticism from Eurovision fans for performing in Crimea in 2015 — a year after Russia annexed the peninsula from Ukraine.

"I don't want this virtual war and hatred. The main war now is an external one, which came to my country in 2014," Pash, 28, wrote in an Instagram [post](#). "With a heavy heart I withdraw my candidacy as the representative of Ukraine in the Eurovision Song Contest."

Much of the international community does not recognize Russia's annexation of Crimea, and traveling to Crimea via Russia is illegal under Ukrainian law.

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Pash said she has provided official documentation confirming that she legally crossed into Crimea via Ukraine and not via Russia, but Ukraine's State Border Guard Service said it did not have the document in question.

Following her Eurovision selection Pash was [added](#) to Myrotvorets, a controversial Ukrainian website that [publishes](#) the names of individuals believed to be involved in the Donbas conflict or seen as dangerous to Ukraine's national security.

Myrotvorets considered Pash's visit to Crimea to be a "deliberate violation of the state border of Ukraine."

In her Instagram post, Pash said she and her family have received threats and that her social media accounts had been hacked during the controversy.

"I am a citizen of Ukraine, I adhere to the laws of Ukraine, I try to carry the traditions and values of Ukraine to the world. What this story has turned into is not at all what I put into my song," she wrote.

Pash's withdrawal comes at a time of intense tensions between Russia and Ukraine over Moscow's massing of troops near the Ukrainian border and in Crimea.

Eurovision organizers had been set to review Pash's participation in the contest on Friday.

Eurovision 2022 will be held on May 14 in Turin, Italy after Italian rock band Måneskin won last year's competition in Rotterdam.

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