

Actress and Activist Chulpan Khamatova Has Left Russia

She joins dozens of Russian cultural figures who have left the country.

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Chulpan Khamatova. **Kirill Zykov / Moskva News Agency**

The Russian stage and screen actress Chulpan Khamatova told Ekaterina Gordeyeva in an interview released on Monday that she would not be going back to Russia.

Khamatova, who heads the Gift of Life charity foundation, was abroad when Russia began its attack on Ukraine. “For the first few days I didn’t know what to do,” she [said](#) in the interview. At first I just wanted to stay some place and wait for it to end, but then I was led to believe that it might not be safe for me to return. I’m in Riga for now. I am certainly not a traitor. I love my homeland very much,” she said.

Khamatova is one of Russia’s most celebrated actresses who has acted in dozens of films and television series — most recently playing the lead role in the screen version of Guzel

Yakhina's novel, "Zuleikha." She also plays Raisa Gorbachev in the hit play "Gorbachev" at the Moscow Theater of Nations.

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She is just one of dozens of Russian cultural figures who have left the country since the war began.

Earlier this month the music director of the Bolshoi Theater, Turgan Sokhiev, resigned his post in Moscow and in Toulouse, France. He wrote that he felt he was being forced "to choose between my beloved Russian and beloved French musicians" and so "decided to resign from my positions at both the Bolshoi in Moscow and Orchestre National du Capitole de Toulouse."

At the same time two foreign ballet dancers at the Bolshoi, Jacopo Tissi and David Motta Soares, put in their resignations.

This was followed by the [announcement](#) that Bolshoi prima ballerina Olga Smirnova left for the Dutch National ballet.

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Russian television has also lost several of its best-known on-screen personalities: Channel One colleague Zhanna Agalakova quit her job as Europe correspondent for Channel One, and both Lilia Gildeyeva and Vadim Glusker quite NTV. Gildeyeva had worked at the channel since 2006, and Glusker had been there almost from the start, for 30 years.

Dmitry Linkin, the head designer for Channel One for 24 years, [also quit](#). "I was taught that human life is invaluable," he said.

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