The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Russian Film Director Alexander Sokurov Prevented From Leaving Russia

The director was on his way to a conference in Italy.

June 22, 2022



Sergei Vedyashkin / Moskva News Agency

Renowned Russian film director Alexander Sokurov was prevented from leaving Russia due to "an order of the prime minister," the director told Russian independent news outlet The Insider.

Sokurov, known for his films "Russian Ark" and "Faust," planned to cross the Russian-Finnish border by car and then fly to a conference on arts education in Milan, where he was scheduled to appear on June 22. His trip had been confirmed with the Finnish and Italian authorities, he said.

"At the border in Russia, all these plans were completely foiled," he wrote.

Sokurov filed a complaint with the Presidential Human Rights Council.

“For several hours we couldn’t understand what was going on, where our documents were, and why we were not allowed to cross the border. During that time hundreds of cars were moving by us, entire buses filled with Russian children and other citizens were allowed to pass, while we sat there like we had been arrested, waiting for what – to be arrested for real?”

Sokurov wrote that when it became clear that he would not make his plane to Milan, the head of the border service approached him.

Later he told journalist Ksenia Larina that, "He couldn’t look me in the eyes when he told me that we were prevented from leaving by a directive from Comrade Mishustin, who forbids people like me to cross the border. I have never met Mishustin in my life... I have no idea why he is so prejudiced against me and hates me so much.”

Later when organizers from the Milan conference called the border checkpoint, the security services told them Sokurov was good to go — without specifying where.

When queried by Finnish authorities, the Russian Embassy stated that Russia had not yet lifted the anti-covid restrictions on crossing land borders. According to a Russian government decree, it is only possible to leave Russia by motor vehicles, including regular buses, if there is a valid reason.

Article 27.2 of the Russian Constitution states that “Everyone may freely leave the Russian Federation. Citizens of the Russian Federation shall have the right to freely return to the Russian Federation.”

Original url:
https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2022/06/22/russian-film-director-alexander-sokurov-prevented-from-leaving-russia-a78074