

'Putin Is a Great Guy': Crimean Waterpark Staff Forced to Apologize for Dancing to Ukrainian Pop Song

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Ukrainian pop singer Verka Serdyuchka. [Oli Zitch / flickr \(CC BY-NC-ND 2.0\)](#)

Three employees at a waterpark in annexed Crimea were forced to sing a song in support of Russian President Vladimir Putin after being filmed dancing to a Ukrainian pop song, authorities [said](#) Friday.

A Russian pro-war Telegram channel that describes itself as a “register of Russophobes, Ukrainian Nazis and traitors” [shared](#) video of the waterpark staff members dancing to a song by the Ukrainian pop star Verka Serdyuchka.

The song, called “Gulyanka,” includes the lyrics: “Ukraine has not yet died if we’re partying like this.”

The Crimean branch of Russia’s Interior Ministry said the three unnamed employees were detained for “publicly dancing to a Ukrainian singer's song with an unacceptable meaning.”

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A local court found the employees — aged 19, 20, 26 — guilty of “discrediting” the Russian armed forces under wartime censorship laws and fined them a total of 15,000 rubles (\$150).

Crimea’s Interior Ministry [published](#) video of the three young women — whose faces were blurred — apologizing to “every citizen of the Russian Federation.”

The Telegram channel that first denounced the waterpark employees [published](#) the same apology video, but without blurring their faces and including additional footage of them reciting the lyrics to the iconic 2014 [song](#) “Vladimir Putin is a Great Guy.”

“Vladimir Putin is a great guy. A politician, a leader and a fighter. The president has lifted up the country. Putin has not betrayed Russia,” the three young women sang, their faces showing little enthusiasm.

Apology videos have become widespread in Russia after the 2022 invasion of Ukraine, first being [popularized](#) by Chechen leader Ramzan Kadyrov, whose critics have been forced to issue on-camera apologies since 2015.

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