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YouTube Bans Pro-War Russian Artists

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Singer Shaman (Yaroslav Dronov). **Sergei Kiselev / Moskva News Agency**

Video-sharing website YouTube blocked the channels of several Russian singers and artists who support the country's war in Ukraine on Thursday, following an appeal from the Lithuanian Radio and Television Commission (LRTK).

The accounts of singers Yaroslav Dronov (who goes by Shaman) and Polina Gagarina were among those suspended.

"My YouTube channel was blocked because I am RUSSIAN," Dronov posted on Telegram.

In June, Dronov and Gagarina were included in the 14th package of EU sanctions against Russia for staging concerts in occupied regions of Ukraine and "participating in state-sponsored propaganda events," respectively.

In its appeal to YouTube, LRTK threatened the streaming giant with "fines of up to 50,000 euros [$54,000] or more," on the grounds that continuing to host pro-war artists violates the EU's sanctions.

YouTube also suspended the channels of singers Oleg Gazmanov, Grigory Lepsveridze (better known as Grigoriy Leps), Yulia Chicherina, and actor Vyacheslav Manucharov.

The move follows music streaming service Spotify's decision to remove the songs and profiles of sanctioned pro-war Russian artists in June, having found that their music violates content standards and local laws.

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