The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Ukraine Criticizes Woody Allen for Speaking at Moscow Film Week

August 25, 2025



Woody Allen appears virtually for a talk at Moscow International Film Week. **Dmitry Belitsky / Moskva News Agency**

Ukraine's Foreign Ministry on Monday criticized American filmmaker Woody Allen for "whitewashing" Russia's 2022 invasion after he spoke virtually at a film festival organized by the Moscow Mayor's Office.

"Woody Allen's participation in the Moscow International Film Week is a disgrace and an insult to the sacrifice of Ukrainian actors and filmmakers who have been killed or injured by Russian war criminals in their ongoing war against Ukraine," the ministry wrote on Facebook.

The four-time Oscar-winning director appeared virtually as the guest of honor on Sunday, with Russian state media reporting a packed audience.

Allen praised Soviet-era Russian cinema, highlighting Sergei Bondarchuk's 1965 adaptation of "War and Peace," which won an Oscar and Golden Globe for best foreign-language film. Bondarchuk is the late father of Fyodor Bondarchuk, who hosted the talk with Allen.

Related article: Russian Swimmer Missing After Bosphorus Race in Turkey

The American director said he had no immediate plans to shoot a film in Russia but would consider directing a feature about "how good it feels to be in Moscow and St. Petersburg" if offered, according to Kommersant.

Ukraine's Foreign Ministry accused Allen of "choosing to turn a blind eye" to Russia's 2014 annexation of Crimea and the 2022 full-scale invasion.

"Culture must never be used to whitewash crimes or serve as a propaganda tool. We strongly condemn Woody Allen's decision to bless Moscow's bloody festival with his address," the ministry added in its statement.

An attached image juxtaposed Allen's signature round-frame glasses with blurred lenses against the backdrop of Ukrainian apartment buildings destroyed by bombs.

Allen later rebuked Ukraine's accusations in a statement sent to The Guardian, saying he believes "strongly that Vladimir Putin is totally in the wrong."

"The war he has caused is appalling. But, whatever politicians have done, I don't feel cutting off artistic conversations is ever a good way to help," the director said.

Original url:
https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2025/08/25/ukraine-criticizes-woody-allen-for-speaking-at-moscow-film-week-a90343