

Singing These Songs in Russia Could Land You in Jail

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From left: Pornofilmy, Monetochka, Noize MC and Zemfira, four artists whose tracks have been covered by Stoptime. [punkmovies](#) and [monetochkaliska](#) / Instagram; [Kerrin Key](#) and [Marina Zakharova](#) / Wikimedia Commons (CC BY-SA 2.0)

A group of young street musicians from St. Petersburg was jailed for nearly two weeks after performing songs by exiled anti-war musicians on the streets of their hometown.

Vocalist Diana Loginova (Naoko), drummer Alexander Orlov and guitarist Vladislav Leontyev, who perform together as Stoptime, rose to viral fame this fall with their [performances](#) of popular anti-Putin and anti-war anthems that are effectively banned under wartime censorship laws.

While the three bandmates were jailed 12 to 13 days each for unlawfully organizing a public gathering, Loginova faces two additional charges of “discrediting” the Russian army, which could lead to criminal prosecution.

Here is a closer look at some of the songs that Stoptime has covered that may have

contributed to their arrest:

Noize MC, "[Svetlaya Polosa](#)" (Light Stripe)

Loginova faces an administrative charge of “discrediting” the Russian army with Stoptime’s performance of Noize MC’s “Svetlaya Polosa,” the St. Petersburg courts’ press service [said](#).

City police pointed to a social media post by Noize MC in which he referred to a Ukrainian listener who said they listened to the song during a drone attack on Kyiv.

“Thus, through both the song itself and the commentary regarding its release, [Noize MC] is forming a negative public assessment of Russia’s special military operation,” the police said.

Loginova disputed the police’s claims that she discredited the army in a statement to the court, the exiled Mediazona news website [reported](#).

Observers were quick to note that the song’s lyrics do not directly address the war in Ukraine, the Russian military or Russia at all, instead using metaphors and abstractions to convey its message.

“But I believe that there will be a stripe of light

In this darkness, as hopeless as snow at the poles.

New stems will break through the ashes to the heavens.

Dew will glisten on the leaves in the rays of dawn.”

Monetochka, "[Eto Bylo V Rossii](#)" (It Happened in Russia)

Monetochka’s song — a wistful ballad mourning her past life before the invasion of Ukraine and Russia’s wartime crackdown on culture prompted her to go into exile — [went viral](#) among anti-war emigres in 2024.

The song has been used in thousands of Instagram and TikTok videos showing footage of Russians’ pre-war memories, ranging from personal videos to clips of foreigners partying in Moscow during the 2018 FIFA World Cup and late opposition figures Alexei Navalny and Boris Nemtsov.

“It happened in Russia, which means it was a long time ago.

It happened in Russia, which means it was only a dream.

A dream cannot be stolen, it will stay with me.”

Noize MC, "[Kooperativ Lebedinoye Ozero](#)" (Swan Lake Cooperative)

The song’s title and lyrics are a reference to the ballet “Swan Lake,” a symbol of the Soviet collapse, as well as the notorious Ozero (“Lake”) dacha cooperative which was formed in the mid-1990s by President Vladimir Putin’s inner circle.

A Russian court outlawed the song as “extremist” in May, deeming that it constituted “propaganda for a violent government overthrow” and threatened the “moral and ethical development” of Russia’s youth.

*[“Where have you been for eight years, you f***ing monsters?”](#)*

I want to watch the ballet, let the swans dance.

Let the old man tremble with fear for his ‘Lake.’

Get Solovyov off the screen — let the swans dance.”

Monetochka, [“Ty Soldat” \(You Are a Soldier\)](#)

Loginova also [faces](#) an administrative charge of “discrediting” the army for covering “Ty Soldat,” an unreleased track that Monetochka herself has only performed once.

“It turns out the authorities already have a linguistic analysis of my unreleased song,” Monetochka [wrote](#) on her Instagram, calling on her fans inside Russia to put their safety first.

“You're a soldier, I can see in your eyes that you've been there.

You smell of blood, you're one big scar.

You whistle like the wind across the steppe.

And there's probably no one colder than you.

You're a soldier, and I wanted to patch up your stitches.

To mend your broken heart and sew it back together.

But the metal is stuck fast.

You've probably seen too much.”

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