The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

St. Petersburg's Gazprom Arena Cancels Ye Concerts

August 25, 2026

American rapper and producer Ye. **Hector Retamal / AFP**

St. Petersburg's Gazprom Arena has denied plans to host two October concerts for the rapper Ye, formerly known as Kanye West, triggering a public dispute with the event's promoter.

Say Agency, one of Russia's top organizers for international music acts, insisted Monday that the performances remained scheduled for Oct. 10 and 11. Both the agency and Gazprom Arena initially promoted the shows last week.

However, the venue abruptly reversed its position on Monday, declaring that the concerts "cannot take place" because it was not organizing them and had not signed rental contracts. All promotional materials for the Ye performances were removed from Gazprom Arena's website.

Local news outlet Fontanka reported that the sudden cancellation followed a phone call "from above," suggesting that the Kremlin may have intervened. The outlet added that organizers launched ticket sales before receiving permits from the local authorities.

Despite Gazprom Arena's withdrawal, Say Agency CEO Anna Subcheva said the two concerts would still take place and that formal contracts are expected by Thursday. Subcheva said Ye had already received a 1.5 billion ruble ($17.7 million) advance payment.

Ye previously visited Moscow in 2024 to celebrate the birthday of fashion designer and collaborator Gosha Rubchinskiy. Rumors of a performance at Moscow's Luzhniki Stadium circulated at the time.

The rapper has drawn controversy in recent years for his antisemitic remarks. He has previously voiced admiration for Adolf Hitler, and in May 2025, he released a song called "Heil Hitler."

Some Russian officials and political figures criticized plans to host the Ye concerts in St. Petersburg given his past public displays of Nazi symbols, which is a criminal offense in Russia.

Moscow's Luzhniki Stadium said it would be open to hosting Ye's concert following Gazprom Arena's withdrawal.

Original url:
https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2026/08/25/st-petersburgs-gazprom-arena-cancels-ye-concerts-a93572