The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Saudi Arabia Will Not Host Russia's Intervision Song Contest This Year, TASS Reports

October 24, 2026

Vietnam's contestant Duc Phuc holds up the 2025 Intervision trophy. **Sergei Fadeichev / TASS**

Saudi Arabia will not host the Russian-backed Intervision song contest this year, with the event potentially postponed until 2027, the state-run news agency TASS reported, citing an unidentified source.

The source said a "combination of circumstances" had made it impossible to stage the competition in Saudi Arabia in 2026, without elaborating.

The decision leaves the future of Russia's alternative to Eurovision uncertain a year after Moscow revived the Soviet-era competition.

A source in Riyadh had already cast doubt on the event in August, telling TASS that its dates, participants and program remained unclear.

Saudi Arabia was announced as the next host during the final of the September 2025 contest

in Moscow. Saudi officials later said Russia had yet to formally hand over responsibility for organizing the event.

Related article: Russia's Answer to Eurovision Hits a Flat Note

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov expressed hope in May that escalating tensions in the Middle East would not disrupt plans for the second edition.

Russia revived Intervision after being barred from Eurovision in 2022 following its full-scale invasion of Ukraine. Eurovision's organizers said Russia's participation could bring the competition into disrepute.

Culture Minister Olga Lyubimova subsequently proposed bringing back Intervision, which was held in the Polish city of Sopot in the late 1970s and early 1980s and featured performers from the Soviet Union and other socialist countries.

President Vladimir Putin signed a decree ordering the competition's revival in February 2025, with Russian authorities allocating 750 million rubles ($9.3 million) to stage it.

Organizers said the Moscow contest drew participants from 22 countries. Russia was represented by the pro-Kremlin singer Shaman.

Vietnamese singer Duc Phuc, who won his country's version of "The Voice" a decade earlier, took first place. Kyrgyzstan's Nomad group finished second, followed by Qatar's Dana Al Meer.

Original url:
https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2026/10/24/saudi-arabia-will-not-host-russias-intervision-song-contest-this-year-tass-reports-a94076