

Russian Orthodox Church Lashes Out at Summer Rock Festival for 'Blatant Immorality'

April 22, 2015



Russia's Orthodox Church said Wednesday that one of the country's largest rock music festivals promotes "blatant immorality."

The Kubana festival has been held every summer since 2009 on the Black Sea in the southern Krasnodar region, in an area called Kuban. This year the festival has moved to the Baltic region of Kaliningrad, following a spate of scandals involving performers.

"Upon familiarizing myself with publicly available information about this festival, I was simply shocked: complete degradation, malfeasance, alcoholism," Baltic Bishop Serafim said in a statement on the Kaliningrad Eparchy's website.

He suggested that the regional governor should consider banning the festival, which is scheduled to take place in August.

At last year's festival one of Russia's best-known rappers, Noize MC, performed completely

naked to protest his microphone being turned off when he started speaking out about events in neighboring Ukraine.

Authorities in Krasnodar said this month ahead of a new concert by Noize MC that based on his performance at last year's festival, the concert would be monitored for signs of extremism.

In 2013, one of the Kubana festival's headliners, American band Bloodhound Gang, quickly left the country before the show when Russian authorities opened a criminal case against them for flag desecration.

The band's bassist had recently been filmed wiping his butt with a Russian flag at a show in Ukraine.

The U.S. ambassador to Russia at the time, Michael McFaul, said on Twitter that the flag incident was "disgusting" but would have been protected by the U.S. Constitution's First Amendment.

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