

# Russia Spends Record-Breaking \$1.4M on Pro-War Concerts – BBC

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Singer Viktoria Daineko (L) at a March concert rally marking the anniversary of Russia's annexation of Crimea from Ukraine at Moscow's Luzhniki Stadium. **Maxim Mishin / Moscow Mayor's Office / Moskva News Agency**

The Russian government spent almost 100 million rubles (\$1.4 million) on a series of concerts aimed at boosting support for Moscow's invasion of Ukraine, the BBC's Russian service [reported](#) Wednesday.

Some 34 bands, artists and poets [performed](#) at the pro-war rallies, which have been held across 30 cities in central Russia, the Urals and Siberia from mid-April to early May.

Organizers dubbed the series "Za Rossiyu," or "For Russia," using the Latin letter "Z" which has come to symbolize support for the Russian military's invasion of Ukraine. They described the concerts as a "musical and patriotic marathon."

Rosconcert, an events company run by the Russian Culture Ministry, contracted the Kremlin-aligned Social Research Expert Institute (EISI) to put on the shows, the BBC reported.

The deal was worth 95.3 million rubles (\$1.4 million), making it the largest state contract ever to be signed for such events in Russia.

The agreement marked EISI's first state contract, as well as its first time being tasked with hosting such large-scale events, the BBC reported.

“EISI is not officially engaged in hosting concerts, which shows that the contract was drawn up spontaneously and carelessly from a legal standpoint,” said Ilya Shumanov, head of Transparency International Russia.

EISI was initially set up to monitor regional developments ahead of Russia's 2018 presidential election.

Its website [lists](#) the current Russian Ambassador to Belarus, Boris Gryzlov, as the chairman of its board of trustees.

Independent investigative outlet Proekt [reported](#) in 2020 that EISI received 3.4 billion rubles (\$50 million) in annual donations from the subsidiaries of state-linked Rostec and Rosatom corporations.

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