

Roger Waters denounces pro-imperialist campaign to cancel his concerts in Poland

Kevin Reed
27 September 2022

On Sunday, rock music artist and political activist Roger Waters responded to false media reports that he had canceled two concerts scheduled for April 2023 in Poland. Waters said that neither he nor his managers had scrubbed the Krakow dates, part of his highly successful “This Is Not a Drill” concert tour, and that he intended to go forward with the performances.

Meanwhile, the entertainment platform Live Nation Polska and the concert venue Tauron Arena Krakow admitted on Sunday in a one-line joint statement that they had canceled the shows. The entertainment companies did not provide reasons for their decision.

In an open letter on Facebook addressed to writers Nadeem Badshah of the *Guardian* and Anna Piatkowska of *Gazeta Krakowska*, Waters wrote that the publications responsible for the false information were “wrong in their assertions” that he had canceled the forthcoming Krakow shows. A pro-imperialist smear by Badshah in the *Guardian* on Saturday reported Waters canceled the dates in Poland amid “outrage over his stance on Russia’s war against Ukraine.”

The publications using news of the canceled concerts to attack Waters for his opposition to the US-NATO proxy war in Ukraine included the *New York Times*, which wrote that the Krakow shows were called off because Waters was “roundly criticized there for his view that Ukraine should pursue peace with Russia,” and the *Washington Post*, which claimed that Waters’ exposure of the role of right-wing nationalists and neo-Nazis in Ukraine was considered “victim-blaming.”

As the true character of the imperialist war against Russia in Ukraine is becoming increasingly clear to the public, the political establishment and corporate media are desperate to bolster their official anti-Russia narrative. The disinformation campaign and concert

cancellations in Poland are part of the ongoing effort to silence Waters for his steadfast opposition to the war and his labeling of US President Joe Biden as a war criminal.

The concerts in the “This Is Not a Drill” tour are multimedia experiences that connect the music of Pink Floyd and Waters’ solo career with pressing contemporary issues, including imperialist war, the rise of fascism, the plight of refugees, poverty and inequality and the danger of nuclear annihilation. The 42-date North American leg of the tour is expected to reach more than 1 million people and, on September 16, Waters announced more than 30 dates across Europe beginning in March 2023.

In his open letter, Waters explained that the cancellations were part of a censorship campaign aimed at preventing the Polish public from hearing the message contained in his tour. Waters wrote, “It is true that a town councillor in Krakow, a Mr ?ukasz Wantuch has threatened to hold a meeting asking the council to declare me ‘Persona non grata’ because of my public efforts to encourage all involved in the disastrous war in Ukraine, especially the governments of the USA and Russia, to work towards a negotiated peace, rather than escalate matters towards a bitter end that could be nuclear war and the end of all life on this planet.”

Waters also said that Wantuch had, “urged the good people of Krakow not to buy tickets to my show. Not very democratic sir?” If Wantuch were successful in his aim, Waters wrote, “it will be a sad loss for me” and “it will deny the people of Krakow the opportunity to see my current show, ‘This Is Not A Drill,’ which is an important addition to a lifetime’s body of work. His draconian censoring of my work will deny them the opportunity to make up their own minds.”

In a tweet late Saturday, Waters also posted, “HEY! ?UKASZ WANTUCH, ‘LEAVE THEM KIDS ALONE!’ Correction Roger Waters didn’t cancel Krakow Gigs.”

On September 14, the 79-year-old cofounder of the British progressive rock band Pink Floyd wrote an open letter to Olena Zelenska, wife of Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky, in which he called for “all sides, and I say all sides, not both sides, because clearly this is a proxy war that involves the USA” to agree to an unconditional ceasefire in the war in Ukraine.

Waters went on to say, “The mainstream media in the West seems intent on encouraging public support for escalation of the proxy war between the USA and the Russian Federation that is raging in the Ukraine, even to the point of contemplating playing nuclear chicken. Wow! How very irresponsible of the gentlemen of the press.”

Referencing the October 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis, Waters pointed out that “the two Presidents resolved the crisis by compromising. [Nikita] Khrushchev agreed to remove the Russian missiles from Cuba and as a ‘quid pro quo’ [John F.] Kennedy agreed to remove American missiles from Turkey!”

Waters then posed the question, “Why doesn’t President Biden do the right thing and speak to President Putin? Why have the powers that be in the USA steadfastly refused to address Russian concerns vis a vis the potential existential threat of a fully-fledged, nuclear armed, Ukraine joining NATO on Russia’s doorstep?”

By asking these questions and others, which are on display in the “This is Not a Drill” tour, Waters is helping to expose the criminal recklessness of US imperialism and telling the public the truth about how close the world is right now to nuclear disaster.



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