

'Gay Propaganda' Book Released Abroad, Plans Underground Russian Distribution

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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In the tradition of the Soviet samizdat (self-publication) and in defiance of Russia's ban on "gay propaganda," a collection of love stories by LGBT Russian writers, titled "Gay Propaganda", was announced Thursday.

The book, edited by journalist and author Masha Gessen and writer Joseph Huff-Hannon, "will be distributed within Russia via underground activist networks," publishers OR Books said in a press release Thursday.

The "collection of stories, interviews and testimonial about the lives and loves of LGBT Russians living both in Russia and in exile today" was timed to come out just ahead of the 2014 Winter Olympic Games in Sochi, the statement said.

Russia's "gay propaganda" law, signed by President Vladimir Putin in July, has drawn criticism from scores of celebrities — including Madonna, Lady Gaga, Elton John and Mikhail

Baryshnikov. The law imposes heavy fines on those convicted of promoting "non-traditional relations" toward minors and also prescribes deportation for foreigners who are found guilty.

Published abroad, the new collection of stories is presented in both Russian and English, and will also be available as a free Russian-language e-book. Publishers said they wanted to "smuggle" as many copies of the paper version into Russia as possible.

Like some of the authors and characters in the book, Gessen, a mother of two, who is openly lesbian and a gay rights activist, said she was abandoning her home in Russia because of the country's anti-gay laws, including a proposed bill to remove children from the custody of gay parents.

Correction: A previous version of the article stated that the book was released Thursday. That was actually the day of the announcement of the book's release date – 7 Feb. 2014. The book can be pre-ordered from the publisher's website.

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