

Fire Guts Major Russian Library, Destroying Millions of Books

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The library's archive of rare books, including medieval Slavic texts, is believed to have survived the blaze unharmed.

Millions of books were destroyed in a fire that gutted one of Russia's largest libraries over the weekend, the head of the Russian Academy of Sciences, Vladimir Fortov, told state television channel Russia-24.

A short circuit is believed to have started the fire on Friday evening at the Institute for Scientific Information on Social Sciences in southwest Moscow, state news agencies reported. It took firefighters about 25 hours to extinguish the blaze.

Some 15 percent of the library's 15 million books were destroyed either by the fire or the water used to extinguish the blaze, Fortov told Russia-24 on Saturday. Other state news reports said the library held about 10 million books.

The library's archive of rare books, including medieval Slavic texts, is believed to have survived the blaze unharmed, the institute's director Yury Pivovarov was cited by state media

as saying. No one has been reported injured in the fire.

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