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Moscow Security Officials Raid Stores for Products Bearing 'Nazi Propaganda'

By Anna Dolgov

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Moscow's municipal security officials have raided stores selling books, toys and souvenirs in the Russian capital and have identified more than a dozen items to be investigated for possible Nazi propaganda, a news report said.

The suspect goods included a kit for building models of World War II-era German military machines and a book with a biography of Nazi leader Adolf Hitler, the M24 news site quoted the head of Moscow's security department, Alexei Mayorov, as saying on Wednesday.

A chess set with black pieces shaped like soldiers and officers of the Third Reich and white pieces that represented Red Army fighters was also confiscated by officials, Mayorov said, adding that a list of 17 items had been forwarded to prosecutors for further investigation.

Moscow's security and commerce officials, along with volunteer activists, have raided more that 1,700 stores in the capital, “paying special attention to shops that sell children's toys, souvenirs and books,” Mayorov told M24. The raids were ordered by Moscow Mayor Sergei

Sobyanin, he added.

“We don't confiscate anything. We identify goods that may be extremist or contain Nazi-symbol propaganda, but it's up to the prosecutor's office to give an evaluation after carrying out an expert analysis,” Mayorov said in the report, adding that more raids were to come.

While Russian law bans the public promotion of Nazi symbols, the country's media watchdog Roskomnadzor issued a clarification earlier this month that noted the use of Nazi symbols for “historical, scientific, etc. purposes is considered permissible.”

Despite this, Moscow bookstores earlier this week removed a novel about the holocaust from their shelves because it featured a swastika on its cover, AFP reported. The Pulitzer-prize winning “Maus,” penned by cartoonist Art Spiegelman, details the experiences of Spiegelman's father — a Polish Jew and a Holocaust survivor.

Moscow investigators also opened a criminal case earlier this month over the sale of Nazi figurines at a landmark downtown toy store that was reopened a few weeks ago after years of renovations.

An antique store in the Black Sea resort of Sochi was also fined for selling a Nazi Germany's naval cadet uniform with a swastika through its website, prosecutors said in a statement this month. The offending item has since been confiscated, the statement added.

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