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Russian Culture Minister Says Burning Books 'Completely Unacceptable'

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Culture Minister Vladimir Medinsky

Russian Culture Minister Vladimir Medinsky has denounced an incident in which 53 publications funded by the George Soros Foundation were reportedly incinerated in northern Russia's Komi region.

Medinsky told the Meduza news portal on Thursday that the burning of books and the destruction of monuments, is "completely unacceptable" because it "looks terrible and provokes strange historical associations."

Fifty-three textbooks published with the support of the Soros Foundation — an NGO set up by billionaire philanthropist George Soros which was labeled as "undesirable" in Russia last year — were reportedly confiscated at a college in Russia's northern republic of Komi, the 7x7 local news website reported earlier, citing an official letter from the regional Education Ministry.

According to the letter, the literature was "destroyed by burning." A list of the titles reportedly reduced to ashes published by the 7x7 news outlet showed the works were devoted

to topics including philosophy, logic and art.

The culture minister, known for his loyalty to the Kremlin and his public denouncements of "unpatriotic" art, denied his ministry had anything to do with the incineration and promised to look into the incident.

"I've asked for the material, we will clear up what happened," he was cited as saying in the Meduza report.

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