

Russia's Biggest Cinema Chain Agrees to Screen Controversial Tsar Biopic 'Mathilde'

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Yuri Smityuk / TASS

Russia's biggest cinema chain has decided in favor of screening a controversial film about Tsar Nicholas II's affair with a Polish ballerina.

Last month the "Cinema Park" and "Formula Kino" chain [said](#) it had scrapped plans to screen the "Mathilde" biopic across its cinemas in 22 Russian cities.

That decision was seen as capitulation to a vigilante group called "Christian State — Holy Rus," which threatened that "cinemas would burn" if the film was shown.

Related article: [Russian Tsar's Love Life Sparks Cinema Censorship Row](#)

Now, the film network's public relations director says law enforcement agencies have made steps to improve security at its cinemas following the chain's Sept. 12 statement.

"This allowed us to decide to return the film's release to our cinemas," Alexandra Artamonova told the RBC business outlet on Friday. The film premieres Oct. 26.

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"Mathilde," which depicts Tsar Nicholas II's affair with ballerina Mathilde Kschessinska, has galvanized opposition among Christian Orthodox activists led by State Duma Deputy Natalya Poklonskaya. The Russian Orthodox Church canonized Tsar Nicholas II in 2000.

The "Cinema Park" and "Formula Kino's" decision follows a string of arson attacks last month related to the upcoming release of "Mathilde."

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