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Kremlin Denies Censorship After 'Death of Stalin' Pulled from Cinemas

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The Death of Stalin **Free Range Films**

The Kremlin has said Russia's Culture Ministry did not exercise censorship when it revoked the screening license of a satire on the death of Soviet dictator Josef Stalin.

The ministry revoked the distribution license for "The Death of Stalin" over "ideological animosity," two days ahead of its nationwide release this week, sparking a public outcry.

Related article: 'Death of Stalin' Satire Film Revoked in Russia Over 'Ideological' Concerns

"We disagree that this was a manifestation of censorship," the state-run TASS news agency cited Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov as saying Thursday.

On Wednesday, Peskov defended the ministry's decision, which was made after Russian cultural figures expressed disapproval of the picture at a public screening.

Stalin's great-grandson Yakov Dzhugashvili said he had not watched "The Death of Stalin" but nevertheless supported the Russian ministry's move to withdraw its distribution license.

"How can a person be considered a human if death is a reason for them to laugh? That is subhuman," he told the Govorit Moskva radio station Wednesday.

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