

Russian Prosecutors Investigate LGBT Video Chats With Kids

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A protester being detained during a rally against the so-called "gay propaganda" law. **ITAR-TASS**

Russian prosecutors on Saturday [opened](#) a criminal investigation into "sexual violence" after a YouTube video series published online showed children talking with members of the LGBT community.

The move comes six years after the Russian government banned "homosexual propaganda" aimed at minors. Authorities in Russia have used the law to block pride parades and rights activists [say](#) homophobic attacks have become more frequent, despite recent polling [suggesting](#) that positive attitudes toward equal rights for LGBT groups have reached their highest level in years, especially [among](#) youth.

The videos, posted on the "Real Talk" YouTube channel in early September, featured children interviewing homosexuals, a cross-dresser and a former porn actress, according to Russian media reports. They have since been deleted.

In one of the YouTube channel's videos [shown](#) by state media, a young girl can be heard

asking a gay man: “How can it happen that a boy grows up and cannot love a girl?”

Related article: [Russian Court Orders LGBT Groups to Disband for Posting on Social Network](#)

News website Meduza [said](#) that in one of the interviews a gay man questioned the children on what they knew about homosexuality and explained to them that it was normal.

In September, Russian media [reported](#) that the notoriously conservative Duma deputy speaker Pyotr Tolstoi had urged law enforcement officials to examine the videos, one of which featured a former porn actress. He labeled the videos "amoral" and "ethically impermissible."

According to human rights activist Valentina Dekhtyarenko, some of the children's parents have already been called in for police questioning.

“The mothers of at least two kids said that the police threatened to take away their parental rights, and that child protective services came to their houses,” Dekhtyarenko [wrote](#) on Telegram.

Russian prosecutors said they have interviewed the producers of the videos and are currently establishing the number of “victims.” In Russia, the offense of “sexual violence” can carry a jail term of between 12 and 20 years.

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