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Stores Pull LGBT-Themed Books as Putin Signs Expanded 'Gay Propaganda' Ban

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Book Fair non/fictio№24 in Moscow. **Arthur Novosiltsev / Moskva News Agency**

Russian bookstores have started removing LGBT-themed works from their catalogues after President Vladimir Putin signed a wide-reaching ban on expressions of LGBT identity into law on Monday.

Under the new law that entered into force immediately after its signing, bookstores, film and video game makers, as well as advertisers and media outlets, risk being shut down for any display of LGBT relationships.

Russia's largest bookselling chain Chitay-Gorod and the trendy Moscow bookstore Respublika swiftly moved to remove works that deal with "non-traditional relations" upon the law's signing, according to the independent Novaya Gazeta Europe news outlet.

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When asked about “Leto v Pionerskom Galstuke” (“Summer in a Pioneer Tie”), a young adult bestseller about a relationship between two teenage boys, and its sequel, a Chitay-Gorod worker said:

“You’re not going to buy them anywhere now.”

LitRes, one of Russia’s largest e-book sellers, has asked authors to rewrite their works to comply with the anti-LGBT law, according to the RBC news website.

“If the author doesn’t respond, we’ll analyze the text ourselves and then decide whether to sell the book,” Yevgeny Selivanov, LitRes’ head of content development, said.

He estimates the share of books subject to redactions of LGBT content at 1% of its overall inventory.

Selivanov said “some” LGBT-themed books had already been pulled from LitRes’ catalogue without identifying them by name.

Similarly, Russian libraries and bookstores had moved over the past week to hide works by “foreign agent” authors, including wrapping them in brown paper, displaying them with blank covers or telling readers they are out of stock.

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