Russian Cinemas Screen Pirated Copies of 'Barbie'

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Russian movie theaters have begun showing pirated versions of the Warner Bros. blockbuster "Barbie," media reported Wednesday, amid ongoing efforts to circumvent major Hollywood studios' screening bans in Russia.

Russian film distributors adopted an illicit scheme last year by obtaining digital copies of movies shown in Kazakhstan via the messaging app Telegram — without permission from copyright owners.

Hollywood companies have since cracked down on Russia's bootleg film distribution, initially preventing the country from experiencing the global frenzy of "Barbie" and "Oppenheimer," the Vedomosti business daily reported in July.

But a screen copy obtained from an illegal streaming website has found its way to an open-air movie theater in the Siberian city of Tyumen, according to the broadcaster RTVI.

"We just want to show movies and provide access to some entertainment in these harsh realities we're in," said the organizer of the Tyumen screening.

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Russian film critic Ilya Dolenko [slammed](#) the "Barbie" screening in Tyumen for "sh*tty" dubbing and pop-up gambling ads, which are prevalent on streaming sites for pirated content.

But organizers defended the low-quality showing as "a perfectly normal alternative for ordinary people who want to go out for the evening" and vowed to continue screening "Barbie" with fewer ads.

Russian distributors told Vedomosti that higher-quality "digital premiers" of "Barbie" and "Oppenheimer" will hit theaters in Russia no earlier than this fall given the 100-day gap between theatrical releases.

"Barbie" premiered worldwide on July 21 with the exception of Russia, which major Hollywood studios abandoned after Russian troops invaded Ukraine in early 2022.

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