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Russia Adds Prominent Writer Akunin to 'Extremists and Terrorists' Registry

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Russian writer Boris Akunin. **Alexander Savin / WikiCommons (CC BY-SA 3.0)**

Russian-Georgian writer Boris Akunin (Grigory Chkhartishvili) has been added to state financial watchdog Rosfinmonitoring's list of "extremists and terrorists," the independent Mediazona news website reported Monday.

Akunin, 67, who lives in the U.K., has publicly condemned the Kremlin's war against Ukraine and is a co-founder of the TrueRussia Foundation, which helps people affected by the invasion.

Russia's Investigative Committee, which probes major crimes, announced later that it planned to issue a search warrant for Akunin on charges of "justifying terrorism" and spreading "fake news" about the Russian military.

The crimes carry maximum punishments of seven and 15 years in prison, respectively.

Last week, the prominent Russian publishing house AST halted the printing and sale of

Akunin's books, citing the need for legal evaluation of his public statements, which were met with "widespread public outcry."

"Publication and shipment of books won't resume until this situation is clarified," AST's Director General Pavel Grishkov said.

Booksellers Molodaya Gvardiya, Chitay Gorod and Bukvoed have also suspended sales of Akunin's books.

Related article: Russian Bookstores, Publishing House Ban Books by Prominent Writers Over Anti-War Statements

Last year, State Duma deputy Yelena Yampolskaya called on booksellers to pull Akunin's works from store shelves, vowing to "ask hard-hitting questions" to Akunin's publishers and bookstores due to his anti-war stance.

Akunin is best known for his series about imperial Russia, especially the Fandorin mysteries, as well as his "History of the Russian State." His books have been translated into many languages and adapted into television series.

In 2021, Akunin became the most popular writer in Russia, according to the audiobook and e-book streaming service Storytel.

Akunin responded to the charges with a restatement of his anti-war position and information on where his books can still be purchased in a post on his Facebook page.

"Terrorists have declared me a terrorist," he wrote on Monday.

"Well, I stopped being surprised by news from Russia a long time ago... But there is one thing about Facebook: those of you living in Russia, please don't put 'likes' on my posts. These days that might be considered collusion."

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