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Siberian Queer Bar Shuts Down After Police Raid

February 26, 2024



Elton Bar Krasnoyarsk

A queer bar in the Siberian city of Krasnoyarsk has announced that it will close following a police raid over the weekend, local media reported Monday.

The abrupt closure of the bar — called Elton — came after Yekaterina Mizulina, who has spearheaded a crackdown on anti-war activists in Russia, vowed to contact the police over a "provocative" party where drag show performers were seen dancing in soldier uniforms at the bar during a military holiday last week.

"The LGBT bar in Krasnoyarsk not only didn't close but held a provocative party on Defenders of the Fatherland Day," Mizulina said on the messaging app Telegram on Saturday.

On Sunday, the local branch of Russia's Interior Ministry announced it had carried out a drug and alcohol inspection at Elton the day before and detained 12 people for questioning.

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"When the propaganda of hate encourages clashes between citizens, we can't ensure your safety and the safety of our employees," the ngs24.ru news website quoted the bar's management as saying in its announcement of the closure.

Elton's owner, who police said was being investigated over last week's party, told local media that he had received "signals" from law enforcement authorities that the bar would be shuttered.

In December, police raided Elton and briefly detained 20 visitors following complaints about men dancing and kissing each other.

Russia's Supreme Court designated the non-existent "international LGBT movement" as "extremist" last year, leading to raids on gay clubs and sparking fears that authorities could use the ban to persecute LGBTQ+ people.

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