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Russia Blocks Screenings of New Trump Biopic

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A still from "The Apprentice"

A new film about Donald Trump will not be shown in Russian movie theaters after its local distributor failed to receive a screening license from the authorities, the Vedomosti business newspaper reported Monday.

Distributor Atmosfera Kino was due to release "The Apprentice," directed by Ali Abbasi, at theaters across Russia last month. However, the release date was pushed back to Nov. 14 for unknown reasons.

"'The Apprentice' will not be released in Russia because it has not received a distribution license," Vedomosti quoted the company as saying in a statement. It did not explain the reason behind the decision.

The film, which depicts Trump as a young man under the mentorship of the notorious New York lawyer Roy Cohn, opened in U.S. movie theaters last month. It premiered at the Cannes Film Festival in May.

“The Apprentice” stirred controversy earlier this year over a scene that shows Trump, portrayed by actor Sebastian Stan, raping his first wife Ivana after she makes fun of him for gaining weight and going bald. That scene is a fictionalized account of an alleged 1989 attack that was previously detailed in the couple’s divorce proceedings.

Trump, who secured a second term in the White House last week, slammed the film as a “cheap, defamatory, and politically disgusting hatchet job” that he hoped would be a box-office bomb. His lawyers have vowed to sue the film’s producers, calling it “garbage” and “pure malicious defamation.”

Before it was banned in Russia, “The Apprentice” was shown last month at a documentary film festival in St. Petersburg.

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