

Police Arrest Publishing House Staff Over Alleged LGBTQ+ Books

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TASS

Law enforcement authorities searched the offices of Russia's largest book publisher and arrested several employees over alleged LGBTQ+ "propaganda" and "extremism," Russian media and rights groups reported Thursday.

According to the state-run TASS news agency, 11 employees of Eksmo Publishing House were [arrested](#) on Wednesday. Three have been [charged](#) with distributing "LGBT propaganda" and engaging in "extremist" activities, according to lawyer Maxim Olenichev of the legal advocacy group Perviy Otdel.

Authorities [accuse](#) the employees of publishing literature with LGBTQ+ themes, Perviy Otdel said. Russia's Supreme Court outlawed the so-called "international LGBT public movement" as an extremist organization in 2023, even though no such entity formally exists.

Those arrested on Wednesday reportedly [include](#) Eksmo's senior managers, as well as staff from its shipping and accounting departments. The rights group OVD-Info and BBC Russia

[noted](#) that at least two of those arrested were no longer employed by Eksmo at the time of their arrests.

Related article: [St. Petersburg Prosecutors Order Independent Bookstore to Remove LGBTQ+ Books](#)

TASS, citing the publisher, later [reported](#) that its head of distribution was released after being questioned by the police. Eksmo said it was cooperating with the investigation.

Following the police searches and arrests, Eksmo reportedly [sent](#) its business partners a list of 50 books flagged by authorities as violating Russia's laws against "LGBT propaganda," according to Novaya Gazeta Europe.

Among those books is the 2021 coming-of-age bestseller "Summer in a Pioneer Tie," originally published by Popcorn Books, in which Eksmo acquired a majority stake in 2023.

Popcorn Books was the first publisher [targeted](#) under Russia's expanded anti-LGBTQ+ legislation.

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