

Russia's Leading Publisher Shuts Queer-Interest YA Imprint Months After 'Extremism' Arrests

January 13, 2026



Alexander Avilov / Moskva News Agency

Russia's largest book publisher Eksmo has [shut down](#) its embattled young-adult literature subsidiary Popcorn Books, which became a primary target of the Kremlin's crackdown on so-called "LGBT extremism."

Eksmo [told](#) the *Vedomosti* business newspaper Tuesday that the brand Popcorn Books has become associated "with a broader context than the publication of books."

The statement appears to refer to the May 2025 [raids and arrests](#) of several Eksmo employees on suspicion of violating Russia's anti-LGBTQ+ "propaganda" and "extremism" laws.

Three top managers of Popcorn Books and another Eksmo imprint Individuum remain under house arrest as part of the investigation. The charges of organizing the activities of an "extremist organization" carry a potential sentence of up to 10 years in prison.

Russia's Supreme Court declared the so-called "international LGBT movement" an extremist organization in late 2023, effectively criminalizing any public displays of LGBTQ+ lifestyles and advocacy.

"This prevents the publisher from further development," Eksmo told *Vedomosti* without mentioning the arrests.

Related article: [Russian Publisher Raided for Selling Books By Renowned Writer on 'Extremists and Terrorists' List](#)

Eksmo acquired a majority stake in Popcorn Books in 2023 following the 2021 success of its queer-themed bestseller "Summer in a Pioneer Tie," which centers on a relationship unfolding in a Soviet summer camp between a teenage pioneer and a camp counselor.

The parent company appeared to [distance](#) itself from the imprint after the 2025 arrests.

Popcorn Books [confirmed](#) its closure in an emotional post Tuesday in which it thanked readers for their support "even when we barely had the strength to go on."

"You are our foundation: humane, sincere and open to different voices and experiences," Popcorn Books wrote on Telegram.

The publisher also appeared to refer to the arrest of its top managers, saying:

"Every day, we think of those we worked with for many years and are deeply concerned for them."

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