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Eksmo CEO Released From Police Custody After Questioning

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Yevgeny Kapyev. **Alexander Avilov / Moskva News Agency**

The CEO and several other employees of Russia's largest book publishing company were released from police custody on Thursday after being questioned as part of a criminal investigation into so-called LGBTQ+ "extremism."

Eksmo CEO Yevgeny Kapyev and his colleagues were detained last week after federal investigators earlier launched a probe into LGBTQ+ "propaganda" and "extremism."

Pro-Kremlin media at the time reported that the investigation focuses on the distribution of LGBTQ+ literature, specifically the 2021 bestseller "Summer in a Pioneer Tie."

The novel, which depicts a relationship between a teenager and a counselor at a Soviet-era summer camp, has been a frequent target of conservative lawmakers.

In 2023, Eksmo acquired Popcorn Books, the original publisher of "Summer in a Pioneer Tie," after it was forced to close under legal pressure.

Related article: CEO of Russia's Largest Book Publisher Detained in LGBTQ+ 'Extremism' Probe

Russian media reported Thursday that police have not pressed any charges against Kapyev, but investigators allegedly issued him a summons to appear for further questioning later in the week. Eksmo denied that report.

Kapyev, writing on his personal Telegram channel, said he is not ready to discuss his detention with the media.

Anonymous law enforcement sources told the state-run news agency TASS that Kapyev and his colleagues are named as witnesses in a bribery case involving Popcorn Books. Three senior managers from Popcorn Books remain under house arrest as part of a probe into LGBTQ+ "propaganda" and "extremism."

Russia's Supreme Court in late 2023 designated the so-called "international LGBT movement" as an "extremist" organization, effectively banning any public display of LGBTQ+ symbols.

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