

Chechen Soccer Team in Hot Water After Referee Called a 'Donkey'

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Chechen soccer team Terek Grozny could face stiff penalties from the Russian Football Union after officials insulted the referee following Sunday's 0-0 draw against Rubin Kazan, with the stadium announcer labeling him a "donkey."

The union's disciplinary committee has scheduled a hearing on Wednesday to discuss the consequences of the events in Grozny.

Chechnya's strongman leader, Ramzan Kadyrov, who serves as Terek's honorary president, called FIFA referee Mikhail Vilkov a "sellout" after he sent off Rizvan Utsyev late in the game and continued the criticism in what was meant to be an apology.

"I want to apologize to the entire soccer world for my remarks but not to the referee," the Kremlin-backed Kadyrov said in comments posted on his account on the Instagram photo sharing service.

"It was a terrible game because the referee was biased. He did everything possible to change the outcome of the match: didn't award a [clear] penalty and gave Utsyev a second yellow."

Vilkov was also insulted by the stadium announcer, who called the referee a donkey over the loudspeaker.

Terek, who remained in eighth place after the draw, could face a fine of up to 500,000 rubles (\$16,300) or incur sanctions on their new stadium, named after Kadyrov's father Akhmat, who was killed in a bomb blast on the old grounds in May 2004.

But many Russian soccer experts think that Terek will only be forced to pay a small fine, and that Kadyrov is unlikely to face any sanction because the Kremlin does not want to destabilize the situation in the formerly war-torn North Caucasus region.

"It's a total disgrace to our game. If people at his [Kadyrov's] level make such outrageous comments, then what should we expect from ordinary fans?" former player Valery Reingold, now a media expert, told the Sport-Express daily on Monday.

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