

Mayor of Sochi Says City Has No Gays

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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A security officer detaining a man who was protesting Russia's anti-gay legislation during the Olympic torch relay in Voronezh earlier this month. **Andrei Nasonov**

The mayor of Sochi, which will host the Winter Olympics next month, said that there are no gays in the city.

"We just say that it is your business, it's your life," mayor Anatoly Pakhomov told the BBC's Panorama program, scheduled to be broadcast on Monday, Reuters reported. "But it's not accepted here in the Caucasus where we live. We do not have them in our city."

Pakhomov seems to have taken a page from the book of former Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, who skirted questions about his country's treatment of homosexuals by saying in New York in 2007 that there were no gays in Iran.

Ahmadinejad's spokesman later claimed his boss had been misrepresented by Western media, and simply meant that there were not as many gays in Iran as there are in the U.S.

Western governments and gay rights activists around the world have criticized Russia for adopting a law last summer that criminalizes the dissemination of "gay propaganda" to minors.

President Vladimir Putin said in October that gays would be welcome at the Black Sea resort for the Games and that there was no discrimination of homosexuals in Russia, however, a number of celebrities, including Lady Gaga and gay British actor Stephen Fry, have called for a boycott of the Games to protest the law.

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