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Controversial Russian Film 'Leviathan' Won't be Shown in Pskov

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"Leviathan" will not be shown to the people of Pskov.

The controversial film "Leviathan," which was as widely acclaimed by critics abroad as it was lambasted by officials in Russia, will not be shown to the people of Pskov, the Interfax news agency reported Monday.

Yury Mikheyev, manager of Pskov's only local film distribution company, said the decision not to show the film was motivated by fear that it would fail to generate sufficient public interest. Pskov is an ancient Russian town of 203,000 people on the border with Estonia.

"We would show it with pleasure, but we were not allowed to. We were told that there is no confidence that the film will be successful in Pskov," Mikheyev told Interfax. He doesn't believe cinemas in Pskov will miss out if the film doesn't play there, he added.

The film premiered in Russian cinemas last week after all profane words were removed from its script in accordance with Russian law. It reportedly drew in $110,000 at its premiere in Russian movie theaters Thursday.

"Leviathan" depicts a story of a Russian man fighting a corrupt mayor over a plot of land. It was shot in the Murmansk region, an area known for its natural beauty.

The film has been nominated for an Oscar in the best foreign-language film category, and has already won big at Cannes and the Golden Globes.

"Leviathan" has been denounced by Russia's Culture Ministry, which had provided funding for it, and the influential Russian Orthodox Church, for its negative depiction of Russian life. The Church's spokesman last month accused the film of pandering to Western prejudices.

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