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# Russian Anti-Abortion Politician Against Use of Public Funds for 'Child Murder'

By The Moscow Times

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A Russian regional governor has denounced the use of public funds to pay for abortions, arguing that Russian women's pro-choice "tendency" was curbing population growth. Governor Sergei Morozov of Ulyanovsk, a city on the Volga River, said he supported a recent appeal by the head of Russia's Orthodox Church, Patriarch Kirill, to ban the use of public health insurance to pay for abortions which were not strictly necessary for medical reasons, Regnum news agency reported Thursday. He also took issue with Russia's history of expanding women's rights shortly after the Bolshevik Revolution. "As of today, only 55 of the world's 194 countries allow abortion. Unfortunately, Russia tops this list, having become the first nation that allowed ending pregnancy for no apparent reason, simply based on a woman's wish. This tendency is very badly affecting our demographic situation," he said Thursday at a regional government meeting, according to Regnum. "We don't prohibit abortions, but we are not going to pay for child murder," he added. Under Bolshevik revolutionary Vladimir Lenin's rule, the Soviet Union became the first country to legalize abortion in 1920, making it widely available at no cost. But dictator Josef Stalin reversed the ruling in the 1930s in a bid to increase population growth, allowing for abortion to be

conducted only on medical grounds. Following a series of legal amendments during subsequent decades, abortion is now legal in Russia during the first 12 weeks of pregnancy, with an additional exception up to 22 weeks in case of rape, and at any time for medical reasons. But the past few years have seen increased calls for restricting abortion amid government concerns about a low birth rate, complaints from the military about a lack of conscripts for the country's annual military draft, and the rising influence of the Russian Orthodox Church.

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