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Anime Festival Canceled in Russia's Dagestan After 'Debauchery' Claims

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Alexander Avilov / Moskva News Agency

An anime festival was canceled and its organizer detained in Russia's southern region of Dagestan after a local comedian reportedly criticized the event for "debauchery" in a social media post.

AniDag has been held in the Muslim-majority North Caucasus region since at least 2011. At least two pop music concerts have been called off in recent months in Dagestan following social media outcries.

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This year's AniDag anime festival was canceled on Sunday following complaints to the host venue's director, the regional kavkaz-uzel.eu news website reported Monday. Police apprehended AniDag organizer Saida Tuchalova and held her for more than three hours,

kavkaz-uzel.eu said.

“The Avar Theater in the city of Makhachkala is literally holding a so-called festival of freaks right now,” reads a widely shared and now-deleted Instagram post by a local comic.

“Those who are silent in protesting against debauchery in Dagestan can lap it up, a festival of gays and transvestites isn’t far off in this city,” reads the screenshot of the post reportedly authored by the comic Eldar Iraziyev.

Local freelance journalist Svetlana Anokhina called on Dagestani prosecutors to investigate Iraziyev’s post for “calls for violence and incitement of hatred.”

“I believe a situation threatening the health and maybe the lives of the event’s participants, with minors among them, unfolded because of Iraziyev’s instigation,” Anokhina wrote on Facebook.

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