

Dagestan Cancels K-Pop Supergroup BTS' 'Gay' Movie

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Makhachkala, the capital city of Russia's majority Muslim republic of Dagestan, has canceled the premiere of South Korean boy band BTS' concert movie over warnings against the "Korean homosexuals."

BTS, a seven-member group also known as the Bangtan Boys, has gained a worldwide following since 2013, winning over fans across continents and helping popularize a music genre further afield from Asia. Their concert documentary "BTS World Tour: Love Yourself in Seoul" premieres worldwide next month, including in scores of Russian cities on Jan. 26. The film follows the group's November hit, "Burn the Stage: The Movie," which "set global cinema alight," [writes](#) the Variety entertainment weekly.

A major movie theater in Makhachkala, however, canceled tickets sales to the new BTS movie one day after its launch, the Kommersant business daily [reports](#).

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“We need to stop this outrage ... about the band BTS (seven Korean homosexuals),” a local group that opposes “over-the-top immoral behavior” wrote on Instagram, using a derogatory term to describe the band members' purported sexual orientation. A screenshot of the Instagram post was [published](#) by the md-gazeta.ru news website.

Kommersant explains that Dagestani Instagram has several popular groups that “oppose ‘freaks,’ ‘debauchery,’ ‘the modernization of fellow citizens,’ as well as any concerts that do not meet the teachings of Islam.”

The BTS movie's screenings in Russia have been [led](#) by the fans' grassroots social media campaign. Kommersant reports that Makhakala's Cinema Hall began selling tickets on Dec. 20, after more than 800 fans campaigned to screen the documentary in their city.

Local fans were recommended to download a pirated copy or travel elsewhere, including to the neighboring Muslim-majority city of Grozny, Chechnya, to watch the canceled documentary.

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“We all think that these people have nothing else to do,” Kommersant quotes a 16-year-old fan Veriko, who plans to watch the film in Grozny with 10 of her friends, as saying.

Having successfully chased BTS out of Dagestan, local groups have now trained their ire, Kommersant reports, on Mikhail Bulgakov's “Master and Margarita” staged in a local medical school. According to Kommersant, their anger was provoked by a short video of the classic novel's devil's ball shared on social media.

Dagestan has previously canceled Russian pop singer Yegor Krid's show at the urging of MMA champion and hometown kid Khabib Nurmagomedov. Last month, the republic disrupted an anime festival over claims of “debauchery.”

Reuters contributed reporting to this article.

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