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# Swimming Pool in Russia's North Caucasus Must Overturn Ban on Women

## Court rules the pool's decision to ban women was illegal and a violation of human rights, but not discrimination.

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Men and women in the North Caucasus often visit sports facilities on separate days, but the Anzhi Arena in January prohibited women entirely. **Kiriil Zykov / Moskva News Agency**

A swimming pool in southern Russia that banned women has been ordered to reverse its decision, the Kommersant business daily reported Wednesday.

The prosecutor's office in the majority Muslim republic of Dagestan ruled that the Anzhi Arena's actions were illegal and a violation of human rights, although it stopped short of calling the ban discrimination.

**Related article**: 'Men Only': Largest Pool in Russia's North Caucasus Bans Women

“The restriction on female visitors to the pool contains formal signs of discrimination, but isn’t discrimination itself,” Kommersant quoted a statement from the prosecutor’s office as saying. “There is no direct intention aimed at the impairment of women’s rights and legitimate interests.”

Men and women in the North Caucasus often visit sports facilities on separate days, but the Anzhi Arena in January prohibited women entirely. The sports complex said on Instagram that it had introduced the rule for commercial reasons because there were almost no visitors on women’s days, but later deleted the post.

Olga Gnezdilova, a lawyer with the Rights Initiative Project, told Kommersant that the ruling is a “good result,” despite the original ban being obvious discrimination. The pool would face fines and a suspension of activities if it defied the ruling, she added.

Anzhi Arena described the 50-meter pool as the North Caucasus region’s largest when it opened in the summer of 2019.

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