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Russian Department Store's Women-Only Parking Spots Spark Backlash

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Some called the spaces sexist while others said they violated men's rights. **Yegor Aleyev / TASS**

A Russian department store has sparked unintended backlash after it introduced pink parking spots for its female clientele.

The Central Department Store in the city of Kazan 800 kilometers east of Moscow painted 10 parking spaces pink and marked them with white symbols for women late last month. Its general director said the spaces were made "with love" for girls, young mothers, grandmothers and grandfathers.

Local residents voiced their displeasure with the parking spaces, with some calling them sexist and others accusing the store of violating men's rights.

Each of the spots — which are nearly twice as long as normal parking spaces — is also marked with a sign that reads "For female customers."

The Central Department Store's head of development and client relations said the spaces were

lengthened to 4.4 meters from 2.5 meters "for the auto-lady's convenience," as the larger spaces are more "convenient for loading purchases into the trunk."

Kazan prosecutors quickly caught wind of the gender-specific spots and said they show "signs of discrimination against drivers on the basis of gender."

Kazan traffic police ordered the store to do away with the pink spaces, saying: "There's no concept of men's or women's parking in the traffic regulations. There are concepts about the width of parking spaces and the number of spaces for disabled people, but not according to gender."

The department store complied with the traffic police order, removing the parking spaces on Aug. 6.

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