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Police in Russia's Dagestan Arrest Man for Active Shooter 'Joke'

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Law enforcement block off University Square in Makhachkala. **Gyanzhevi Gadzhibalayev / TASS**

Police in the North Caucasus republic of Dagestan have arrested a man after he made false claims on Tuesday night that a shooting in the region's capital city was imminent, coming just days after armed attacks on local religious sites left nearly two dozen people dead.

The man, whose name law enforcement authorities did not reveal, reportedly approached a young woman in the Dagestani capital of Makhachkala and told her that "there's going to be a shootout." The woman then called the police, who quickly arrived at the scene and cordoned off the area.

Videos shared on social media showed armed police officers rushing through the streets of Makhachkala on Tuesday night as they responded to the reported active shooter incident. Residents had been advised to stay in their homes amid rumors of a possible attack.

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The high alert turned out to be the result of an ill-timed “joke” by the unidentified man, according to Dagestan’s police spokeswoman, Guyana Gariyeva.

“Considering the tragedy that took place in recent days in Dagestan, we can only say that this [joke] was unwise, to put it mildly,” Gariyeva said, referring to Sunday’s deadly attacks on a Russian Orthodox Church and Synagogue in the region.

In an on-camera apology, the detained man claimed the young woman who called the police had “misinterpreted” his comments.

Gariyeva did not say whether the man would face any charges, but warned not to “joke like that anymore so that your jokes don’t lead us to you.”

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