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Chechnya's Mufti Slams Ban on Hijabs in Schools

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Chechnya's Supreme Mufti Salah Mezhiev. **grozny.tv**

The republic of Chechnya's supreme mufti on Tuesday decried bans on hijabs and other religious clothing in schools as unconstitutional, arguing that the restrictions violate a person's right to freedom of conscience and religion.

Supreme Mufti Salah Mezhiev issued his criticism a week after education authorities in central Russia's Vladimir region ordered a ban on religious clothing, including hijabs and niqabs, in public schools.

"We're bewildered by the fact that this prohibition order specifically and only targets Islamic religious clothing," Mezhiev said. "We hope that is due to an inadequate amount of work that was put into developing the order and not the result of a concerted effort against Muslims."

Mezhiev, who also serves as an adviser to Chechen leader Ramzan Kadyrov, said he did not believe calls for banning hijabs had Russia's national security interests in mind. He urged anyone who supports banning religious clothing to volunteer to fight in Moscow's war against

Ukraine like “the thousands of fighters professing Islam.”

Calls to ban hijabs in Russia have resurfaced this year after a series of deadly attacks claimed by Islamic militants led to an uptick in discrimination and xenophobia in the country.

Regional authorities previously issued school hijab bans in Russia’s Stavropol region in 2013 and the republic of Mordovia in 2015. Russia’s Supreme Court upheld both decisions.

Russian President Vladimir Putin himself spoke out against students wearing hijabs at school in 2012 and 2013.

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