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Russia's Top Islamic Authority Backtracks on Polygamy Ruling

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Russia's top Islamic authority reversed its decision to permit marriage between a man and multiple women after law enforcement authorities said the ruling violated the law.

The Ulama Council of Russia's Spiritual Administration of Muslims announced last week that it issued a fatwa, or Islamic legal ruling, that allowed men to marry multiple women in various circumstances. These included situations where a wife is "unable to bear children" due to age or health reasons, or if she "does not want to have children."

However, on Monday, media reported that Russia's Prosecutor General's Office sent a letter to the head of the Spiritual Administration of Muslims requesting the fatwa's revocation, citing its contradiction with Russian law, which prohibits polygamous marriages.

"The state respects internal regulations of religious organizations as long as those regulations do not run counter to the laws of the Russian Federation," Interfax quoted an unnamed source at the Prosecutor General's Office as saying.

Following the request, the Islamic authority withdrew the fatwa.

“This is God’s will, and the Ulama Council of Russia’s Spiritual Administration of Muslims sees no reason to start an argument over this,” Imam Shamil Alyautdinov, the council’s head, wrote on Telegram late Monday.

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