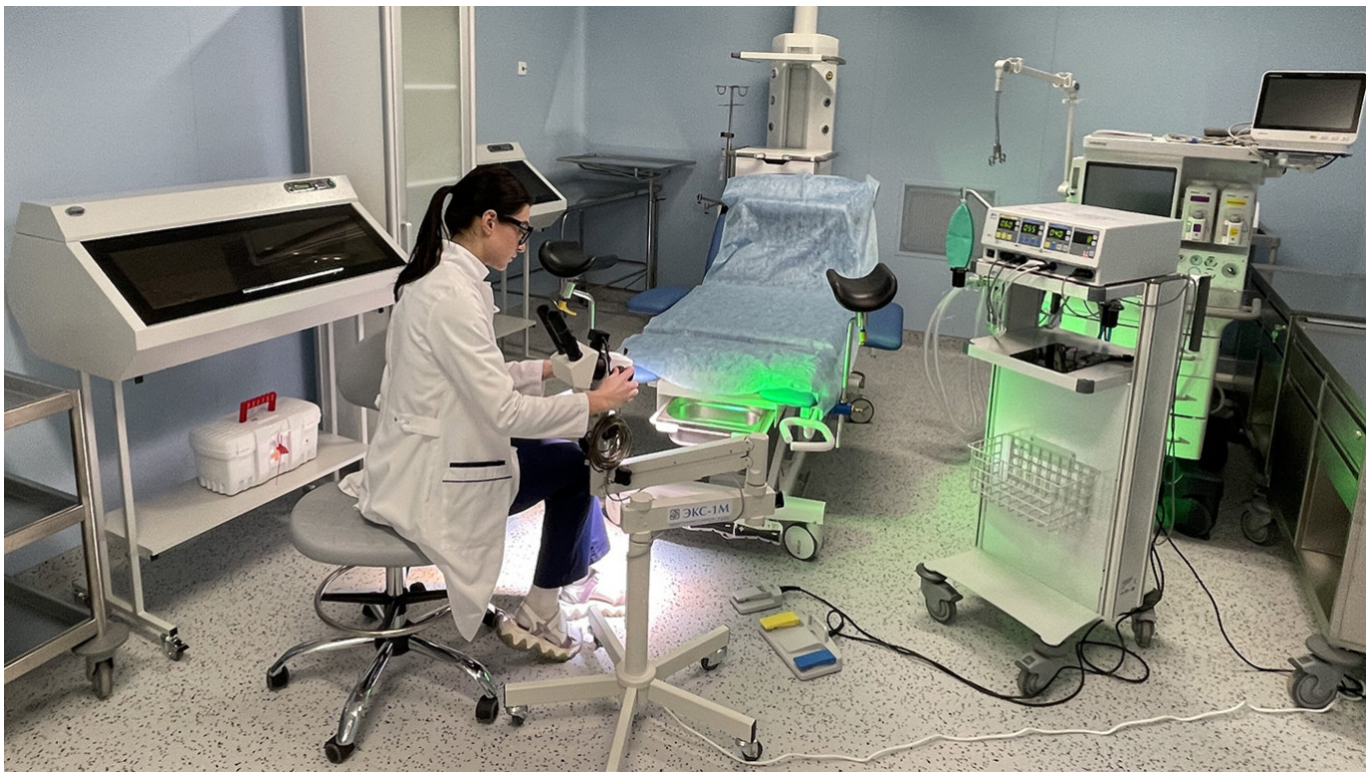
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Russia's Vologda Region Moves Toward Total Abortion Ban

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Moskva News Agency

Authorities in northwestern Russia's Vologda region are considering banning abortions in both private and state-run clinics, a move that would make it the first Russian region to implement a total ban if approved.

Vologda region Governor Georgy Filimonov said Thursday that local officials plan to discuss the measure with representatives from public and private medical institutions later this month.

"We will talk about the need to refuse abortions even in private clinics," Filimonov said at a government meeting, according to the state-run TASS news agency.

He added that the initiative is being developed in collaboration with public organizations and state institutions, as well as the Russian Orthodox Church.

Related article: In Russia, International Safe Abortion Day Is a Reminder of Reproductive Rights Backsliding

A nationwide attempt to ban abortions in private clinics was rejected by lawmakers in December 2023. While Russia maintains relatively liberal abortion laws, several regions have introduced local restrictions as part of efforts to boost birth rates amid a demographic decline.

Private clinics in at least nine Russian regions have already halted abortion services, while at least 15 regions have introduced fines for "coercing" women into terminating pregnancies.

President Vladimir Putin has encouraged women to give birth while cautioning officials against imposing strict legal restrictions on abortion access.

Filimonov's remarks announcing the abortion ban discussions were deleted from public broadcasts late Thursday.

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