

Samara Governor in Hot Water Over 'Bathhouse With Girls' Comments

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Governor Vyacheslav Fedorishchev. kremlin.ru

The governor of the southern Samara region has found himself caught in the middle of a scandal after appearing to joke online about visiting a bathhouse with sex workers alongside members of his staff, the exiled news outlet Vyorstka [reported](#) on Friday.

“To the bathhouse! Call the girls,” Governor Vyacheslav Fedorishchev allegedly [wrote](#) on Thursday in the comments section of a local opposition Telegram channel known for criticizing him. The channel, called Sukhodrishchev, is a play on the governor’s name and a character from a 1995 Russian comedy.

Vyorstka said it verified the authenticity of the comments, which appeared to have been posted from the accounts of Fedorishchev and his aides, through leaked databases and sources familiar with the officials.

The banter, which appeared to be an inside joke, was allegedly carried out by Fedorishchev himself without the involvement of his press team, two officials in the Samara administration

told Vyorstka. One source described it as the governor's emotional response to online criticism.

Confronted by reporters on Thursday, Fedorishchev [denied](#) knowing anything about the Telegram channel, even though just last week he had [praised](#) it as "an interesting channel which I read every morning." Before walking away, the governor [added](#): "But since you're asking, tell everyone to switch to [the Kremlin-backed messaging app] Max."

At 36, Fedorishchev is Russia's youngest regional governor and is seen by Kremlin insiders as part of a [new generation](#) of officials who embrace publicity, pick fights with local business elites and experiment with policies favored by Moscow but unpopular with local voters.

Yet his bathhouse gaffe may have gone too far. Local officials told Vyorstka they expect his dismissal, noting that the governor himself [hinted](#) at rumors of a Kremlin summons in his comments on the Telegram channel.

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