The Moscow Times
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Chechnya to Host Brazil 2002 Team for Friendly

February 16, 2011

ROSTOV-ON-DON — Brazil's 2002 World Cup-winning team will play a friendly match next month in Chechnya, a local official said Wednesday.

Chechnya's government web site cited sports minister Haidar Alkhanov as saying Kaka, Ronaldinho and the recently retired Ronaldo are likely to feature in the March 10 match. Chechnya president Ramzan Kadyrov will captain a team comprising local players.

There was no word of confirmation from Brazilian officials, but if the match goes ahead it will be the third major football coup in a month for the poverty-stricken region.

Earlier this month, former Dutch midfielder Ruud Gullit agreed to coach Kadyrov's team, Terek Grozny, and veteran Brazilian left back Roberto Carlos left Corinthians to join Anzhi Makhachkala in neighboring Dagestan.

"This will be a powerful stimulus for Terek players and a huge present for Chechen supporters," the site quoted Alkhanov as saying.

It is unclear how much the Brazilian team is to be paid. The value of Gullit's 18-month contract is thought to be about $5 million per year. Roberto Carlos' reported two-year deal with Anzhi is worth $9 million per year.

Alkhanov said Gullit promised to use his connections to persuade as many Brazil players to come to Chechnya as possible for the friendly.

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