

Royal Group Plans to Invest Big in Chechnya

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Royal Group, run by the brother of Abu Dhabi's ruler, may invest several hundred million dollars in housing and agriculture projects in Chechnya, said Ramzan Kadyrov, the region's leader.

Royal Group, which is active in media, trade, financing, real estate, manufacturing, construction and technology, recently sent a delegation to the region, Kadyrov said in an interview last weekend.

"We proposed some projects to them, and they really liked them," Kadyrov said. "They said they are ready to participate in building homes and in the agricultural sector."

Russia is trying to lure investment to the North Caucasus, which has seen almost daily attacks on government officials and police.

Royal Group will spend as much as \$100 million in the first phase of a housing project, said Samia Bou Azza, a spokeswoman.

The total value "may go up in different phases," and the company is considering investment in livestock, dairy and the power industry, she said last week.

The Chechen leader said he first discussed investment opportunities at a meeting in June last year with the crown prince of Abu Dhabi, Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan. He then met Sheikh Tahnoun bin Zayed al Nahyan, who is chairman of Royal Group and another son of Abu Dhabi ruler Sheikh Khalifa Bin Zayed Al Nahyan, last year.

Chechnya also wants to create its own oil producer, Kadyrov said.

"We aren't even supposed to think about it, but we think about it anyway," he said.

Chechnya attracted \$1 billion of investment last year and aims to gain the same this year, Kadyrov said.

Russia's government, which has made control over the oil and gas industry a cornerstone of its strategy, is unlikely to allow the region to create anything other than a retailer or local distribution business, Chris Weafer, chief strategist at UralSib Financial, said by e-mail.

Rosneft controls Chechnya's Grozneftegaz, which has boosted output more than 20-fold since the 1990s, when the republic was torn by two wars. The unit produced an average of 31,000 barrels a day in 2009, according to the state-run company's web site. That is about 1.3 percent of Rosneft's total output last year.

"It's not important if it's oil or a refinery," Kadyrov said. "The main thing is that money comes into the republic."

Ramzan Kadyrov says he is looking for a second wife.

The 34-year-old Kadyrov told Komsomolskaya Pravda in comments published Thursday that he is "always on a lookout for a decent bride" but has not found the right lady yet, The Associated Press reported. While bigamy is prohibited in Russia, prominent politicians have called for it to be legalized in an effort to address the country's low birth rates.

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