

'Chechnya Cured Girl's Disorder'

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Chechen leader Ramzan Kadyrov said an extended stay in Chechnya is to thank for curing a Siberian girl of a rare sleeping disorder.

Kadyrov was touched by the plight of Sasha Pisarenko, a 9-year-old who doctors said suffered from the only case of narcolepsy in Russia, the Chechen government said in a [statement](#) on its web site.

At Kadyrov's insistence, Pisarenko was dispatched to Grozny, where she lived for six months with her mother and sister in a luxury apartment.

"Grozny was charming, not menacing at all," the statement said, adding that Kadyrov personally telephoned the girl after his own mother learned about her from a television program and instructed him to help out.

Helping Pisarenko is the latest gesture from Kadyrov, 34, to prove that normalcy has returned to Chechnya, a small republic widely feared by ordinary Russians who do not venture there.

In recent months, he has taken to playing football matches against world greats in friendlies

in Chechnya, which also unveiled a multimillion-dollar stadium in May.

His portrait, bearded and often smiling, graces buildings across the region, leading rights workers to accuse him of fostering a cult of personality.

Critics and rights groups also warn that Kadyrov, who fought against federal forces in the first war, rules Chechnya as a personal fiefdom and accuse him of torture, claims he has repeatedly denied as attempts to blacken his name.

"One of the important reasons behind her recovery has been the surrounding atmosphere — sun, smiles, music and hospitality," the Chechen government statement said.

It said she was also sent to Switzerland for medical checks.

Kadyrov will now visit Pisarenko in her hometown of Chita, some 5,000 kilometers east of Chechnya, the government's web site said Monday, showing a picture of the barrel-chested leader hugging Pisarenko, wearing a headscarf.

"During her stay, Sasha suffered only one sleeping attack and her migraines stopped," it added.

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