

Chechnya Backs Ruling Party 99.5%

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Though Prime Minister Vladimir Putin started the second Chechen war in 1999, there is no resentment at all in the republic toward his political party, judging by the results of the State Duma vote in Chechnya.

United Russia swept a whopping 99.48 percent of the vote in the republic, with the turnout standing at 99.51 percent, the Central Elections Commission said Monday.

Both figures are the highest among all regions. They are also better than Chechnya's showing in the previous Duma elections in 2007, when it won 99.36 percent of the republic's vote with a turnout of 99.5 percent.

The other North Caucasus republics followed suit, though they were no match for Ramzan Kadyrov's domain. United Russia's results in Dagestan, Ingushetia, Kabardino-Balkaria and Karachayevo-Cherkessia hovered between 90 and 91 percent of the vote, and the turnout between 85 and 91 percent.

Chechen head Kadyrov, who assumed office in 2007 after his father Akhmad was killed in a bomb blast, is routinely accused by independent activists of abusing human rights

and suppressing dissent in the republic.

"It's a system based on authority, and authority can ensure the right results," political analyst Vyacheslav Nikonov said about Chechnya's voting.

"I haven't heard about results like that since the Soviet times," he added by telephone Monday.

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