

In Chechnya, Thousands of Hectares of Farm Land Still Not Cleared of Mines

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Officials in Chechnya will soon begin work demining land that has not been cleared of explosive devices for over a decade, including over 5,000 hectares of farm land and more than 8,000 hectares of forest, Interfax reported Friday.

Since 2000, the final year of the Second Chechen War, only 344 hectares of land have been cleared of mines, the republic's deputy agriculture minister Jamaldi Mollayev said.

In that time, land mine explosions have destroyed one car, three combines and five tractors, according to agriculture ministry data. Six people have died and five have been injured in accidental mine detonations.

The North Caucasus republic, ruled by strongman and Putin ally Ramzan Kadyrov, has received extensive federal funding to redevelop after the wars of the 1990s, and its capital Grozny has seen skyscrapers and modern buildings go up in recent years.

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