

Kadyrov Sacks His Government

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Chechen leader Ramzan Kadyrov

Chechen leader Ramzan Kadyrov on Thursday dismissed his government in what appeared to be an attempt to avoid a possible reduction in federal subsidies, which the region heavily relies upon.

Kadyrov offered little explanation for his actions, telling the dismissed officials that he was overall pleased with their work but changes to the government's composition and structure were needed to solve "new problems," according to a statement on Chechnya's official website.

He did not say when a new government would be appointed and who would be in it.

Pavel Salin, an analyst with the Kremlin-connected Center for Current Politics think tank, said Kadyrov might be trying to show some activity, fearing that the country's leadership might decide to cut federal budget subsidies to some or all of the regions despite promises not to do so.

Chechnya and the other North Caucasus republics are among the most heavily subsidized

regions, provoking nationalist sentiments of ethnic Russians, who have rallied repeatedly under the slogan: "Stop Feeding the Caucasus."

In November, the Audit Chamber said 18 billion rubles (\$580 million), or almost 10 percent of the money allocated from the federal budget to the North Caucasus republics in 2010, was improperly spent.

In 2010, federal authorities sank 52 billion rubles (\$1.7 billion) into Chechnya alone.

In February, anti-corruption blogger Alexei Navalny exposed questionable purchases by Chechnya's police force, including a plan to spend 113 million rubles on 15 Mercedes E350 cars, a Porsche Cayenne Turbo Tiptronic S and other vehicles.

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