

Yevkurov Reports to Putin Amid Ouster Rumors

By [The Moscow Times](#)

February 24, 2013

The  **Moscow Times**

Yunus-Bek Yevkurov, head of the restive North Caucasus republic of Ingushetia, reported to President Vladimir Putin on Monday amid rumors that the Kremlin wanted to expel him.

But Putin's invitation may have been "good news" for Yevkurov, as a signal that the head of state "trusts him and is not going to fire him," political analyst Alexei Titkov said by phone.

Yevkurov, whose four-year term ends in October, will need to consider running for re-election amid waning popularity and an ongoing feud with Chechen head Ramzan Kadyrov, who has the Kremlin's backing.

At his meeting with Putin, Yevkurov said investment into his region had risen 100 percent since the end of 2011 to 4.3 billion rubles (\$142 million) and the number of terrorism-related crimes had been reduced 50 percent.

He also noted a relatively low inflation rate versus other regions, as well as a decent average rate of real income per capita. And infant mortality in Ingushetia is the lowest in the country, he said, according to a transcript on the Kremlin website.

But while Ingushetia is one of the national leaders by other demographic parameters, it has the lowest proportion of kindergartens and schools, he said. As of Monday evening, Putin's official reaction to the report had not been published.

Last week, RBC cited a Kremlin source as saying Putin was considering dismissing all regional leaders in the North Caucasus except for Kadyrov, before the Sochi Winter Olympics in 2014. Yevkurov's gubernatorial future was the most precarious.

Yevkurov, appointed in October 2008 by then-President Dmitry Medvedev, is not part of Putin's inner circle, and rumors of his potential ouster were linked to Putin's campaign against corruption, Titkov said, adding that "naturally, Putin would not want to make trouble for his own team."

A link in the same chain was Putin's dismissal of Olympic Committee vice president Akhmed Bilalov earlier this month for allegedly violating construction deadlines and mispending state money, Titkov said.

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