

# A Quarter of Russians Want Rid of Chechnya

By [The Moscow Times](#)

July 01, 2013

**The**  **Moscow Times**

A quarter of Russians would be happy if the North Caucasus republic of Chechnya was no longer part of the Russian Federation, according to the results of a Levada Center poll released Monday.

Twenty-four percent of Russians polled said they "would be glad" if Chechnya left, while 27 percent said they wouldn't care much if it happened.

Twelve percent of the 1,601 respondents said they thought that Chechnya, where rebels fought two wars of independence in the last 25 years, is already a de facto independent state.

The Kremlin gives Chechnya much larger subsidies than most regions and has granted Chechen leader Ramzan Kadyrov a great deal of independence in return for loyalty to the federal government.

Levada Center deputy director Alexei Grazhdankin, commenting on the poll results, told Kommersant that xenophobic attitudes were growing and that people had a desire to "shut out" the North Caucasus.

Chechnya is "not perceived by citizens as part of the Russian Federation," but instead "as a time bomb," Grazhdankin said. "Citizens get the impression that federal agencies do not control what is happening there."

Human rights organizations have described Chechnya as Kadyrov's personal fiefdom and a place where civil activists and journalists can be silenced, attacked or even killed without consequences. Kadyrov denies wrongdoing.

Twenty-three percent of those polled said they were nonetheless against Chechnya leaving the federation, and 10 percent said the republic should be prevented from becoming legally independent, even by military means.

Regarding the federal funds given to Chechnya, 28 percent of Russians told the Levada Center that they believed the subsidies were mainly "stolen," while 21 percent said they believed the funds were "spent ineffectively."

The poll was carried out in 130 regions and had a margin of error of 3.4 percent.

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