

Kadyrov's Criticism Leads to Cell Phone Service Problems in Chechnya

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Chechen President Kadyrov with a cushion depicting the mosque, uploaded on his Instagram feed. **kadyrov_95**

Chechen subscribers of VimpelCom and Megafon found themselves with poor or no service after their republic's president, Ramzan Kadyrov, criticized the nationwide telecommunications companies for their role in a text message voting contest.

On Friday Kadyrov accused the companies of not counting millions of SMS votes for the Heart of Chechnya mosque, which is named after his father and former Chechen leader Akhmad Kadyrov, in the "Rossiya 10" competition to decide the top 10 architectural symbols of Russia.

He withdrew the landmark from consideration after its sizable lead in the contest evaporated during the final days of competition's second round and it was knocked out of first place by the Kolomensky kremlin.

Beeline, which is owned by VimpelCom, closed its Chechen office on Sunday after it was pelted with eggs, Moskovsky Komsomolets reported.

A VimpelCom spokesperson told Vedomosti that after Kadyrov's comments the providers began having serious coverage issues and some lines were simply cut off. She added that 70 percent of subscribers were receiving service again within an hour and all issues were cleared up by Sunday night.

Kadyrov also urged his 180,000 followers on the photo-sharing social network Instagram to switch to the local cellular service provider Vaynakh Telekom, saying that the company had a "beautiful name" and that he was certain the company would provide reliable service.

He added "We do not intend to continue to feed Megafon and Beeline."

Representatives from Megafon denied any service problems and would not comment on customers' potential switch to a Chechen company.

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