

VimpelCom, MegaFon Services Jeopardized After Kadyrov's Criticism

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Chechen subscribers of VimpelCom and MegaFon found themselves with poor or no service after the republic's president Ramzan Kadyrov criticized the nationwide telecom companies on Instagram.

On Friday, Kadyrov accused the companies of not counting millions of text message votes for the Heart of Chechnya mosque, which is named after his father and former Chechen leader Akhmat Kadyrov, in the Rossia 10 competition to decide the top ten symbols of Russia.

The landmark's sizable lead in the contest evaporated during the final days of the competition's second round and it was knocked out of first place by the Kolomna Kremlin.

Related Story: [Kadyrov Alleges Cheating in Rossia 10 Contest](#)

VimpelCom closed its Chechen office 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 Vainakh Telekom, saying that the company had a "beautiful name" and that he was certain that the company would provide reliable service.

"We do not intend to continue to feed MegaFon and [VimpelCom]," he added.

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

Few major Russian companies choose to operate in Chechnya because of the volatile nature of the market. Businesses in the area are highly dependent on local authorities and the market isn't attractive enough to pay for that risk, Mikhail Burmistrov, head of research agency INFOLine-Analitika, told Vedomosti.

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