

Chechen Leader Kadyrov Offers to Send Troops, Peacekeepers to Ukraine

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Chechen leader Ramzan Kadyrov has offered to send soldiers to Ukraine to "protect" its pro-Russian residents from "terrorists" who came to power after the ouster of Moscow-backed President Viktor Yanukovich.

"We never wanted what belongs to others, but we will protect what is ours," Kadyrov said Wednesday on his Instagram social-network account.

"A coup planned by the West has taken place in Ukraine. Bandits and terrorists have taken power," he said. "If needed, we will come to help those who have been abused and humiliated by terrorists bred by the West, and we will help them rise from their knees."

Kadyrov posted his comment after about 100 riot police in western Ukraine got down on their knees on stage to ask local residents on Monday to forgive them for their force's role in recent violence against anti-government protesters. The police in the city of Lviv said they had not

been involved in the clashes in the capital, which left more than 80 people dead.

Kadyrov said Chechens "could not watch in silence" as Berkut riot police repented, and clashes took place between pro-Russian separatists and anti-Moscow Tatar activists in the Crimea. He also said he had "received information" that Russians living in Ukraine were "starting to have serious problems with their personal and business security."

"We are ready to be peacekeepers and soldiers to protect the people," he said in Grozny on Wednesday evening, Interfax reported.

Crimean Tatars were forcefully exiled from their homeland to Soviet republics in Central Asia during the rule of Soviet dictator Josef Stalin. This week, they rallied in support of Kiev and a unified Ukraine, clashing with separatists who want the peninsula to secede to Russia.

Chechens fought Russia for independence during two wars in the 1990s and 2000s, until Moscow suppressed the revolt and installed a pro-Russian government, which Kadyrov now heads.

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