

Chechen Leader Kadyrov Joins 'Night Wolves' Motorcycle Gang

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The 'Night Wolves' or Nochniye Volki, Russia's biggest black-leather clad biker gang.

Chechen leader Ramzan Kadyrov has been inducted into Russia's biggest black-leather-clad biker gang, the Night Wolves.

Head of the Chechen Republic and a prolific user of social media, Kadyrov wrote Sunday on his Instagram account he had been made a member of the club at a gala dinner thrown by him in their honor.

"At the general decision of the veterans of the club, I was included in the Night Wolves," Kadyrov wrote, adding that he had been "handed a bracelet of the club," as evidence of his membership.

Kadyrov went on to salute Night Wolves leader Alexander Zaldostanov's kind words about Kadyrov's father, Akhmad Kadyrov, who would have been 63 on Saturday if not for the

explosion which killed him and several others in 2004.

Grozny stepped up security measures in the city prior to the launch of commemorative festivities.

The Night Wolves (Nochniye Volki) were personally invited by Kadyrov, who added that on the day of the event — apparently as a result of the trip — a branch of the Night Wolves was established in Grozny.

Formed in the 1980s, the group is frequently dubbed the Russian Hell's Angels, combining anti-Soviet sentiment with rock music and bike obsessions, with current leader Alexander Zaldostanov — or The Surgeon — seeming to be a big fan of Russian President Vladimir Putin.

In 2011, Putin led several bikers into the Black Sea city of Novorossiisk for a bike show and in March last year, he presented Zaldostanov with a Medal of Honor for "activity in the patriotic education of young people."

Kadyrov lauded the gang's political support: "The Surgeon expressed his sincere gratitude for our strong support for the people of Crimea. ... This is a man with a public mindset, a clear and firm stance on major issues."

The Chechen leader made headlines only a week ago after reportedly losing his phone at a wedding feast, prompting police questioning of more than 1,000 attendees, said human rights organization Memorial, in a statement on Aug. 18.

However, the following day, Kadyrov's press secretary Alvi Karimov, told Interfax news agency that Kadyrov was in possession of "two phones, and they are both on his desk."

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