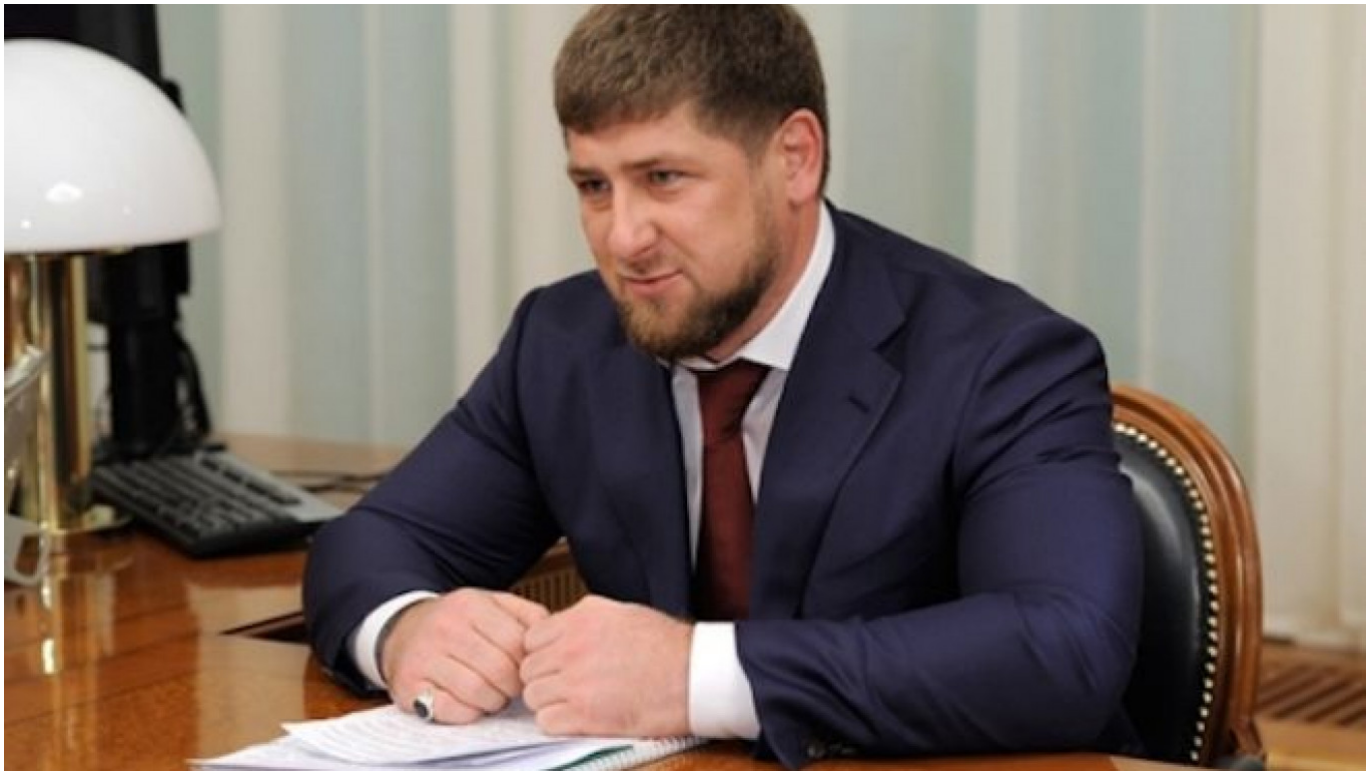
The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Kadyrov Recounts Heartbreak of Realizing Santa Claus Was 'Abu From Our Village'

December 31, 2014



Chechen leader Ramzan Kadyrov

Chechen leader Ramzan Kadyrov on Wednesday opened up about a heartbreaking childhood trauma: discovering that the man he believed to be Santa Claus was actually just one of his neighbors.

"I believed with all my heart that Father Frost [the Russian equivalent of Santa Claus] existed," Kadyrov told journalists ahead of the New Year's holiday, RIA Novosti reported.

"I always waited for him, like a miracle, and was very upset when I found out that Father Frost was just Abu from our village," the Chechen leader said.

Despite his own disillusionment with the mythical figure, Kadyrov urged others to enjoy the holidays.

"Shaitans [devils], our enemies, are spreading all sorts of rumors among the population,

scaring children, saying not to go out on the street, not to take part in the New Year's festivities," Kadyrov said, referring to calls among some residents in the Muslim region not to celebrate the "infidel" holiday as well as speculation of an impending terrorist attack after the Dec. 4 attack on Grozny.

"I want to tell everyone that we will mark New Year's ... You can calmly go out for the holidays, visit the Christmas tree in Grozny, City Hall is thoroughly prepared for celebrations," Kadyrov was quoted as saying.

As for the upcoming year, the Chechen leader said it could only bring good things.

"I am certain that the upcoming year will be a year of growth and prosperity for us, despite all the difficulties," Kadyrov said.

The Grozny police force has heightened its security measures through Jan. 11 to ensure that the holiday festivities go smoothly. Many residents have expressed fear of a repeat attack following the assault on Grozny that claimed dozens of lives earlier this month.

Original url:
https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2014/12/31/kadyrov-recounts-heartbreak-of-realizing-santa-claus-was-abu-from-our-village-a42650