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Kadyrov Says Islamic State Not a Threat to Russia

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Chechen leader Ramzan Kadyrov

Chechen leader Ramzan Kadyrov has said he sees no threat to Russia from Islamic militants aligned with the ruthless Islamic State terrorist group.

"There is no threat. And it's a shame that we're scaring ourselves with all this Islamic State stuff," Kadyrov said Sunday in an interview with the Interfax news agency.

"We have a massive intelligence network in the ranks of these terrorists. It allows us to track the movements of those who interest us. Moreover, it provides an opportunity to send all those who, even just in jest, point their guns at Russia on a one-way journey to eternal rest," Kadyrov was cited as saying.

Kadyrov's comments come just one month after a terrorist attack on the Chechen capital of Grozny left more than a dozen policemen dead.

Russian analysts said at the time that they believed the Islamic State played a role in the

attack — even if only as inspiration. Alexei Malashenko of the Carnegie Moscow Center said the group may have used recruits from the North Caucasus to carry out the attack, while independent analyst Georgy Engelhardt said members of Chechen jihadist group Caucasus Emirate likely carried it out, in part as an attempt to restore clout in the face of Islamic State's rising influence.

The Islamic State, which seeks to establish an Islamic caliphate in the Middle East, has seized large territories in Iraq and Syria and slaughtered thousands in the process, alarming the international community and prompting Western air strikes.

Members of the Islamic State have also directly threatened Russia, releasing a video on YouTube earlier this year in which Russian-speaking fighters said they planned to liberate Russia's predominantly Muslim North Caucasus region and take President Vladimir Putin's "throne."

In September, Russia's Security Council warned of the dangers of the group's fighters returning to Russian soil "politically and religiously loaded" and with military experience, TASS news agency reported at the time.

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