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Russian Group Says YouTube Blocks Film Alleging Abuses in Chechnya

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Ramzan Kadyrov

A documentary film that alleges widespread human rights abuses and mass corruption in Chechnya has been temporarily blocked by YouTube for copyright reasons, the Open Russia foundation said Wednesday.

The 26-minute film, which is called "The Family," was published last week on the site of Open Russia, a pro-democracy initiative set up by tycoon-turned-political activist Mikhail Khodorkovsky.

But Open Russia said Wednesday that the Russian-language version of the film had been temporarily removed from YouTube following a complaint by Ilyas Vinerovich Synbulatov, who heads a company called T&K Production.

Open Russia also posted a copy of the supposed email from YouTube alerting them to the violation.

The foundation denied using protected footage and said that Synbulatov had not specified in his complaint which particular frames were in violation of the copyright.

“We are now protesting this blockage, and as soon as YouTube finds that this video does not violate copyright law, the film will be available again,” Open Russia added in its statement.

The English-language version of “The Family” is still available on Open Russia's official YouTube account, and the Russian version is available to watch on its website.

Ramzan Kadyrov, who has ruled the Chechen republic with an iron fist since 2007, has repeatedly been accused of torture and other human rights abuses.

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