

Thousands Rally In Support of Chechen Leader Kadyrov, Russia

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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A mass rally in support of Russian President Vladimir Putin and Chechen leader Ramzan Kadyrov took place in the republic's capital Grozny on Friday, Russian media reported.

During the demonstration, organized by Chechen trade unions, thousands of people gathered in the central square of Grozny, shouting “Ramzan” and holding banners with slogans supporting Russia and Kadyrov and criticizing the Russian opposition.

According to the organizers of the event, called “Our strength is in unity,” the main aim of demonstrators was “to express their unconditional support” for Putin and Kadyrov “in an effort to make a stand against the hostile forces against the country, the RBC newspaper reported, citing the organizer's statement.

Rally participants called to “unite around Russia's leaders and make a stand against information aggression of the representatives of destructive forces, that have recently launched a full-scale information war against Russia,” the statement said.

The organizers initially predicted the demonstration would be attended by 750,000 people.

According to the Chechen police, 1 million people have taken part in the rally, the Interfax news agency reported Friday. The republic's population as of Dec. 1, 2015 totals 1.39 million, according to the news agency.

Among the speakers at the rally was a representative of the Russian Orthodox Church and Alexander Zaldostanov — leader of the Putin-backed biker group the Night Wolves, also known as “the surgeon” — RBC reported. Kadyrov did not make an appearance at the rally.

The demonstration was held a week after the Chechen leader verbally attacked Russian opposition activists — calling them “jackals” and “enemies of the people.”

Many opposition activists, politicians and human rights activists have reacted to the aggression with criticism and even spoke in favor of Kadyrov's dismissal.

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