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Commission Chooses Late Chechen Leader Kadyrov as Name for St. Petersburg Bridge

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Akhmat Kadyrov

The St. Petersburg toponymic commission has agreed on proposals to name a city bridge after Chechenya's first president Akhmad Kadyrov, the local Fontanka newspaper reported Monday.

Nine members of the commission supported the new title for the nameless bridge across the Duderhof channel. Six members voted against the motion, which was decided via a secret ballot. Nine commission members also backed the idea of an additional discussion with experts.

An employee of the Museum of City History Galina Nikitenko later said that she was "pressured" to vote, the Slon.ru news website reported.

Renowned film director Alexander Sokurov and actor Oleg Basilashvili have both protested

against the naming, Slon.ru reported. “Residents of St. Petersburg will be outraged to have a reference to this notorious family in the city that underwent the blockade,” Sokurov wrote in a message to the St. Petersburg governor.

A public rally against the naming took place on Saturday, with many St. Petersburg citizens holding posters of possible alternative names. “Most of those we asked preferred the names ‘Zhemchyuzhny’ (Pearl) and ‘Dudergofsky’,” rally co-organizer Ilya Smirnov told the Rosbalt news agency.

The idea to name the bridge after the father of the current Chechen president Ramzan Kadyrov emerged in March this year, Slon reported. On Wednesday, the city toponymic commission was called for an emergency meeting in order to accelerate the decision-making process.

St. Petersburg mayor Georgy Poltavchenko refused to consider renaming of one of the city’s streets after Akhmad Kadyrov in January last year, saying that the former Chechen leader “never took direct part in St. Petersburg’s life.”

Akhmad Kadyrov became Chechen president in 2003. He was assassinated in Grozny in 2004.

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