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Russia's Human Rights Council Cancels Meeting With Kadyrov

By The Moscow Times

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Chechen leader Ramzan Kadyrov

Russia's Presidential Human Rights Council has cancelled a planned meeting with Chechen leader Ramzan Kadyrov over his position on human rights activist Igor Kalyapin, the RBC news website reported Thursday.

Kalyapin, head of the Committee Against Torture NGO, had planned to travel to Chechnya as part of the Council's delegation.

“We got in touch with Kadyrov and he said that if the members of the Council are planning to visit the country with Kalyapin, he cannot ensure the security of the delegation,” RBC's unidentified source in the Council said.

Council chairman Mikhail Fyodorov decided against visiting Chechnya without a guarantee of safety.

“As long as the Chechen leadership position [on Kalyapin] does not return to common sense, we have decided to refrain from visiting the country” another member of Council Andrei Babushkin was quoted by the news website as saying.

The Committee Against Torture is a prominent organization that monitors human rights violations in Chechnya and other regions. The activity of the committee and its head have been repeatedly criticized by the Chechen authorities. Kalyapin and the offices of his NGO in Chechnya have been repeatedly attacked by unknown groups.

The latest incident happened in late March when Kalyapin was beaten and eggs were thrown at him near the hotel in the center of Grozny. Local law enforcement agencies launched an investigation into the attack but refused to open criminal proceedings. Chechnya's Prosecutor's Office stated that the refusal of police to open a criminal investigation was illegal.

Council head Fyodorov refused to comment on the cancellation of the meeting but noted that there is a conflict between Kadyrov and Kalyapin which they are trying to eliminate, RBC reported.

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