

Russian Region Bans Stalin on Anniversary of Deportations

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Joseph Stalin

He may remain a hero for many Russians, but in Russia's Ingushetia republic Stalin is an enemy of the people whose commemoration may soon be banned.

On Tuesday, the North Caucasian republic's parliament unanimously passed a law banning Stalin in its first reading, the TASS news agency [reported](#).

Beyond banning Stalin monuments, streets, and town names, the law also makes it illegal to publically express support for the Soviet dictator or even publicly display his image in a positive light.

Parliamentary committee chairperson Maryam Amrieva said that celebrating Stalin was "blasphemy." She added that Stalin "deported dozens of ethnic groups" and "killed or jailed tens of thousands of members of the intelligentsia and military."

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Ingushetia's anger toward Stalin is not unmerited. During World War II, Stalin deported the entire Ingush and Chechen ethnic groups from their homeland to Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan for allegedly collaborating with Nazi Germany. The Ingush parliament voted on the law to mark the 73 anniversary of the deportations.

The two ethnic groups were eventually rehabilitated after Stalin's death and allowed to return home in 1957, but the damage had already been done. During the deportation and their 13-year exile, more than a third of the deportees died.

Ingushetia's ban comes as Stalin's popularity reaches a peak elsewhere in Russia. According to [survey results](#) published by the independent Levada Center pollster earlier this month, more Russians now approve of Stalin than at any other time over the last 16 year.

Of 1,600 people surveyed across Russia, 46 percent expressed approval of Stalin — making him the third most popular head of state after President Vladimir Putin and Soviet leader Leonid Brezhnev, respectively.

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