The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
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Ingushetia's Constitutional Court Rules Against Divisive Land Swap Deal

October 30, 2018



Yelena Afonina / TASS

Ingushetia's Constitutional Court ruled on Tuesday that a new border agreement with Chechnya — which sparked weeks of protests — was unconstitutional.

Thousands took to the streets for daily protests in the North Caucasus republic of Ingushetia after the regional parliament endorsed a border swap deal with the neighboring republic of Chechnya earlier this month. Some deputies later said that their votes against the agreement had been tampered with in the tally.

Protesters in the Ingush capital of Magas, who gathered daily after the deal was signed on Oct. 4, said that the arrangement amounted to a surrender of territory that favors Chechnya at their own region's expense. Cartographers estimate that Ingushetia gave up 26 times more territory than Chechnya in the deal.

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On Tuesday, the Ingush Constitutional Court ruled that the border law was "inconsistent with the Constitution of the Republic of Ingushetia."

According to the court's decision, a referendum has to take in place in Ingushetia in order for the border law to be legally approved.

Meanwhile, participants of the 1st World Congress of Ingush People that is currently taking place in Ingushetia welcomed the decision of the Constitutional Court, the Kavkaz Uzel news website reported.

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