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Kadyrov's Instagram Account Briefly Unblocked, Posts Ode to Guns

By Reuters

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Ramzan Kadyrov (Sergei Savostyanov / TASS)

The Instagram account of Ramzan Kadyrov, the Kremlin-backed head of Russia's Chechnya region and an avid social media user until he was banned last year, was unblocked briefly and then blocked again after he used it to post an ode to his pistol.

Kadyrov, a former anti-Russian rebel turned pro-Russian politician, was suspended from Facebook and Instagram in December last year, soon after he was placed on a U.S. sanctions list for alleged rights abuses.

He has long used both social media platforms, especially Instagram where he has amassed more than 3 million followers with regular photos of his life and posts of his views.

Related article: Ten Crazy Things Ramzan Kadyrov Has Said in His Decade Ruling Chechnya

Screenshots shared widely on social media showed that his Instagram account was back up on Wednesday and remained live for at least eight hours. After his first new post — a photo of himself holding a gun and wearing protective glasses — it was blocked once again.

Instagram, which is owned by Facebook Inc, did not reply to a request for comment.

"On Wednesday my @kadyrov_95 Instagram page was unblocked. Justice has prevailed. It took about 11 months to achieve," Kadyrov wrote on his public feed of another app, Telegram, where he has 40,000 subscribers.

"All that time, millions of my subscribers were denied the opportunity to receive information first hand," Kadyrov wrote on Telegram, before his Instagram feed was blocked again.

During his brief foray back on Instagram, he included an ode to his pistol alongside the photo.

"GUN. How much I need to say about you, my friend. As if in this silence there is only you and I," Kadyrov posted.

U.S. authorities accuse Kadyrov, who has been in charge of the majority-Muslim region of southern Russia since 2007, of overseeing "an administration involved in disappearances and extrajudicial killings."

Rights groups and Western governments allege that authorities in Chechnya repress their political opponents, discriminate against women and persecute gays, all allegations that Chechnya's leaders deny.

Chechnya was brought to heel by Russia after two wars against pro-independence rebels there in the 1990s which killed tens of thousands of people and reduced the region's towns and cities to rubble. The capital Grozny has since been lavishly rebuilt.

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