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# Russia's Constitutional Court Upholds Divisive Chechnya-Ingushetia Land Transfer

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**Peter Kovalyov / TASS**

Russia's Constitutional Court has ruled that a controversial land swap agreement between Chechnya and Ingushetia that sparked mass protests in the region was lawful.

The agreement ratified by the Ingush parliament on Oct. 4 sparked weeks of protests in the Northern Caucasus republic of Ingushetia, with activists saying that it amounted to a surrender of territory that favors neighboring Chechnya at their own region's expense.

Later that month, Ingushetia's Constitutional Court ruled the agreement was "inconsistent with the Constitution of the Republic of Ingushetia" and said that a referendum had to take in place in the republic in order for the border swap to be legally approved.

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On Thursday, judges at Russia's Constitutional Court ruled that the land swap agreement was lawful, the Mediazona outlet reported.

The court said that Ingushetia's Constitutional Court lacked the necessary jurisdiction on questions of territory to make judgements on the agreement.

The head of Ingushetia's Constitutional Court, Ayub Gagiev, refused to attend the hearing, Mediazona reported.

Cartographers have estimated that Ingushetia gave up 26 times more territory than Chechnya in the deal. Some Ingush deputies have said that their votes against the agreement had been tampered with in the tally.

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