

Divisive Chechnya Deal Sparks Protest Calling for Ingush Leader's Resignation

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Musa Sadulayev / AP / TASS

Thousands of residents in Russia's [smallest region](#) protested for the right to hold a referendum on a divisive border-change deal after local leaders sought to remove such proposals from the ballot box.

In October 2018, the republic of Ingushetia's leaders signed the land swap deal with neighboring Chechnya, [sparking](#) mass protests. According to proposed rules, residents will not be able to vote in a referendum on issues concerning the border.

As many as 10,000 people rallied in Ingushetia's capital against the land deal and proposed referendum rules, organizers [said](#) Tuesday. Protesters called on Ingushetia head Yunus-Bek Yevkurov to resign, as well as for the return of gubernatorial elections.

Related article: [In Ingushetia, Russia's Smallest Region, Protests Are Reaching a Boiling Point](#)

Yevkurov last week withdrew the proposed referendum legislation after tribal councils, elders and some lawmakers urged him to send it back for changes, the Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL) news outlet [reported](#).

In December, the Ingush electoral commission [rejected](#) a public vote on the border-change deal submitted by local activists.

Russia's Constitutional Court has [upheld](#) the agreement that Ingush activists said amounted to a surrender of their territory.

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