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Chechen Leader Threatens to Break Fingers, Tear Out Tongues of Online Critics

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Ramzan Kadyrov **Wikimedia Commons**

The leader of Russia's republic of Chechnya has threatened to break the fingers and tear out the tongues of anyone who leaves offensive comments about his subjects online.

Residents of the neighboring republic of Dagestan have expressed outrage this week over a new sign that was installed near their border that marked the area as Chechnya. Dagestani protesters saw the sign as a land grab and tore it down on Monday, only to have it reinstalled on Tuesday by Chechen authorities, who say the area has always been part of their republic.

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Speaking to his followers in a live Instagram broadcast, Ramzan Kadyrov urged residents of Dagestan to not "succumb to provocations" and post offensive comments online.

“If you insult my blood, my race or my people, this is most significant for me. So keep your tongue and your fingers in check, otherwise we will break your fingers and we will tear out your tongue,” Kadyrov said. “You know me well, I love to keep my word.”

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Kadyrov told viewers to remove any offensive comments that have already been posted, adding that Chechen police and intelligence agencies "will come and knock on the doors" of anyone found to have insulted the people of Chechnya online.

“We do not tell you what to name your streets or villages,” he said. “Let us live.”

Dagestan and Chechnya have been involved in negotiations over their 400-kilometer border since the start of 2019.

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