

Kadyrov Denies 'Purging' Chechen Elite

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Zubair Bairakov / TASS

Chechen leader Ramzan Kadyrov has denied reports that senior officials and their relatives have been tortured in secret prisons in his republic for showing disrespect and disloyalty to him and his family.

The independent Novaya Gazeta newspaper [reported](#) this week that members of Kadyrov's inner circle have been tortured since August and forced to confess their disloyalty. The purges had reportedly begun with a long-time mayor who had previously been linked to [reports](#) of the torture and imprisonment of LGBT people in Chechnya.

Related article: [Chechen Leader's Inner Circle Being Held, Tortured in Secret Prisons – Novaya Gazeta](#)

“These fabrications are off the charts! Their authors know that this is a 1,000% lie!” Interfax [quoted](#) Kadyrov as saying in response to the allegations at a public meeting Wednesday.

“Certain forces and the media that serve them are conducting a targeted information

campaign aimed at creating a negative image of Chechnya and its leadership in Russia and the world,” he added.

Kadyrov and Chechen authorities have previously been accused of kidnapping and torturing suspected jihadists, drug users, activists and sexual minorities in the republic. Local officials have denied the accusations of torture and extrajudicial killings.

Kadyrov has ruled Chechnya, which was devastated by two bloody separatist conflicts in the 1990s and early 2000s, since he was formally appointed its leader in 2007.

Critics have accused Kadyrov of carving out a state within a state, enforcing a strict Islamic “code of virtue” for women and committing grave human rights abuses, including systemic torture and extrajudicial killings.

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