

# Kadyrov Daughter's Parisian Fashion Debut Is a Slap in the Face

Allowing Kadyrov's daughter to host an event of such scale in the capital of France, a country that provides asylum to thousands of Chechens fleeing the regime, sends a troubling message.

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Screenshot Russia TV

A fashion show took place at the luxurious Hotel Le Marois on Feb. 25 as part of the cultural exchange festival 'Russian Seasons' held in Paris. But this was no ordinary event. The designer, 21-year-old Aishat Kadyrova, is the daughter of Chechen president and strongman leader Ramzan Kadyrov.

Ramzan Kadyrov was not in the audience to cheer his daughter on as she revealed her new collection celebrating the 10th anniversary of her luxury fashion house, Firdaws. Kadyrov is subject to an EU travel ban due to the numerous, gruesome and detailed allegations of human

rights violations that have been leveled against him.

Speaking on the night, Ms. Kadyrova revealed a touching anecdote about the inspiration behind her collection: “I saw my dad give my mum a bouquet of edelweiss flowers. He had to spend three days in the mountains in order to find them. I came up with the idea to tell this story through fashion...”

The choice is understandable — the extrajudicial killings, torture, abductions and repression her father is accused of make less compelling subjects on an inspiration board.

The reach of Kadyrov’s power now extends well beyond Chechnya, with reports revealing an apparent spy network that has infiltrated Chechen diasporas across Europe. His ambitious goal is to control Chechens everywhere, not just inside the republic, with his most prominent critics paying a heavy price for speaking the truth.

A day after the show, Chechen blogger Tumso Abdurakhmanov, famous for his daring denunciations of the regime, narrowly escaped an assassination attempt. “They have my mother,” pleaded the disarmed would-be assassin lying in a pool of blood while Tumso questioned him on camera after apparently disarming him.

Earlier this year on Jan. 30, Imran Aliyev, another critic of Kadyrov, was [murdered](#) in a hotel room by a man who had managed to worm his way into his friendship. The list of assassination attempts goes on — stretching back well over a decade.

Allowing Kadyrov’s daughter to host an event of such scale in the capital of France, a country that provides asylum to thousands of Chechens fleeing the regime, sends a troubling message. Whoever helped organize it on the French side should be aware of the implications: They are helping to legitimize Kadyrov’s grisly regime by turning his daughter into an emissary of Chechen culture.

It contrasts poorly with France’s self-image as a bastion of human rights and democracy if it is willing to provide a platform for despots to rebrand themselves. Meanwhile, those who seek refuge in the country live in fear of the long shadow of Kadyrov — who has exported the culture of fear and silence that he imposed in Chechnya to Europe, leaving those that live in the diaspora unsure of who to trust.

The collection itself is a neat metaphor for the existential hodgepodge that is modern Chechnya.

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The quasi-traditional floor-length designs in luxurious fabrics and matching hijabs are not a reflection of true Chechen identity.

They are an inauthentic product of the Arab-style ‘Islamization’ imposed by Kadyrov as a means of controlling the population since he came to power in 2007. He initiated his ‘programme’ with an official decree forcing women to wear headscarves in schools, universities and government buildings.

This cultural experiment has since been extended to police every aspect of people's lives — from the way they dress to what they like on Instagram and the opinions they express. If anything, that is the culture that Ms. Kadyrova expresses: a shallow facade — kitschy and inaccessible to most.

To those who might say that children are not responsible for their fathers' sins, the financial backing of Ms. Kadyrov's brand requires serious scrutiny. Poverty levels in Chechnya are above 20%, with rampant corruption and unofficial levies extorted from the population.

It is plainly obvious she didn't work her way up studying at St Martin's and getting an unpaid internship at Alexander McQueen. "Just because I'm not at Firdaws [all the time], that doesn't mean that I don't control everything that's happening there... I need to know everything," said Ms. Kadyrova in a rehearsed voice in one of her interviews.

She is her father's daughter, after all.

*The views expressed in opinion pieces do not necessarily reflect the position of The Moscow Times.*

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