Russia's Novaya Gazeta Deletes Chechnya Lockdown Article After Kadyrov Threat

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Novaya Gazeta reported that quarantined Chechens had stopped reporting coronavirus symptoms for fear of being labeled "terrorists." **Valery Sharifulin / TASS**

The independent Novaya Gazeta newspaper has deleted its investigation into the republic of Chechnya's strict anti-coronavirus measures after Chechen leader Ramzan Kadyrov issued a threat to the journalist who wrote it.

Kadyrov said Monday that Novaya Gazeta's story on Chechens underreporting potential coronavirus symptoms out of fear for their safety would lead "someone" to "commit a crime" against its author. The veteran journalist who wrote the feature, Yelena Milashina, and her lawyer were previously subjected to a physical attack in a Chechen hotel in February that Kadyrov said had no witnesses.

Related article: [Chechen Leader Threatens Journalist Who Investigated Region's Harsh Virus](#)

Milashina's article was found to contain "false socially significant information… that threatens people's lives and wellbeing," Novaya Gazeta [reported](#), citing the General Prosecutor's Office ordering state media watchdog Roskomnadzor to take the article down.

Roskomnadzor didn't specify which piece of information in the article was deemed fake, Novaya Gazeta's editor-in-chief Dmitry Muratov [told](#) Interfax.

Muratov said Novaya Gazeta could appeal the ruling.

In an interview with the Meduza news website, Muratov [said](#) his legal team will decide over the next few days whether to report Kadyrov's threats to the police.

"As for his threatening tone, this isn't the first time he's addressed Novaya Gazeta like this. I don't even want to remember what happened when we [reported the story](#) about gay people in Chechnya," he said.

Kadyrov may have taken offense at the report's suggestion that he himself has been ignoring Chechnya's quarantine order, Milashina [said](#) in an interview with the U.S.-funded RFE/RL news outlet's Russian desk Tuesday.

Chechnya, which has imposed strict regional border controls during Russia's coronavirus outbreak, reported 108 coronavirus cases and five deaths since the outbreak began. Russia reported a total of 27,938 cases and 232 deaths as of Thursday.

The Kremlin on Thursday [called](#) Kadyrov's threats against Milashina and Novaya Gazeta "quite emotional."

"On the other hand, the current [coronavirus] situation is very emotional," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov was quoted as saying.

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