Chechen Leader Orders Sacking of Medics Complaining of PPE Shortage

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Accounts of police intimidation and press censorship employed in response to the pandemic have hardened Ramzan Kadyrov's reputation as a strongman intolerant of dissent or criticism. **Yelena Afonina / TASS**

Chechen leader Ramzan Kadyrov has ordered the firing of local medics who complained of personal protective equipment shortages and the death of at least one colleague, the regional Caucasus Knot news outlet reported Sunday.

Staff at a hospital repurposed for coronavirus patients in the town of Gudermes staged protests last week claiming that many of their colleagues are infected and demanding PPE from their employers. They apologized on Chechen television two days later for what they said were unfounded complaints.

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"Provocateurs must be fired," Kadyrov said at a regional coronavirus task force meeting

Friday, according to the Caucasus Knot.

"We have enough of everything: equipment, costumes, masks, oxygen, medicine," the state-run TASS news agency [quoted](#) him as saying. "On the contrary, we can provide assistance to other regions. We have at least 30,000 to 40,000 anti-plague costumes, we buy millions of masks."

Kadyrov also reportedly singled out a "mad" Chechen doctor who mistakenly reported a colleague's death and demanded her firing.

The Gudermes central district hospital's chief doctor has been fired and replaced following a visit by Chechen parliamentary speaker Magomed Daudov.

Accounts of police intimidation and press censorship employed in response to the pandemic have [hardened](#) Kadyrov's reputation as a strongman intolerant of dissent or criticism. He has said that those who violate quarantine should be "killed" and likened Chechens who infect others with the coronavirus to "terrorists" who should be buried in pits.

Kadyrov has has been credited with bringing stability to Chechnya, a region in Russia's North Caucasus hit by an Islamist insurgency and two separatist wars, since taking over as its head in 2007. Rights groups say Kadyrov's rule is accompanied by abuses including extrajudicial murders and kidnappings.

Chechnya has reported a total of 966 coronavirus cases and 10 deaths since the start of the outbreak. Russia has the world's second-most number of cases with 290,678 infections and 2,722 deaths as of Monday.

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