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INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Chechen Leader Kadyrov Hospitalized With Coronavirus in Moscow – Reports

May 21, 2020



Ramzan Kadyrov initially dismissed the coronavirus, but has since imposed one of Russia's harshest lockdowns. **Zubair Bairakov / TASS**

Chechen leader Ramzan Kadyrov has been hospitalized in Moscow with a suspected coronavirus infection, Interfax reported Thursday, citing an anonymous source in Moscow's medical services.

Kadyrov, 43, was reportedly flown to the Russian capital Wednesday, a few days after reporting flu-like symptoms, the Baza Telegram channel reported earlier Thursday. Chechen doctors recommended that Kadyrov seek treatment there after his "condition began deteriorating rapidly," Baza said.

Embed:

Ramazan Kadyrov coming to Moscow for #coronavirus #Covid_19 treatment ??

> A319-133CJ VIP configuration associated with Kadyrov, flew from Grozny to Moscow & is landing to Vnukovo. pic.twitter.com/VYcOFoRclR
>
> — Yörük Işık (@YorukIsik) May 21, 2020

The Telegram channel cited medical data as saying that Kadyrov has been diagnosed with lung damage and a suspected Covid-19 infection.

"He is under doctors' supervision," Interfax cited its source as saying.

A well-known transport tracker said Thursday that a private jet linked to Kadyrov arrived at Moscow's Vnukovo Airport from the Chechen capital of Grozny.

Kadyrov's official page on Russian social network Vkontakte has posted several updates in the past 24 hours, including posts on his charitable donations and birthday greetings for Russia's defense minister, but has not yet addressed his alleged infection.

Kadyrov was last active on his Telegram account on Tuesday, while Instagram blocked his page last week.

Kadyrov has briefly transferred power twice — once in 2020 and once in 2019 — to undergo medical procedures. Other than a decree on law enforcement dated May 20, no similar orders ceding power to Kadyrov's aides have appeared on the Chechen administration's website.

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

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While he initially dismissed the coronavirus, Kadyrov has since imposed one of Russia's harshest coronavirus lockdowns, sealing off the region's internal borders, enacting a curfew and promising severe punishments for violating quarantine.

If confirmed, his infection would make him one of Russia's highest-profile figures to contract the virus, following Prime Minister Mikhail Mishustin, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov and Russia's culture, construction and education ministers.

The republic of Chechnya has reported a total of 1,026 coronavirus cases out of Russia's overall total of 317,554.

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