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Chechen Leader Kadyrov Taps Cousin for Grozny Mayor

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Taisiya Borshigova / TASS

Chechen leader Ramzan Kadyrov has named another relative to a high-level government post in the southern Russian republic that enjoys federal subsidies while maintaining relative autonomy from Moscow, state media reported Tuesday.

Kadyrov's third cousin Khas-Magomed Kadyrov, 30, follows in the footsteps of two Kadyrov daughters in their early 20s as well as two nephews and a foster brother who have all been appointed to public office within the past year.

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Kadyrov, 44, "noted [Khas-Magomed's] achievements in the development of the city of Argun" at a cabinet reshuffle Monday where he tapped his cousin as mayor of the Chechen capital Grozny.

Independent Russian media reported that Argun was the site of gay detention centers set up by Chechen authorities in 2017 during the region's alleged LGBT purges.

Grozny city councillors approved Kadyrov's choice as acting mayor on Tuesday, according to the state-run TASS news agency.

The Chechen leader himself had just turned 30 when President Vladimir Putin appointed him as the region's head in 2007. He has since worked to stamp out an Islamist rebellion and other forms of dissent using heavy-handed tacticts, including alleged widespread torture and killings.

A 2018 analysis by the BBC's Russian-language service found that nearly one in three Chechen officials were Kadyrov's relatives while one in five were his fellow villagers and one out of 10 his friends.

Kadyrov is widely believed to enjoy free rein from the Kremlin in exchange for loyalty while Moscow turns a blind eye to the documented human rights abuses in the majority-Muslim region.

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