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Chechnya ‘Won’t Survive’ Without Moscow’s Money, Kadyrov Says

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Chechen leader Ramzan Kadyrov. **kremlin.ru**

Chechen leader Ramzan Kadyrov said Monday that his southern Russian region would not be able to survive a month without Moscow’s multi-billion-dollar subsidies.

Kadyrov estimated that Russian handouts in Chechnya total 300 billion rubles ($3.8 billion) a year. According to the RBC news website, Moscow’s grants and subsidies to the republic of Chechnya totaled 125.6 billion rubles ($1.6 billion) in 2020.

“I swear to the almighty Allah, we won’t be able to last three months — not even a month” without Russia's financial backing, Kadyrov said.

“We won’t survive without Russia,” he added in a live social media stream shared by the state-run RIA Novosti news agency.

Kadyrov said he “also wanted an independent Ichkeria,” referring to the Chechen secessionist government that Moscow waged two bloody wars against in the 1990s and early 2000s.

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But the Chechen strongman stressed that his region has "no gas, no electricity, no oil" that would allow it to secede from Russia.

"I've been looking for seven years, but I can't find a single investor to handle the refinery," Kadyrov said. "If anyone offers us something else, let them write an economic model for us."

Kadyrov's musings on secession follows the controversy surrounding a prominent Russian director's offer last month for President Vladimir Putin to "let go" of the North Caucasus republics that seek independence from Moscow.

Alexander Sokurov, who is also a member of the presidential Human Rights Council, apologized for his remarks after being reprimanded by both Putin and Kadyrov in addition to receiving death threats.

Moscow is accused of turning a blind eye to alleged abuses like torture and extrajudicial killings in Chechnya in exchange for its loyalty to the Kremlin.

The Kremlin struck an encouraging note in its response Tuesday, with spokesman Dmitry Peskov saying "there are no hopeless regions in terms of investment."

"There are certain reserves for the development of certain industries in the region, and the creation of certain prerequisites for increasing investment appeal," Peskov told reporters.

Earlier this week, Peskov referred to the kidnapping of a Chechen human rights lawyer's mother as a "fantastical" story, prompting her husband — a retired federal judge — to issue a video response challenging his claims.

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