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Chechen Commander Awarded 'Hero of Russia' for Mariupol Siege

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Adam Delimkhanov, deputy prime minister of the Chechen Republic. **Chingis Kondarov / TASS**

Russian President Vladimir Putin has awarded top Chechen politician Adam Delimkhanov the country's highest honorary title in recognition of his role in the invasion of Ukraine.

Delimkhanov was made Tuesday a Hero of the Russian Federation for his "courage and heroism".

Delimkhanov led Chechen units fighting in the besieged Ukrainian city of Mariupol, "clearing [the city] from criminal elements block by block," the head of Chechnya Ramzan Kadyrov wrote on Telegram in March.

In a video posted earlier this month, Delimkhanov was shown standing in front of a burning building. He told viewers that, "the special operation to destroy and clear Mariupol has been completed."

Embed:

> Мариуполь освободили от модерна и вернули в мир средневековья pic.twitter.com/Fxz2tcXehj
>
> — Andrey Zakharov (@skazal_on) April 21, 2022

Chechen fighters have been on the forefront of Russia's brutal siege of Mariupol, the de-facto capital of the Ukrainian-held areas of eastern Ukraine's Donetsk region. Multiple sources have also linked Chechen units to war crimes committed in Ukraine.

Delimkhanov initially gained military experience fighting against Moscow in the Russia-Chechen conflicts of the 1990s. He switched sides during the Second Chechen War, along with Kadyrov.

In the years since, Delimkhanov has become one of Chechnya's leading politicians. He has been a deputy in the Russian parliament since 2007.

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