

Russian Governors Back Kadyrov's Call to 'Self-Mobilize' Residents for Ukraine Deployment

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Aleksandr Avilov / Moscow News Agency

The governors of Russia's far-flung regions are taking up a call issued by their Chechen counterpart to mobilize volunteer fighters as the country's military suffers major setbacks in northeastern and southern Ukraine.

Chechen leader Ramzan Kadyrov called on his colleagues to "self-mobilize" 1,000 fighters each and send an 85,000-strong army to Ukraine nearly seven months after Russia invaded its pro-Western neighbor.

"Russia is a federal state where regions can initiate any undertaking such as 'self-mobilization'," Kadyrov [wrote](#) on his Telegram channel.

"We shouldn't wait for the Kremlin to declare martial law or sit back and wait for the end of the [campaign] in Ukraine."

Three governors from Russia's 85 regions have expressed “full support” for Kadyrov’s initiative in the 24 hours since his call to action.

Sergei Aksyonov, head of the Crimean peninsula that was annexed from Ukraine in 2014, was the first to back Kadyrov, boasting that his region has fielded more than 1,200 volunteer fighters and is forming two more battalions.

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“We’re fully providing them with combat uniforms, protective gear, communications and reconnaissance equipment,” Aksyonov [wrote](#) Wednesday.

Aksyonov and Kadyrov are ranked the most and second-most “patriotic” governors, according to a list [shared](#) by the broadcaster RTVI, which said it was compiled and presented at the opening session of Russia’s parliament Wednesday.

The next to [back](#) Kadyrov’s appeal for “self-mobilization” was Kursk region Governor Roman Starovoit on the border with Ukraine.

Starovoit placed the number of local volunteers already deployed on the battlefield at 800 and said more residents are being recruited to defend against a potential Ukrainian incursion.

By Thursday, the head of the Magadan region in Russia’s Far East — which independent estimates say has the third-smallest population and some of the [lowest troop deaths](#) in Ukraine — became the third governor to express support for Kadyrov’s “self-mobilization” plan.

Magadan region Governor Sergei Nosov [suggested](#), however, that Russian territories should pool together their resources based on their “capabilities.”

The Kremlin has so far steered clear of declaring a politically risky nationwide mobilization to shore up its troops in Ukraine.

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