

Kadyrov Calls for Russian 'Jihad' Across All of Ukraine

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Ramzan Kadyrov. vk.com/ramzan

Chechen leader Ramzan Kadyrov [continued](#) his anti-Ukrainian tirade late Tuesday with territorial claims beyond captured regions in what he characterized as Russia's "jihad" against pro-Western Ukraine.

"Our territory is not Zaporizhzhia, not Kherson. Our territory is Odesa, Kiyv, Kharkiv. Every region and Ukraine as a whole is our Russian territory," Kadyrov said in a video message on the Telegram messaging app.

A prominent ally of Russian President Vladimir Putin, Kadyrov appeared to suggest that units under his control were prepared to go on the offensive despite the Ukrainian forces' advance to reclaim northeastern and southern territories ceded to Russian troops in the eight-month campaign.

"We have volunteers who will go to the end and we've decided not to defend but go on the offensive," Kadyrov told his 3 million subscribers.

Though he did not acknowledge the losses, Kadyrov's second address in 24 hours comes after Ukrainian military authorities claimed to have [killed](#) dozens of Chechen fighters in a strike on their makeshift base in southern Ukraine's Kherson region Monday.

"I give you my word: we'll attack them every day. We won't take these shaitans [evil spirits in Islam] prisoner. We'll burn them. We won't stop anywhere," Kadyrov said.

The recently promoted colonel general reiterated the [frustration](#) he expressed Monday with the military leadership's response to cross-border attacks blamed on Ukraine. Kyiv has neither confirmed nor denied responsibility for the attacks.

"I'm deeply dissatisfied with today's situation, but people who command at the top understand more than I do," Kadyrov said.

After bucking Russia's official term for the invasion — "special military operation" — in favor of the outlawed word "war" on Monday, Kadyrov cast the campaign in religious terms as he called on more recruits from Russia's Muslim-majority regions in the North Caucasus to join the fight.

"This is a great jihad everyone should take part in," he said.

The characterization appears to be part of an increasing attempt by Russian officials to "cater" to disgruntled religious minorities within the Russian military, according to [analysis](#) by the Institute for the Study of War, a U.S. think tank.

"The invocation of war on religious but not overtly Christian grounds is likely an attempt to transcend religious divides and set information conditions for continued recruitment of ethnic and religious minorities to fight in Ukraine" the ISW said Tuesday.

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192