

Kadyrov Indignant at Polish PM's Support for Chechen Independence

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Ramzan Kadyrov, Head of Chechnya. vk.com/ramzan

The head of the Russian Republic of Chechnya Ramzan Kadyrov criticized Polish Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki on Saturday for comments he made in support of Chechnya's independence during an interview with French news channel LCI.

"There are parts of Russia that are prisons for other nations," Morawiecki [said](#) in an interview with LCI on Friday. "For example, Chechnya ... this nation deserves independence."

Kadyrov, who succeeded his father to head the Russian-installed administration that has ruled Chechnya with an iron fist since a nationalist movement ultimately failed to secure the nation's independence, reacted to Morawiecki's comments with a video address on Saturday.

"He says that people should support Ichkeria. Where were you when we fought for Ichkeria? When we stood up for the interest of independence?" Kadyrov [said](#), referring to the Chechen Republic of Ichkeria, the independent state proclaimed between the two Chechen wars.

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Kadyrov added that Chechens did not want independence and stressed that they had chosen to live as a part of the Russian Federation.

Vocal Kadyrov critic and human rights lawyer Abubakar Yangulbaev publicly disagreed with Kadyrov, however, arguing that the 2003 referendum that backed Chechnya remaining as a federal subject of Russia had been unlawful.

"Voting [in Chechnya] was conducted at gunpoint, neither the Council of Europe nor election observers recognized the results," Yangulbaev [said](#) in a video message posted on his Telegram channel.

Yangulbaev's view is widely held outside Russia as well. In October, the Ukrainian parliament passed a resolution [declaring](#) the Chechen Republic of Ichkeria to be "temporarily occupied by the Russian Federation."

Kadyrov's father Akhmat initially fought on the side of the Chechen Republic of Ichkeria during the First Chechen War (1994-1996), only to switch sides in 1999 when the Second Chechen War began. Moscow appointed him to be the republic's president in 2003.

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