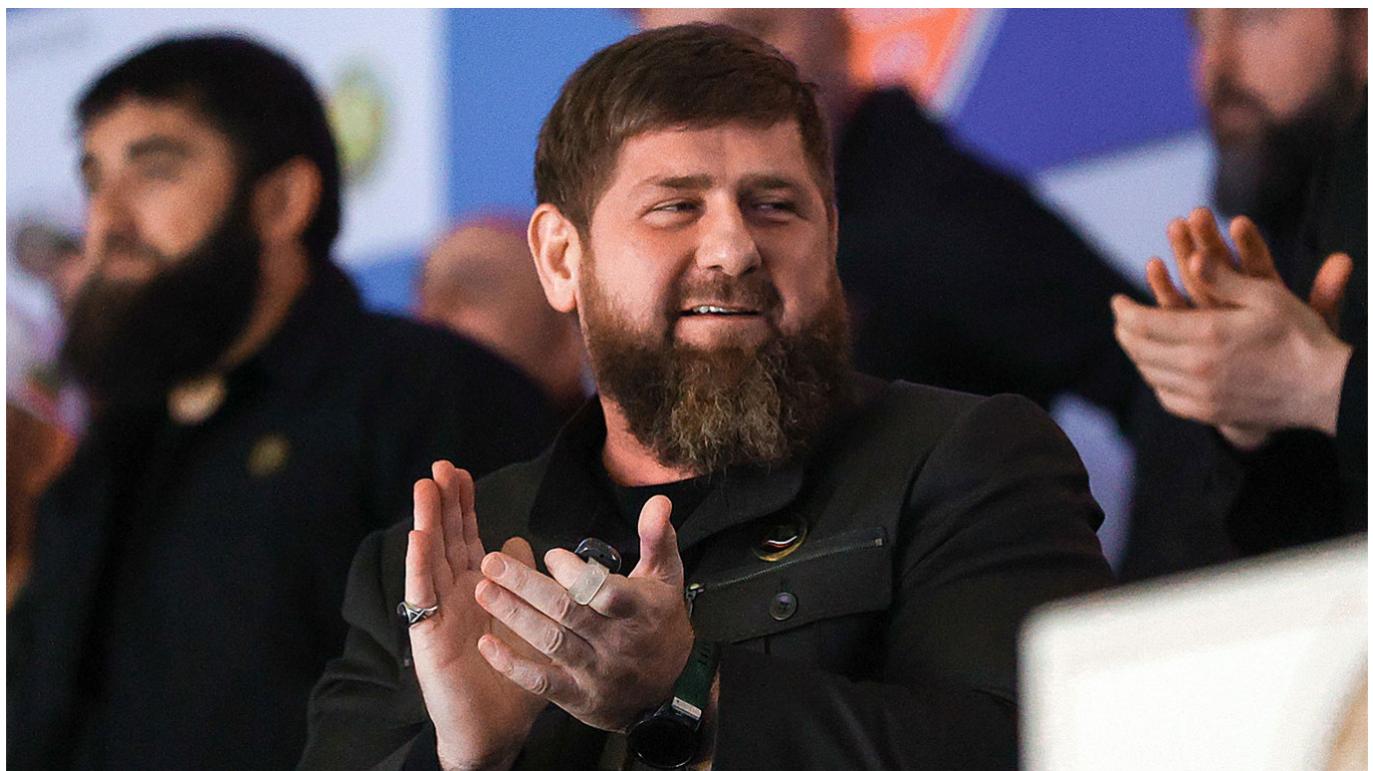


Chechnya Names Kadyrov 'Father of the Nation'

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Chechnya's leader Ramzan Kadyrov. **Erik Romanenko / TASS**

Lawmakers in the southern Russian republic of Chechnya have enshrined its leader Ramzan Kadyrov as the “father of the nation” in a unanimous vote.

Members of Chechnya’s legislative assembly added the term “Mekh-Da” — Chechen for “father of the land” — to the republic’s constitution, [according](#) to Chechen state media.

“The purpose of this change is to establish uniformity in the use of the title for the regional leader in the Chechen language,” the Chechen broadcaster Grozny said Thursday.

The title will presumably apply to Kadyrov and his future successors.

The republic of Chechnya is a majority Muslim region in the North Caucasus that was devastated by two separatist wars in the 1990s and early 2000s.

Related article: [Putin Makes Chechnya's Kadyrov an Army General](#)

Kadyrov, 46, has ruled Chechnya since 2007 with an iron fist, drawing widespread allegations of rights violations and Western sanctions.

His father, Akhmad Kadyrov, had been a Chechen separatist fighter in the 1990s but later switched sides and pledged allegiance to Russia. He was named the first head of the republic of Chechnya before his assassination in 2004.

A loyal ally of President Vladimir Putin, Ramzan Kadyrov has fully backed the invasion of Ukraine and emerged as a vocal anti-Ukrainian hawk among Russia's leadership.

Kadyrov's militia units, called the Kadyrovtsy, are known to be fighting alongside regular Russian forces in Ukraine.

Thursday's vote follows [another title change](#) in the majority Muslim republic of Tatarstan, which was until recently the only Russian region to have its own "president."

In December, Tatarstan's legislative assembly amended the regional constitution to replace the title "president" for "rais," an Arabic term meaning "leader."

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