

Chechnya's Kadyrov Accuses Ukraine, Czech Police of Kidnapping Favorite Stallion For Ransom

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Ramzan Kadyrov / VK

Updated on May 17 to add Kadyrov's claim that his associates took the horse without paying the ransom.

Chechen leader Ramzan Kadyrov on Monday [accused](#) Ukrainian intelligence and Czech police of staging the kidnap for ransom of one of his favorite stallions.

Zazu, a 16-year-old English Thoroughbred owned by Kadyrov, was stolen from a stable in the Czech village of Krabčice in March this year.

In a Telegram post on Monday, Kadyrov alleged he was approached by Ukrainian intelligence services “through a third party” after the incident, who offered to return the horse to him in exchange for \$18,000.

“They knew about my attachment to the stallion and they were not wrong. I, of course, agreed

[to pay],” Kadyrov wrote in a Telegram post, calling the \$18,000 sum “mere pennies.”

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Zazu, who was [reportedly](#) acquired by Kadyrov in 2012, has been under [arrest](#) alongside Kadyrov's other European assets since 2014 as part of EU sanctions imposed on the Chechen leader for his alleged role in widespread rights abuses.

The sanctions prevented Zazu — once a well-known stallion in the horse-racing world — from competing and left the horse effectively locked in Czech stables alongside several of Kadyrov's other racehorses.

“To be honest, I was hoping Zazu would be handed over officially, with sanctions being lifted off him and all that. But...the [Ukrainian] intelligence simply staged his kidnapping...together with the Czech police,” Kadyrov said of the incident Monday.

The head of Chechnya also said that the horse was being delivered directly to him.

“My friends, if you need to get anything delivered from Europe — just ask Ukrainian intelligence [for help],” Kadyrov joked.

But by Wednesday, Kadyrov said he had not paid the Ukrainian side after all — and that his associates simply took the horse.

“At the last moment of the horse's transfer at the border, the Ukrainian side either conceived something outside the plan, or did not share something among themselves,” he [said](#) in a Telegram post.

“While representatives of the Ukrainian special services sorted things out among themselves ... [my people] took the horse without giving back the money. And they did the right thing! The SBU's horse thieves are excellent, but the negotiators are not,” he said, referring to Ukraine's SBU security service.

He attached a video showing his reunion with Zazu to his Telegram post.

It was not possible to independently verify any of Kadyrov's claims.

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