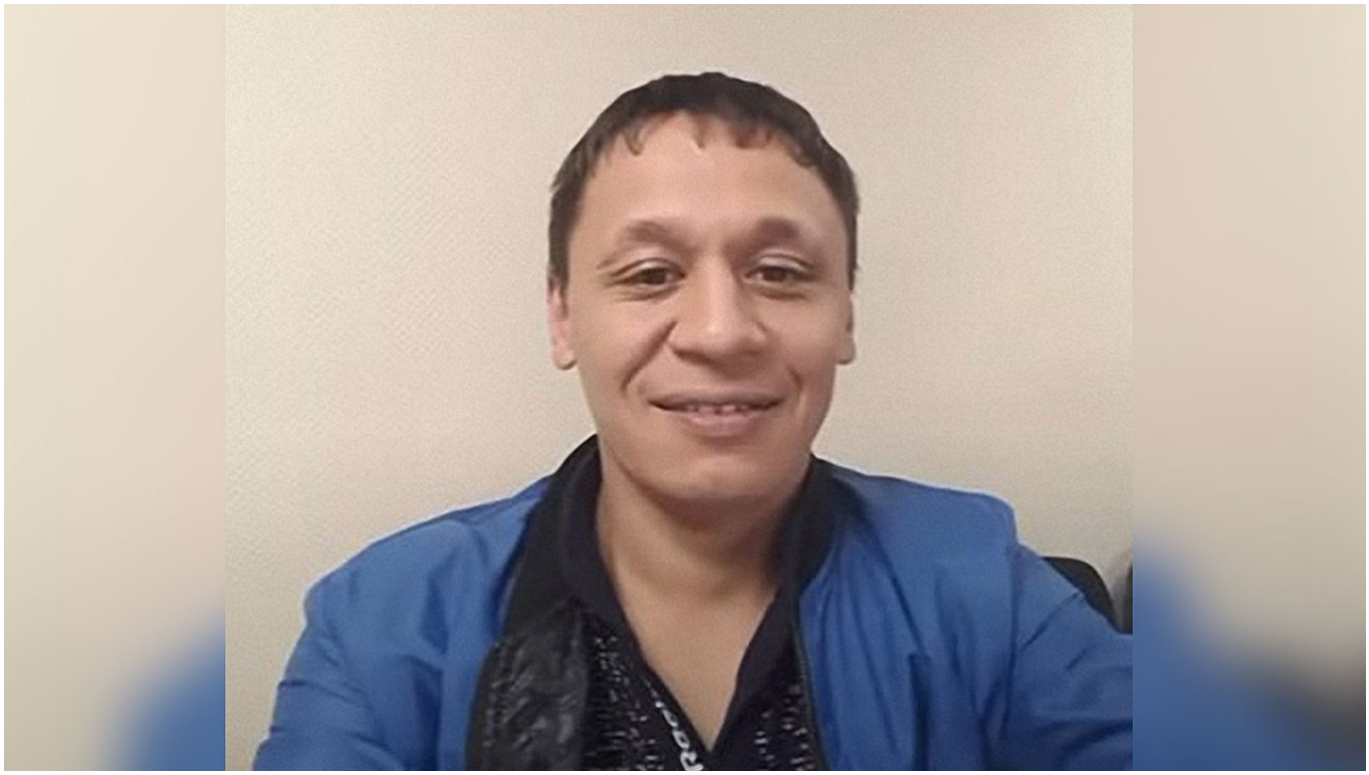
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Head of Russia's Bashkortostan Slams Proposal to Honor Man Who Died After Mass Protests

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Rifat Dautov. **t.me/aspecty**

The Kremlin-appointed head of the republic of Bashkortostan slammed a proposal to honor the memory of a local man who died in police custody after being arrested last month during mass protests.

Prominent Bashkir dancer Rif Gabitov asked to hold a moment of silence for the deceased Rifat Dautov at a meeting on Tuesday with Bashkortostan head Radiy Khabirov and other public figures.

Dautov was arrested in connection with a criminal case initiated by local authorities over last month's mass demonstrations in support of jailed Bashkir activist Fayil Alsynov.

"Your proposal [to hold] a minute of silence is disgusting and unconscionable," Khabirov told dancer Gabitov at Tuesday's meeting.

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“You’re proposing to honor with a minute of silence a man... accused of committing a serious crime,” he added, claiming that Dautov had helped “organize mass riots and endangered the life of a law enforcement official.”

Dautov’s sister Zaliya Akhmadieva told journalists last month that police detained her brother and transported him to an unknown location on Jan. 25. The following day, his parents were contacted by a coroner to identify his body.

While authorities claim Dautov died from a heart attack caused by heavy intoxication, his sister says he did not drink alcohol, as he was a devout Muslim. She also insists that he did not take part in the protests in support of activist Alsynov.

Human rights defenders have called on the government of Bashkortostan to investigate the circumstances of Dautov’s death.

Authorities in the region have opened at least 163 administrative and 34 criminal cases in connection with last month's protests, according to independent monitor OVD-Info.

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