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Chechnya's Kadyrov Shares 'Training' Video After Reports of Near-Drowning in Turkey

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Ramzan Kadyrov. **VK**

Chechen leader Ramzan Kadyrov on Friday released a video of himself exercising, days after Turkish media reported that he had briefly lost consciousness in a near-drowning incident while vacationing at a resort on the Aegean coast.

The 20-second clip, posted to the Russian social network VKontakte, shows a visibly thinner Kadyrov pedaling a recumbent exercise bike while dressed in blue athletic wear resembling a hospital gown.

"We're resuming serious training now. I haven't been training much lately," Kadyrov says in Chechen, according to a translation by the investigative outlet Agentstvo.

A man filming the video can be heard responding, "It was just a break, chief. Muscle recovery. Training will go better now."

The video comes a week after at least five Turkish news outlets reported that Kadyrov, 48, lost consciousness after entering the water at a five-star hotel in the resort town of Bodrum on July 24. Turkish Coast Guard officers and hotel staff were said to have pulled him from the water, with doctors later confirming he was not in life-threatening condition.

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The Bodrum-based broadcaster Kent TV aired footage of what it claimed was Kadyrov's motorcade leaving a local hospital following the incident.

Chechen authorities have not commented on the reports, nor has Kadyrov publicly addressed the alleged medical emergency.

Agentstvo reported that on the same day as the near-drowning incident, Kadyrov's eldest daughter, Ayshat, posted an Instagram story from a five-star hotel in Antalya, roughly 280 miles (450 kilometers) east of Bodrum.

The video and surrounding reports have renewed speculation over Kadyrov's health, which has been the subject of repeated scrutiny in recent years. Last year, Novaya Gazeta Europe reported that he suffers from a serious illness, possibly pancreatic necrosis, while Kremlin PR specialists were said to be working to conceal his condition.

This spring, the exiled news outlet IStories claimed relations between Kadyrov and President Vladimir Putin had deteriorated over the Chechen leader's alleged secret meetings with officials from Middle Eastern states. Kadyrov is believed to be weighing a departure from politics and reportedly fears Moscow will not uphold security guarantees if he steps down.

Kadyrov has ruled Chechnya with wide autonomy since 2007, when Putin appointed him following the assassination of his father and predecessor, Akhmat Kadyrov.

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