



Chechnya's Kadyrov Gets Promoted in Russian National Guard

OE Watch Commentary: Russian-Chechen relations have fluctuated drastically over the past three decades. After two vicious wars (1994-96 and 1999-2009), the conflict was mostly resolved after the Kremlin appointed a loyal strongman (Akhmad Kadyrov) to run the region. When Akhmad was assassinated in 2004, his son Ramzan took control. In exchange for considerable economic aid and a large degree of independence, Ramzan Kadyrov has been able to repress any remaining separatist sentiments within the region. In the process, however, while still officially a part of Russia, Kadyrov has created a mini-fiefdom out of Chechnya, where he and his clan rule the region with considerable autonomy and brutal authority.

As the first excerpt from the popular daily, *Komomolskaya Pravda*, points out, in perhaps an attempt to further legitimize Ramzan Kadyrov's authority, in July, President Putin promoted the Chechen leader to the rank of Major General in the Russian National Guard.

Kadyrov remarked that this promotion "is an event of unprecedented importance," exclaiming that "I have always said that I am a loyal infantryman of our president, I am ready to carry out his orders of the highest complexity on any continent. We have everything for this - will, determination, full readiness, equipment and weapons."



President Putin meets with Ramzan Kadyrov, June 2018.

Source: <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/57797>, CCA 4.0 Intl

The second excerpt from the liberal news source, *Sobesednik*, quotes the opposition politician, and retired FSB colonel Gennady Gudkov regarding his thoughts on Kadyrov's promotion. Gudkov points out that it is "very unusual to assign the rank of major general to the current head of the region." Gudkov goes on to point out that the timing of this promotion is curious, given that Kadyrov has recently begun to "annoy the whole world with threats," and by endorsing him now will likely be regarded by Kadyrov as "an indulgence for further actions."

Kadyrov reportedly enjoys a good relationship with Viktor Zolotov, Putin's former bodyguard and now head of the Russian National Guard. In the past, the Kremlin has employed Chechen martial expertise both for conventional military operations (e.g. Syria) and unconventional actions, both within Russia and abroad. By appointing Kadyrov to a high rank within the National Guard, the Kremlin leadership may be anticipating the use of Chechen paramilitary skills for additional domestic and foreign purposes. **End OE Watch Commentary (Finch)**

"...I have always said that I am a loyal infantryman of our president, I am ready to carry out his orders of the highest complexity on any continent...."

Source: Vladislav Goncharov, "Я — верный пехотинец: Кадыров не сдержал чувств после получения звания генерал-майора," [I am a faithful infantryman: Kadyrov could not hold back his feelings after receiving the rank of major general] *Komomolskaya Pravda*, 23 July 2020. https://radiokp.ru/politika/ya-vernyy-pekhotinec-kadyrov-ne-sderzhal-chuvstv-posle-polucheniya-zvaniya-general-mayora_nid29419_au4311au

...Vladimir Putin once again noted the merits of the head of Chechnya, Ramzan Kadyrov. The head of the region was promoted along the military line - according to the presidential decree, he was awarded the rank of major general. Note that Major General Ramzan Kadyrov is listed as a fighter of the Russian Guard.

...The head of Chechnya once again confirmed that receiving a high rank for him is an event of unprecedented importance. "I have always said that I am a loyal infantryman of our president, I am ready to carry out his orders of the highest complexity on any continent. We have everything for this - will, determination, full readiness, equipment and weapons," wrote the head of Chechnya.

Source: Rimma Akhmirova, "Тудков: Путин дал индульгенцию Кадырову, присвоив звание генерал-майора Росгвардии," [Gudkov: Putin gave indulgence to Kadyrov, conferring the rank of Major General of the Russian Guard] *Sobesednik*, 24 July 2020. <https://sobesednik.ru/politika/20200724-gudkov-putin-dal-indulgenciyu>

The controversial presidential decree on conferring the rank of Major General of the Russian Guard to Ramzan Kadyrov was commented on for *Sobesednik.ru* by the politician, retired FSB colonel Gennady Gudkov. "It is, of course, very unusual to assign the rank of major general to the current head of the region. It is like giving Sobyenin the rank of general or some other governor. I am inclined to believe that the moment was not chosen by chance - right now, when Kadyrov is becoming a target all over the world. He began to annoy the whole world with threats, demands for an apology...."

"I think Putin wanted to support him in this way. Moreover, a scandal with the murder of Kadyrov's opponents is now spreading in Europe. The latter happened in Vienna. The assignment now of the rank of Major General of the Russian Guard is the support and encouragement of Ramzan Kadyrov. And an indulgence for further actions."