

Germans Who Danced for Kadyrov May Lose Salaries

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Members of a German TV dancing troupe that performed in front of Chechen leader Ramzan Kadyrov on his Oct. 15 birthday in Grozny will be asked to donate their fees to the Reporters Without Borders media watchdog, German news reports said Tuesday.

Six dancers from MDR Fernsehballett were at the lavish show in the Chechen capital. The event was officially devoted to Grozny City Day and the opening of a business center.

The attendance of the group and other celebrities caused an international outcry because Kadyrov, who was sitting in the front row during the show, is accused by human rights organizations of persecuting opponents in the small North Caucasus republic.

Udo Reiter, head of public broadcaster MDR, which owns a 40 percent stake in the troupe and also provides its brand name, said there was no good explanation for the dancers' decision to perform and that he would ask a board meeting to see that their fees were donated to Reporters Without Borders, the Digitalfernsehen.de web site [reported](#).

Another 30 percent of the ballet troupe, which has its roots in Communist East Germany's state television, is owned by the German Catholic church, a media report said Tuesday. Nine German dioceses own 30 percent of the ballet, Sächsische Zeitung reported on its web site.

The diocese of Rottenburg-Stuttgart said in a statement that it was deeply sorry about the incident and that the church distances itself from political leaders accused of human rights violations, the report [said](#).

Hollywood actress Hilary Swank, Belgian actor Jean Claude van Damme, British violinist Vanessa-Mae and British singer Seal were among the international stars who attended the show in Grozny. Of them, only Swank has said she regretted going and promised to give her fee to charity.

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