

Chechen Charity Delivers Humanitarian Aid to Eastern Ukraine

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The  **Moscow Times**

A charity linked to Chechnya's strongman leader Ramzan Kadyrov delivered a batch of humanitarian aid to conflict-torn eastern Ukraine on Monday.

"Inhabitants of the Lugansk People's Republic and the Donetsk People's Republic need emergency help and support. They cannot wait until the U.S. and Europe agree on some kind of [humanitarian] corridors," Kadyrov said on his Instagram feed, referring to the self-proclaimed breakaway republics in eastern Ukraine.

Donetsk is effectively surrounded by government troops at the moment. Its residents are facing shortages of food, water and fuel, Reuters reported Monday.

The Akhmad Kadyrov Public Foundation donated various items, including food and medical supplies.

Overall, the charity has pledged to provide \$7.5 million to eastern Ukraine. The foundation is presided over by Kadyrov's mother and named after his father, the deceased former president

of Chechnya.

Kadyrov first announced the massive aid package after the U.S. pledged \$7 million in aid to Kiev.

Chechnya, which has suffered two bloody wars in as many decades that claimed tens of thousands of lives and destroyed most of the republic's infrastructure, is heavily reliant on federal government subsidies. It is unclear where the Kadyrov charity gets its money from.

In March the unemployment rate in Chechnya stood at 24 percent, while the Russian average was only 5 percent, according to the Federal Statistics Service.

In February, Kadyrov offered to send soldiers to Ukraine to protect its Russian-speaking residents from the "terrorists" who seized power from the former Moscow-backed president, Viktor Yanukovich.

Last month Kadyrov confirmed that Chechens are among the volunteers fighting with pro-Russian insurgents in eastern Ukraine.

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