

Make Putin President for Life, Chechnya's Kadyrov Says

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Kadyrov has gone from rebel fighter to Putin's fearsome enforcer in his war-scarred region since rising to power. [Kremlin.ru](https://kremlin.ru)

Chechen leader Ramzan Kadyrov has called for the election of Vladimir Putin as Russia's president for life ahead of a nationwide vote that could allow Putin to stay in power for another 12 years.

Millions of Russians are voting on more than 200 constitutional amendments, one of which clears the term limits of sitting or former presidents. The clause paves the way for Putin, 67, to seek two more six-year presidential terms when he is constitutionally mandated to step down in 2024.

Embed:

Chechen leader Ramzan Kadyrov:

"We should elect Putin as president for life. Who is there today to replace him?"
pic.twitter.com/3Mw8AZ7Py2

— Francis Scarr (@francska1) [June 30, 2020](#)

"I've always said that we need to elect Vladimir Putin as a lifetime president," Kadyrov said in a video [published](#) on his social media accounts Tuesday.

"Who can replace him today? There's no political leader like that on a global scale," he said during an open-air meeting.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov [responded](#) to Kadyrov's suggestion by saying that the Russian Constitution does not allow lifetime appointments for presidents.

Nationwide turnout for the vote neared 60% as of mid-Wednesday, with Chechnya reporting the highest turnout of nearly 90% among 85 Russian regions.

In the video posted on the Telegram messaging app, Kadyrov called on his compatriots to turn out for the vote on the constitutional referendum, adding that the plebiscite is being held to "preserve the state."

Kadyrov, 43, has gone from rebel fighter to Putin's fearsome enforcer in his war-scarred region since rising to power in 2007. Rights groups accuse him of overseeing torture and killings of dissidents and sexual minorities, who he has famously denied exist in majority-Muslim Chechnya.

Despite Russia's secular tradition, he has sought to impose Islamic values in Chechnya such as encouraging women to wear headscarves and men to take up to four wives, even though polygamy is forbidden under Russian law.

AFP contributed reporting to this article.

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