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**Peter Lentini**

**CAMPAIGNING  
UNDER THE  
SHADOW OF  
MARTYRDOM?**

**The 2004 Chechen  
Presidential  
Elections and the  
Cult of Kadyrov**

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## Introduction

On 9 May 2004 Chechen terrorists killed Chechen President Akmat-Khadzhi Kadyrov with a bomb hidden in Grozny's Dynamo Stadium during a Victory Day celebration. The assassination constituted a serious setback for the Kremlin. Kadyrov was a handpicked official whose qualities appeared to make him look superficially attractive to Chechens and other Muslims. Kadyrov was a former Mufti, he had fought against Russian forces during the First Chechen War (1994-96), and he prepared young Chechen students for study in other Islamic countries. For Moscow he would be difficult to replace.

This paper analyses how in the process of elevating Kadyrov's successor, former Chechen Interior Minister Major General Alu Dadashevich Alkhanov, to power during the 2004 Chechen Presidential campaign, Russian and Chechen officials created a cult of personality around the slain president. It is significant to state at the outset of this paper that the election's outcome was never in doubt. As an East German official once said about elections in his country: 'The actual voting is of no importance. It has all the inevitability of a marriage ceremony. The courting of the bride has been done.'<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> W.J.M. Mackenzie, *Free Elections: An Introductory Textbook* (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1958), p. 172.

It was clearly a one horse race and with Kremlin and 'Kadyrovtsy' backing, Alkhanov was destined to win. Nevertheless, the election had two significant figures: Alkhanov and the memory of Kadyrov. Hence, throughout the election, Alkhanov was campaigning in the shadow of a martyr. During the Chechen presidential elections Russian and Chechen officials reappropriated his martyrdom for the state, and began constructing a cult of personality around him.

The Cult of Kadyrov served distinct political purposes. Russian and Chechen elites utilised Kadyrov and his memory as a means of legitimation, generally fusing aspects of traditional (within the context of the 'Kadyrov clan' and family), charismatic (the person of Kadyrov himself), legal-rational (policy continuance, and the electoral process) as well as aspects of eudaemonic legitimation (consumer goods, payments, discounted services and goods).<sup>2</sup> This is manifested in how Alkhanov and other Chechen politicians have used their relationships to Kadyrov and their places within 'the Kadyrov team' (*komanda Kadyrova*), how they invoke their intentions to continue the Kadyrov course, and how both the Russian and Chechen administrations (both within the republic and elsewhere) have established and erected various forms of memorials to the former President to immortalise him. Additionally,

the political elites also deployed the cult of Kadyrov as a means for resolving real or alleged intra-elite disputes. Most of all, however, the cult of Kadyrov helped to provide a central point of focus for the new Chechen regime, and a basis from which to build national myths and establish political traditions.

Before addressing the paper's central arguments there are three points of context worth mentioning: the Chechen elections proceeded in the manner of recent Russian electoral trends; the elections demonstrated the strength of the state vis-a-vis civil society; and the elections highlighted members' of the security forces importance in Putin-era Russian politics. First, evidence from the campaign suggests that these elections followed what appears to be an emerging pattern in Russian national and regional politics: the final results of the elections are known well before voters cast their ballots. Boris Kagarlitsky contends that these elections are consistent with the Kremlin's strategy of micro-managing elections: 'First, the Kremlin takes an active role in elections at pretty much every level....Next, the ruling elite no longer balks at breaking the law.... Finally, and most importantly, the voters no longer matter....'<sup>3</sup> Kagarlitsky contends that in this process: 'The people

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<sup>2</sup> Leslie Holmes, *Post-Communism: An Introduction* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1997), pp. 42-52.

<sup>3</sup> Boris Kagarlitsky, 'Micro-Managed Elections', *The Moscow Times*, 14 October 2003. Located at <http://www.themoscowtimes.com/stories/2003/10/14009-print.htm> Accessed 15 October 2003.

are increasingly unnecessary to express the will of the people.’<sup>4</sup> It was evident from at least June 2004 that Alkhanov would be the victor. Indeed, the press and other mass media provided him with a great deal of support. More important, some media outlets provided scant attention to the other 6 candidates against whom Alkhanov competed.

Second, these elections are further examples that the state is occupying spaces that should normally be held by agents of civil society. Political parties’ weak links to civil society, and their functions as vehicles to support the candidacies of individuals reinforces this point. Moreover, United Russia, the current party of power, and the most influential political party to emerge in the past five years, is an amalgam of a political organisation developed to support then Prime Minister Putin’s eventual drive for the Presidency (Unity) and a political party comprised largely of Governors and other regional officials (Fatherland-All Russia). Hence, party politics reflected in political organisations with clear linkages to class-oriented cleavages have not developed strong roots in Russia.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Kagarlitsky, ‘Micro-Managed Elections’.

<sup>5</sup> On these matters see Zoe Knox, Pete Lentini and Brad Williams, ‘Parties of Power and Russian Politics: A Victory of the State over Civil Society?’, *Problems of Post-Communism*, vol. 55, no. 1 (January-February 2006), pp. 1-12; Cameron Ross, *Federalism and Democratisation in Russia*. (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002); Darrell Slider, ‘Russia’s Governors and Party Formation’ in A. Brown (ed.) *Contemporary Russian Politics: A Reader* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), pp. 224-34. Nevertheless, as Chechnya is a war zone, it

Third, and closely related to the second point, Alkhanov's victory is another example of the growing strength of the security forces in Russian electoral bodies. This is a trend that followed from the accession of power of Putin, himself a former KGB officer and former Director of the KGB's successor, the FSB, especially during his presidency.<sup>6</sup>

This paper first addresses some background on the Chechen conflict. It then provides a political biography of Kadyrov and discusses his election as Chechen President. It is followed by a brief political portrait of Alkhanov. Thereafter, the paper analyses the 2004 campaign. The final section examines the establishment of the cult of Kadyrov and its political uses and significance.

### **Background to the Chechen Conflict**

For well over a decade Russian and Chechen forces have confronted each other in two wars within the Caucasian republic. Both Russians

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is understandable that it will take some time before it is possible to envisage some forms of autonomous civic activity performing under 'normal' conditions. Chechnya's levels of violence, displacement and combat with forms of corruption will take a significant time to sort out before it is reasonable to expect civil society to begin taking shape.

<sup>6</sup> Pavel Yevdokimov, "'Al'fa" v Dume', *Spetsnaz Rossii*, 12 (87) (December 2003). Located at <http://www.specnaz.ru/gosudarstvo.344>. Last accessed 9 January 2004; 'Operatsiya "Duma"', *Spetsnaz Rossii*, 12 (87) (December 2003). Located at <http://www.specnaz.ru/gosudarstvo/355>. Last accessed 9 January 2004.

and Chechens have experienced a civil war which was accompanied by acts of terrorism and other forms of atrocities committed by both sides. The roots of the conflict and impact of the wars are well documented elsewhere, and need not be recounted in detail here.<sup>7</sup> Nevertheless, it may be useful to provide some context for the present study.

It is important to note that both the first (1994-96) and second wars (1999-arguably 2003) shared similar origins. Russia intervened militarily in the republic to prevent the spread of further destabilising elements coming from a 'failed state' located in its southern region. In the first, it reacted to criminality, marginalisation of ethnic Russians, and supported a pro-Moscow elite that sought to overthrow separatist President Dzhokar Dudaev. However, Russia got bogged down in a two-year campaign that was intended to be a reasonably swift, effective campaign to rein in the

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<sup>7</sup> Flemming Splidsboel-Hansen, 'The 1991 Chechen Revolution: The Response of Moscow', *Central Asian Survey*, vol. 13, no. 3 (1994), pp. 395-407; Soli Nysten-Haarala, 'Does the Russian Constitution Justify an Offensive Against Chechnya?', *Central Asian Survey*, Vol. 14, No. 2 (1995), pp. 311-317; Johanna Nichols, 'Who are the Chechen?', *Central Asian Survey*, vol. 14, no. 4 (December 1995), pp. 573-7; Svante E. Cornell, 'A Chechen State?', *Central Asian Survey*, vol. 16, no. 2 (June 1997), pp. 201-14; John Dunlop, *Russia Confronts Chechnya: Roots of a Separatist Conflict* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998); Anatol Lieven, *Chechnya: Tombstone of Russian Power* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1999); Matthew Evangelista, *The Chechen Wars: Will Russia Go the Way of the Soviet Union?* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institute Press, 2002); Valery Tishkov, *Chechnya: Life in a War Torn Society* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 2004); Dmitri V. Trenin and Aleksei V. Malashenko, *Russia's Restless Frontier: The Chechen Factor in Post-Soviet Politics* (Washington, DC: The Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2004), pp. 71-102; Richard Sakwa (ed.), *Chechnya: From Past to Future* (London: Anthem Press, 2005).

separatist region, and re-establish Russian control. It resulted in Russia conceding great deals of autonomy to Chechnya, making it a *de facto*, and it could be argued, *de jure* independent state for about three years. In the second, Russia reacted to a series of bomb attacks on its soil, including Moscow, and the rise of an expansionist Islamist insurgency that attempted to create an Islamic state throughout the Caucasus by invading Dagestan. Moscow also attempted to reverse the instability, disorder and criminality that were constant features of Chechen life under President Alsan Maskhadov's leadership. Since 9/11 President Putin has linked Russia's campaign in Chechnya to the global war against terrorism.<sup>8</sup> There are estimates that at present some 800 fighters are continuing their struggle against Russian forces, which includes 700 under the command of Chechen commander Shamil Basaev and another 100 foreign fighters. Russian and other sources claim that this latter group may have links to Al Qaeda.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Robert Bruce Ware, 'A Multitude of Evils: Mythology and Political Failure in Chechnya' in Sakwa (ed.), *Chechnya: From Past to Future*, pp. 79-117.

<sup>9</sup> ITAR-TASS, 'Yedeleev: v Chechne deistvuyut okolo 800 boevikov', *Informatsionnyi Kanal Chechenskaya Respublika*, 11 October 2005. Located at <http://www.kavkaz.strana.ru/print/261867.html>. Last accessed 6 December 2005; RIA Novosti, 'Dzhordzh Bush: "Al'-Kaida" pomogaet chechenskimi ekstremistami', *Informatsionnyi Kanal Chechenskaya Respublika*, 28 October 2005. Located at <http://www.kavkaz.strana.ru/print/263613.html>. Accessed 6 December 2005; RIA Novosti, 'Kozak obvinil "Al'-Kaidu" v podderzhke terrorizma v Chechne', *Informatsionnyi Kanal Chechenskaya Respublika*, 10 November 2005. Located at <http://www.kavkaz.strana.ru/print/264583.html>. Accessed 6 December 2005.

The wars have had an enormous impact on Russia and Chechnya. Russian scholar and former Presidential adviser Emil Pain indicates that according to official statistics the First War cost some \$US 5.5 billion, 30,000 Chechen lives and 5,300 Russian troops.<sup>10</sup> In June 2005 Chechen President Alu Alkhanov indicated some 322,563 Chechens were unemployed.<sup>11</sup> This figure is staggering as it has been estimated that: 'The population before the start of the latest war, was approximately 1.05 million, but it had shrunk during the war to around 700,000...because 40,000-45,000 civilians have been killed, 50,000 are living as internally displaced persons, tens of thousands are external refugees, and a vast number have moved permanently elsewhere (to Moscow, other Russian cities or foreign countries)<sup>12</sup>. Richard Sakwa notes that:

Already by February 2000 Russian losses were officially stated to be 1,458 servicemen killed and 4,495 wounded, a figure that according to Putin had risen to 2,600 deaths by November 2000. By the time the full-scale military phase of the war ended in 2000, reports from the human rights organization Memorial...state that nearly 3,000 people had been abducted; Memorial also

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<sup>10</sup> Emil Pain, 'The Chechen War in the Context of Contemporary Russian Politics', in Sakwa (ed.), *Chechnya: From Past to Future*, pp. 67-78, at p. 67.

<sup>11</sup> RIA Novosti, 'V Chechne seichas bolee 322 tysyach bezrabortnykh', 6 June 2005.

<sup>12</sup> Mark Kramer, 'Guerrilla Warfare, Counter-Insurgency and Terrorism in the North Caucasus: The Military Dimension of the Russian-Chechen Conflict', *Europe-Asia Studies*, vol. 57, no. 2 (March) 2005, pp. 209-90, at p. 210.

has records on 1,254 taken between 1 January 2002 to August 2004, 148 of whom are known to be dead and 757 of whom are still missing.<sup>13</sup>

Chechen scholar Dzhabrail Gakaev provides further detail on the social and economic impact that the Chechen wars have had on the republic:

Out of 428 villages, 380 were bombed, 70 per cent of houses were destroyed, and large parts of the city of Grozny were razed to the ground. More than 60,000 houses and administrative buildings [sic] have been completely or partially destroyed..., and [sic] more than 30,000 hectares of agricultural land were contaminated with explosives...A whole generation of young men (some 150-200,000) have grown up without education. Many of them are involved in the armed conflict and the only skill they have is to wage war.<sup>14</sup>

Despite the fact that sporadic combat and terrorism still continue, there have been indicators that the violence has reduced. For instance, it was announced in October 2005 that pro-Moscow forces had killed some 113 anti-Russian personnel, including 16 key leaders. Alkhanov noted that there were 65 kidnappings for the year, but that that figure had been twice as high the previous year.

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<sup>13</sup> Richard Sakwa, 'Introduction: Why Chechnya?', in Sakwa (ed.), *Chechnya: From Past to Future*, pp. 1-20, at p. 17.

<sup>14</sup> Dzhabrail Gakaev, 'Chechnya in Russia and Russia in Chechnya' in Sakwa (ed.), *Chechnya: From Past to Future*, pp. 21-43, at p. 40.

Additionally, where there had been 130 terrorist acts in 2004, 28 were reported in 2005.<sup>15</sup>

Russia began its phased withdrawal from military operations in the republic through a process of Chechenization which began in 2000. Under these conditions, Chechen forces, especially those under the command of the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MVD), began to take a much greater role for security operations, replacing Russian troops. Some 700 Chechen MVD personnel have so far lost their lives.<sup>16</sup> President Alkhanov indicated that as the situation in the republic has become gradually more stable, Russian Federal Forces would be able to reduce their numbers from their current strength of some 40,000 persons to 17,000 troops following the November 2005 Chechen Parliamentary Elections.<sup>17</sup> Indeed, it is important to locate the significance of the elections of both Kadyrov and Alkhanov within the context of Chechenization. In both instances, the elections are a continuation of Moscow's policies of having Chechens undertaking positions of responsibility within the

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<sup>15</sup> RIA Novosti, 'Za tekushchii god v Chechne likvidirovany 113 banditov', *Informatsionnyi Kanal Chechenskaya Respublika*, 18 October 2005. Located at <http://www.strana.ru/print/262529.html>. Accessed 6 December 2005; Interfaks, 'Alkhanov: obstanovka v Chechne imeet tendentsiyu k uluchsheniyu', *Informatsionnyi Kanal Chechenskaya Respublika*, 27 October 2005. Located at <http://www.kavkaz.strana.ru/print/263459>. Accessed 6 December 2005.

<sup>16</sup> ITAR-TASS, 'V Groznom otkryt pamyatnik chechenskim militsioneram', *Informatsionnyi Kanal Chechenskaya Respublika*, 10 November 2005. Located at <http://www.kavkaz.strana.ru/print/264658.html>. Accessed 6 December 2005.

<sup>17</sup> Interfaks and ITAR-TASS, 'Posle vyborov v Chechne gruppirovka voisk budet sokrashchena', *Informatsionnyi Kanal Chechenskaya Respublika* 27 October 2005. Located at <http://www.kavkaz.strana.ru/print/263465.html>. Accessed 6 December 2005.

republic. Alkhanov also led and represented the MVD, the Chechen organisation that has made the most significant contribution to helping stabilise and re-establish order in Chechnya.

### **The Rise of Akhmat-Khadzhi Kadyrov**

#### *Contrasting Political Biographies I: Official Sources*<sup>18</sup>

Akhmat Abdul-Khadimovich Kadyrov was born on 23 August 1951 in Karaganda in Kazakhstan. He lived there until 1957 when he and his family returned to the then Chechen-Ingush ASSR, settling in Tsentroi in the Shalinskii district. He completed his secondary schooling in 1968 and also studied to be a combine operator. From 1969 to 1971 he worked on a rice growing *sovkhos*, in Gudermes raion. He also worked in construction in the Nechernozem and Siberia.

Kadyrov's religious career began in 1980, when he enrolled at a Bukhara medrassah. He was a student at the Tashkent Islamic Institute for four years, beginning in 1982. After completing his course he served as the Deputy Imam of a Gudermes mosque, from 1986-1988. The following year he founded the first Islamic Institute

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<sup>18</sup> The following information has been extracted from Kadyrov's official political biographies: 'Prezident Ch R'. Located at <http://chechnya.gov.ru/officials.admin.htm>. Accessed 13 May 2004 and 'Pervyi Prezident Chechenskoi Respublik'. Located at <http://chechnya.gov.ru/officials.admin.htm>. Last accessed 26 July 2004.

in the North Caucasus in the village of Kurchaloi, Shalinskii raion, and served as its rector. In 1990 Kadyrov enrolled in the Shariah Faculty of Amman Islamic University. However, the events of 1991 prompted him to return to the Chechen-Ingush ASSR. Thereafter, Kadyrov continued his religious duties, serving first as Deputy, then as Acting Mufti of the Chechen Republic in 1993 and 1994. Kadyrov became Mufti of the Chechen Republic in 1995. Kadyrov fought against the Russians during the first Chechen war and was a commander.

However, during the inter-war period Kadyrov quickly fell out with his former comrades because he 'had been appalled by Maskhadov's toleration of Islamic fundamentalists (the so-called Wahhabis) in Chechnya...' As a result he turned to the Russians.<sup>19</sup> In the process, he began to build up his own political base through his own clan and extend his power throughout the republic. He also began to amass military power through the militia his son Ramzan began to construct. This made him an attractive political ally with whom the Federal Government could work. However, because he also 'sought to limit the arbitrariness of the Russian military in relations with the Chechen population', he began to gain some legitimacy and trust amongst the Chechens.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Sakwa, 'Introduction: Why Chechnya?', p. 19.

Kadyrov had Putin's and at least some segment of the Chechen people's trust, and a political and military power base. These factors contributed to Putin appointing him to the key leadership position within the republic, Head of Administration of the Chechen Republic, in June 2000. He held this post until he was elected as President of the Chechen Republic in October 2003. In addition to his religious education, Kadyrov also successfully defended a thesis that earned him the degree of Candidate of Political Science (Russian Academy of Sciences), and he completed a degree in the Economics Faculty of the Institute of Management and Business in Makhachkala. He also held Honorary Professorships at the Chechen State University and the Contemporary Humanitarian University (Moscow). Kadyrov held state orders and awards, conferred upon him during his life and posthumously. Kadyrov was married and was the father of four children and the grandfather of 13.

*Contrasting Political Biographies II: Unofficial Sources*

There is, however, significant information excluded from Kadyrov's official biography. Writing in 2002, the critical Russian journalist Anna Politkovskaya contended that Kadyrov was 'a mullah with a shady financial past' who allegedly 'stole money from his people' and never repaid the King of Saudi Arabia for sponsoring the first

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<sup>20</sup> Gakaev, 'Chechnya in Russia and Russia in Chechnya', pp. 37-38.

pilgrimage of Chechens to Mecca. She also called into question his religious credentials claiming he was a “field mufti”, because he was named to this post not by the Chechen spiritual leaders, but by a group of field commanders of the first Chechen war who at the time were looking for a clergyman capable of announcing a holy war against Russia. Everybody but Kadyrov refused.’<sup>21</sup>

Kadyrov’s appointment as Head of Administration caused a great deal of discontent among Chechen elites. According to Matthew Evangelista, ‘Kadyrov’s appointment led to the immediate resignation of several local Chechen administrators who had been working with the Russian government’.<sup>22</sup> Dmitri V. Trenin and Aleksei V. Malashenko contend: ‘Interestingly, at that time the Russian media, which had talked a lot about Kadyrov, now often avoided [sic] his recent separatist past’.<sup>23</sup> They go on further to claim:

The Chechen bureaucracy’s discontent was understandable, because instead of choosing someone who had supported the Kremlin throughout those troubled years, President Putin picked its former enemy, someone who had

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<sup>21</sup> Anna Politkovskaya, *A Small Corner of Hell: Dispatches From Chechnya*, translated by Alexander Burry and Tatiana Tulchinsky (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003), p. 140.

<sup>22</sup> Matthew Evangelista, *The Chechen Wars: Will Russia Go the Way of the Soviet Union?* (Washington, DC: The Brookings Institution Press, 2002), p. 85.

<sup>23</sup> Dmitri V. Trenin and Aleksei V. Malashenko, *Russia’s Restless Frontier: The Chechnya Factor in Post-Soviet Russia* (Washington, DC: The Carnegie Endowment for Peace, 2004), p. 36.

declared a holy war against Russia. It suddenly turned out that steadfast loyalty to Moscow could have adverse career implications.<sup>24</sup>

In addition to creating enemies amongst Chechen politicians and elites, Kadyrov further alienated himself from some of the ordinary Chechen people with his heavy handed leadership style. Politkovskaya notes that he was incredibly intimidating during a by-election to the Chechen Republic's Duma in August 2000 when he presented his nephew Ismail Kasumov, as his candidate to the people, accompanied with 'a guard of thugs, armed to the teeth.'<sup>25</sup> During an interview with Politkovskaya in 2002 Kadyrov stressed, "A dictator is needed here" to establish some form of governance and uphold criminal justice.'<sup>26</sup> These examples tend to explain why Anna Politkovskaya's claims that, 'I've never met a Chechen who would say, "I respect Kadyrov"'.<sup>27</sup> Additionally, during the late 1990s there had been attempts on his life.<sup>28</sup>

Trenin and Malashenko suggest that Kadyrov's appointment sent multiple signals including that Putin did not want a representative in Chechnya who would negotiate with rebel forces

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<sup>24</sup> Trenin and Malashenko, *Russia's Restless Frontier*, p. 36.

<sup>25</sup> Anna Politkovskaya, *A Dirty War: A Russian Reporter in Chechnya*, translated by John Crowfoot (London: The Harvill Press, 2001), p. 252.

<sup>26</sup> Politkovskaya, *A Small Corner of Hell*, p. 142.

<sup>27</sup> Politkovskaya, *A Small Corner of Hell*, p. 140.

<sup>28</sup> Valery Tishkov, *Chechnya: Life in a War-Torn Society* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2004), p. 178.

and that he was attempting to 'split' and 'coopt' the opposition.<sup>29</sup>

Despite these tactics, they also imply that Kadyrov's appointment was problematic:

First, Kadyrov's influence was limited to Chechnya's northern and northeastern regions, where separatist sentiments had been traditionally weaker and federal controls tighter. Second, Kadyrov had never been supported by the majority, let alone all, of Chechen society. Third, the new administration was only nominally autonomous because it depended on Russian ministries that ultimately ensured its very existence. Fourth, shortly after he had been appointed, Kadyrov entered into a conflict with Bislan Gantamirov, Grozny's former mayor, who the federal government had released from prison and appointed (without Kadyrov's consent) to be deputy head of administration and also the commander of the Chechen police force. The situation was exacerbated by Kadyrov's support by Viktor Kazantsev, the presidential representative in the South of Russia, while Gantamirov was widely seen as an associate of Anatolii [sic] Kvashnin, the Chief of the Russian General Staff, and backed further by the Federal Ministry of Internal Affairs. Fifth, many influential figures in the Chechen diaspora refused to recognize or accept Kadyrov.<sup>30</sup>

Nevertheless, according to Shevtsova:

[Putin] sought opportunities to share responsibility for what was going on in Chechnya with loyal Chechens. There were few to be found. The new Chechen leaders he appointed, like the new head of the Chechen

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<sup>29</sup> Trenin and Malashenko, *Russia's Restless Frontier*, p. 36.

administration Akhmat [sic] Kadyrov, had participated in military action against the federal army or were suspected of corruption; they were not trustworthy. But there was no choice. Putin refused to negotiate with Chechen President Maskhadov. The latter had lost his former influence. But in comparison to other Chechen leaders, he had two important qualities: The Chechens had elected him their president, and his legitimacy had been confirmed by Yeltsin, who as Russian President had negotiated with him.<sup>31</sup>

Such testimonies suggest that despite the fact that Kadyrov had amassed political and military clout and trust among some segments of the Chechen population, he was also a controversial and (to some an) unpopular choice to lead Chechnya in such difficult times. Moreover, they help to establish why it was necessary for Putin and the administration to 'assist' his 2003 election and subsequently help to manage his image posthumously, particularly during the 2004 Presidential campaign in order to establish some form of legitimacy for the new Chechen regime.

#### *The 2003 Chechen Presidential Election*

On 25 March 2003 Chechens went to the polls to approve a new Constitution. The document included provisions for the new institutions of power, including a President of the Chechen Republic, and a parliament, the Chechen State Council (Gossoviet). Overall,

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<sup>30</sup> Trenin and Malashenko, *Russia's Restless Frontier*, p. 37.

<sup>31</sup> Lilia Shevtsova, *Putin's Russia* (Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for World Peace, 2003), p. 138.

Russians viewed the exercise with scepticism. In an All-Russian Centre for the Study of Public Opinion (VTsIOM) poll conducted between 28 February-3 March 2003, only a quarter of respondents felt that the process would 'facilitate a normalisation of life in Chechnya' while 41 per cent did not see it having 'any influence'. Another 14 per cent believed it would 'sharpen' the situation in the republic and one in five declared the question difficult to answer.<sup>32</sup> While 'official results' claimed that there was overwhelming popular support for the referendum, the draft Constitution, and for holding the Chechen Presidential and Parliamentary elections, the process was conducted dubiously. For instance, many of the voters who cast their ballots in favour of the Kremlin's agenda were Russian soldiers serving in Chechnya. Additionally there were instances of ballot fraud and individuals casting multiple ballots. Also, the Kremlin drafted the document without consulting the Chechen opposition.<sup>33</sup> Therefore, it is possible to suggest that from the beginning, the Chechen Republic's institutional foundation was established on grounds of questionable legitimacy.

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<sup>32</sup> VTsIOM, 'Chechnya: Press vypusk no. 8 (18 March 2003). Located at <http://www.vciom.ru/vciom/new/press/press/030318-8.htm>. Accessed 13 June 2003.

<sup>33</sup> Gwenn Roche, 'Fake Referendum and Surreal "Normalisation"', translated by Julie Stoker, *Le Monde Diplomatique*, 10 June 2003. Located at <http://MondeDiplo.com/2003/06/11roche>. Last accessed 11 June 2003; Gregory Feifer, 'Chechnya: Russian Officials Say Chechen Referendum Broadly Approves Constitution', 24 March 2003. Located at <http://www.rferl.org/nca/features/2003/03/24/24032003172927.as>. Last accessed 10 October 2003.

The Chechen people were also deprived of their choices during the Presidential election campaign. Once the contest began, and the Kremlin favourite Kadyrov began to face some opposition, his competitors quickly began to become neutralised politically. Three candidates Kadyrov trailed suddenly dropped out of the race: one allegedly had fraudulent signatures on his nomination papers; another was elevated as a Presidential advisor; the third withdrew after conferring with Putin's staff.<sup>34</sup> Additionally:

A reorganisation of the Chechen mass media structure accompanied the winnowing of the field of presidential candidates. In early September, Chechen Minister of Press and Information Bislan Gantimirov, an outspoken Dzhabrailov [sic] supporter, was sacked and his ministry merged with the republic's Nationalities Ministry. The Chief of Kadyrov's campaign staff was put in charge of the new governmental body. Shortly after Gantimirov's firing, Kadyrov's personal security services seized the Grozny TV station. Pro-Kadyrov forces also took control of the editorial offices of all eight Chechen newspapers. These moves, which gave Kadyrov control over all of the region's major mass media outlets did not generate any reaction from Russia's Press Ministry or Chechnya's Interior Ministry.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Igor Torbakov, 'Russian Election Meddling Could Stoke Violence in Chechnya', *Eurasianet.org*, 15 September 2003. Located at [http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/insight/articles/eav091503\\_pr.shtm](http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/insight/articles/eav091503_pr.shtm). Last accessed 24 September 2003; Andrei Savchenko, 'Kandidatov stanovitsya men'she', *Rossiiskaya gazeta*, 13 September 2003. Located at <http://www.rg.ru/2003/9/12/kandidatovstanovitsyamenshe.htm>. Last accessed 6 October 2003.

<sup>35</sup> Igor Torbakov, 'Russian Election Meddling Could Stoke Violence in Chechnya'.

Presidential elections took place on 5 October 2003. There were 7 candidates on the ballot paper. According to official protocols some 81.3 per cent of voters participated in the poll. Kadyrov was the resounding victor, earning nearly 83 per cent of all ballots cast. Table 1. contains aggregate data on the election results.<sup>36</sup>

**Table 1. 2003 Chechen Presidential Election Results**

<i>Candidate</i>	<i>Votes (n)</i>	<i>Votes (%)</i>
A. A. Kadyrov	201,838	82.55
A.M. Bugaev	13,151	5.38
Sh. D. Buraev	8,303	3.40
Kh. D. Biibulatov	4,162	1.70
K. V. Saduev	2,346	.96
N.T. Paizulaev	2,141	.88
O.R. Khal'chukaev	1,111	.45
Against All Candidates	6,036	2.47

*Source:* Federal'nyi Tsentri Informatsii pri Tsentral'noi izbiratel'noi komissii Rossiiskoi Federatsii, 'Chechenskaya Respublika', 5 October 2003. Located at:  
<http://www.fci.ru/EOUID/304748/way/203914/obj/314127.html>.  
Accessed 9 October 2003.

While, for instance, observers from CIS states contended the vote was conducted within acceptable democratic standards,<sup>37</sup> US State Department spokesperson Richard Boucher claimed, 'they do not

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<sup>36</sup> Federal'nyi Tsentri Informatsii pri Tsentral'noi izbiratel'noi komissii Rossiiskoi Federatsii, 'Chechenskaya Respublika', 5 October 2003. Located at <http://www.fci.ru/EOUID/304748/way/203914/obj/314127.html>. Accessed 9 October 2003.

<sup>37</sup> Interfaks, 'Chechen Presidential Elections Democratic—CIS Observers', *The Moscow Times*, 5 October 2003. Located at <http://www.themoscowtimes.com/doc/HotNews.htm>. Last accessed 6 October 2003.

satisfy international standards of free will'.<sup>38</sup> Observers from the Moscow Helsinki Group queried the turnout figure, citing 'the presence of no more than two or three people at any one time at the polling stations throughout the day' as a basis of discrepancy. Additionally they claimed they witnessed other occurrences that challenged the poll's legality and its administrators' ethical conduct because there were:

Kadyrov's campaign posters decorating polling station walls; people coming in with stacks of passports and voting for their relatives; newlyweds handed envelopes with cash prizes from the Kadyrov administration at a polling station; [and] an electoral official leaving with ballot boxes and locking himself in a room with the head of the local administration.<sup>39</sup>

Although the EU did not send observers:

Diego de Ojeda, spokesman for Chris Patten, its external affairs commissioner [claimed]...the EU "shares" a number of concerns expressed by many NGOS — such as the continued use of military checkpoints and the fact that many Chechens outside the republic were not allowed to vote while many soldiers inside the republic were.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>38</sup>Ministerstvo Inostrannykh Del Rossiiskoi Federatsii Department Informatsii i Pechati, 'Informatsii Byulleten' Soobshecheniya "Komentarii Departmenta informatsii i pechati MID Rossii v svyazi s voprosam SMI otnositel'no zayavleniya predstavatelya Gosdepartementa SShA R. Bauchera o prezidentskikh vyborakh v Chechne', 8 October 2003, no. 2224-07-10-2003.

<sup>39</sup> Anna Dolgov, 'Helsinki Group Says Chechen Vote "Farce"', *The Moscow Times*, 9 October 2003. Located at <http://www.themoscowtimes.com/stories/2003110/09/013-print.htm>. Last accessed 10 October 2003.

<sup>40</sup> Ahto Lobjakas, 'Russia: EU Issues Cautious Assessment of Chechen Elections', 6 October 2003. Located at

Regardless of these criticisms and violations, the results stood; Kadyrov took the oath of office on 19 October 2003,<sup>41</sup> and held the Presidency until his assassination on 9 May 2004.

## **Alu Alkhanov and the 2004 Campaign**

### *Succession Crisis*

Shortly after the assassination the Chechen Election Commission issued a proclamation that set 29 August 2004 as the date for the Presidential elections.<sup>42</sup> After Kadyrov's death there was significant media speculation on who would succeed him. At first, there was a strong suggestion that Kadyrov's son Ramzan would inherit the leadership mantle. Immediately after the assassination Putin met with the younger Kadyrov and passed on his condolences — in fact, he did this before he met with 32 year-old Sergei Abramov, the Chechen Prime Minister, who as a result of the killing became the

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<http://www.rferl.org/nca/features/2003/10/06/02003154413.as>. Last accessed 9 October 2003.

<sup>41</sup> Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, 'Chechnya: Kadyrov Sworn in As President', 19 October 2003. Located at

<http://www.rferl.org/features/2003/10/19102003093056.as>. Last accessed 3 March 2005.

<sup>42</sup> Izbiratel'naya Komissiya Chechenskoj Respubliki, 'Postanovlenie Izbiratel'noi Komissii Chechenskoj Respubliki "O dosrochnykh vyborakh Prezidenta Chechenskoj Respubliki', no. 182/86-3, 21 May 2004. Located at <http://.chechnya/gov.ru/bulletins/reports.1640.htm>. Last accessed 28 July 2004.

Acting President in accordance with the Chechen Constitution (Article 72 (a)).<sup>43</sup>

Nevertheless, some factors impeded the younger Kadyrov's chances. First, according to the Chechen Constitution, the President of the Republic must be at least 30 years of age (Article 76). As Ramzan was only 27 years old it would require amending the Constitution to permit him to stand for election. This was hardly a practical consideration in a war-torn republic. It was also a potentially impolitic move which could have been indicative of a clear Kremlin-installed dynastic prefect as the Republic's chief executive. Certainly, Ramzan had some support besides the Kremlin. The official Chechen news services reported that members of the Chechen Government and Gossovet sent an appeal to President Putin, asking him to lower the constitutional age requirement to enable Ramzan to stand as a candidate.<sup>44</sup> Second, Kadyrov had the reputation of being politically inexperienced, as well as a thug. He was viewed as a commander of a ruthless private army that terrorised the population. Hence for these reasons he might have been an unattractive option for the Chechen electorate.

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<sup>43</sup> *Konstitutsiya Chechenskoj Respubliki*. Located at <http://www.ln.mid.ru/ns-rkonfl.nsf/37f2dd8fd42c23aa43256ce00042d0f8/f68d6d04882cc7b343256d18002ad239?OpenDocument>. Last accessed 10 October 2003; Prezident Chechenskoj Respubliki, 'Ukaz Prezidenta Chechenskoj Respubliki, No. 91', 9 May 2004. Located at <http://chechnya.gov.ru/bulletins/reports/1632.htm>. Last accessed 23 August 2004.

More important, his candidacy could have been a poor reflection of Putin's political endorsements.<sup>45</sup> Kadyrov the younger quickly ended any potential Constitutional (and confidence) crisis by announcing on 13 May 2004 that he would not contest the presidential elections.<sup>46</sup> That he had been appointed a Deputy Prime Minister in the Chechen Government<sup>47</sup> may have helped in his decision not to stand.

Following Kadyrov's withdrawal, as well as that of former 2003 Presidential challenger Alsambek Aslakhonov, there was a scramble to find a suitable candidate. Journalists Mariya Cheglyaeva and Nikolai Ul'yanov quickly identified four key criteria for the future Chechen President: 1. The Federal Centre's absolute trust; 2. Either a native-born Chechen, or as a 'minimum — a person who has

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<sup>44</sup> Ekho Moskvy, 'Voзрастnoi tsenz dlya prezidenta Chechnii mogut snizit', *Informatsionnyi kanal Chechenskaya Respublika*. 14 May 2004 Located at <http://kavkaz.strana.ru/print/215150.htm>. Last accessed 14 May 2004.

<sup>45</sup> Indeed it is possible to suggest that Kadyrov's heavy handedness and naiveté were apparent in late August 2004 when he offered to send 5,000 Chechen commandos to Georgia's troubled South Ossetia to help 'maintain the peace' in the region. Georgian and South Ossetian officials promptly declined to accept the offer. 'Tskhinovali ne otkazalsya by ot pomoshchi "spetnaza karyrova"', *Informatsionnyi kanal Chechenskaya Respublika*. 21 August 2004 Located at <http://kavkaz.strana.ru/print/224167.htm>. Last accessed 23 August 2004; Alexander Golts, 'Kadyrov Forever', *The Moscow Times*, 13 May 2004. Located at <http://www.themoscowtimes.com/stories/2004/5/13/006-print.htm>. Accessed 13 May 2004.

<sup>46</sup> RIA Novosti, 'Ramzan Kadyrov ne budet ballotirovat'sya', *Informatsionnyi kanal Chechenskaya Respublika*. 13 May 2004 Located at <http://kavkaz.strana.ru/print/215152.htm>. Last accessed 14 May 2004.

<sup>47</sup> Prezident Chechenskoï Respubliki, 'Ukaz Prezidenta Chechenskoï Respubliki No. 93, O Pervom Zamestitele Predsedatelya Pravitel'stva Chechenskoï Respubliki', 11 May 2004. Located at <http://chechnya.gov.ru/bulletins/reports/1637.htm>. Last accessed 23 August 2004; ITAR-TASS, 'Ramzan Kadyrov Naznachen Pervym Zampredom Pravitel'stva', *Informatsionnyi Kanal Chechenskaya Respublika*, 11

resided in the republic for a long time' with a sufficient knowledge of the people and culture; 3. The ability to be a unifying force; 4. Administrative and financial experience. They argued that the potential leading candidates (at that time) Kadyrov, Bislan Gantamirov, Moscow based businessman Malik Saidullaev, Khusein Dzhabrailov, and even former Russian Parliamentary Speaker Ruslan Khasbulatov lacked one or more of these qualities. In their opinion, the only candidate who would have satisfied these criteria was former Mayor of Grozny, and FSB General Oleg Zhidkov. Although not a Chechen, he was born in Grozny in 1956 and lived there until he moved to Moscow in 1991, where he worked in law enforcement and in Presidential circles until he returned to Grozny to serve as Mayor from 2001-2003. As a result of these qualities and achievements and experiences, they labelled him 'the Kremlin's candidate'.<sup>48</sup>

Such Kremlin backing would not be surprising. Indeed, during Putin's administration former security members have become more prominent in political posts. Earlier it was mentioned that they have begun entering the Parliamentary ranks. Additionally, it is important to acknowledge that in his attempts to reform the state and to

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May 2005. Located at <http://kavkaz.strana.ru/print/214936.htm>. Last accessed 12 May 2004.

<sup>48</sup> Mariya Cheglyaeva and Nikolai Ul'yanov, 'Prezidentom Chechnii stanet general FSB', *Informatsionnyi kanal Chechenskaya Respublika*. 14 May 2004 Located at <http://kavkaz.strana.ru/print/215195.htm>. Last accessed 17 May 2004.

transfer more power to the centre, Putin re-organised the country into 7 major Federal Districts governed by Presidentially appointed plenipotentiaries. These officials were solely accountable to him. It is significant that 5 of the 7 administrators had been generals either in the military or the Ministry of Internal Affairs.<sup>49</sup>

Nevertheless it is worth noting that in a public opinion poll of 1,600 Russians conducted by the Levada Centre during 21-24 May 2004 a plurality preferred that the next Chechen President would be a popularly elected ethnic Chechen. Only 12 per cent felt that Ramzan Kadyrov should succeed his father. This was however, double the respondents who preferred an ethnic Russian as chief executive, or establishing a coalition government in charge of the Republic's affairs. Seven per cent felt that Putin should appoint a governor general and 10 per cent would have liked Chechnya to come under direct presidential rule.<sup>50</sup> Shortly thereafter, on 10 June 2004 members of the deceased President's team, including his son Ramzan, put forward Chechen Interior Minister Major General Alu Alkhanov — an ethnic Chechen who would have notionally satisfied Cheglyaeva and Ul'yanov's criteria and continued the recent trend of

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<sup>49</sup> Cameron Ross, *Federalism and Democratisation in Russia* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002), pp. 139-45.

<sup>50</sup> Levada Tsentr, 'Chechnya posle gibeli Akhmada Kadyrova', 26 May 2004. Located at <http://www.levada.ru/press/2004052601.print.html>. Accessed 27 May 2004.

the security forces playing a prominent role in contemporary Russian politics.<sup>51</sup>

*Alu Alkhanov: A Political Biography*<sup>52</sup>

Alu Dadashevich Alkhanov was born in exile on 20 January 1957 in a settlement in the Kirov Taldy-Kurgan oblast in Kazakhstan. Following the amnesty permitting Chechens to return home, his family moved to Urus-Martan. There his father was a builder on a *sovkhos*. The younger Alkhanov also worked there after completing school in 1973. Alkhanov performed his military service in the Soviet Army from 1975-1977. He began his career in law enforcement in 1979 within the Chechen-Ingush ASSR, later the Chechen Republic. During this time he graduated from the Academy of the MVD of the USSR. Working in the MVD Alkhanov rose to command positions in transport and criminal investigation units. Alkhanov has spent a considerable amount of his career policing and securing train stations and airports both in peace time and during conflicts in the Chechen-Ingush ASSR/Chechen Republic and Rostov oblast. In 1994 he completed a course at the Rostov Higher School

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<sup>51</sup> Dmitrii Semenov, "Kadyrovtsy" opredelilis' s kandidatom v prezidenty', *Informatsionnyi kanal Chechenskaya Respublika*. 10 June 2004 Located at <http://kavkaz.strana.ru/print/218006.htm>. Last accessed 11 June 2004

<sup>52</sup> Information in this section is derived from ITAR-TASS, 'Glava MVD Chechni vydvinit kandidatom na post Prezidenta ChR', *Informatsionnyi kanal Chechenskaya Respublika*. 10 June 2004 Located at <http://kavkaz.strana.ru/print/217961.htm>. Last accessed 11 June 2004; 'Avtobiografiya zaregistrirovannykh kandidatov na dolzhnost' Prezidenta Chechenskoj Respubliki'. Located at <http://chechen.izbirkom.ru/candidate.html>. Accessed 18 August 2004.

of the MVD of the Russian Federation and earned a qualification in jurisprudence.

Politically, Alkhanov has consistently maintained a pro-Russian stance. He was a leader in the anti-Dudaev opposition. From 1995-1996 Alkhanov served as Chief of the Chechen Directorate for Internal Affairs for Transport in the Government of Doku Zavgayev. Official sources claim that 'from 1999 he actively participated in the counter-terrorist operation in Chechnya'. He was appointed Minister of Internal Affairs of the Chechen Republic on 16 April 2003. In addition, Alkhanov is a judo champion.

#### *The Campaign and Results*

President Putin very quickly expressed his support for the Chechen Interior Minister, meeting with him in a press conference on 16 June 2004.<sup>53</sup> Following his endorsement from the Kadyrovtsy, the candidate very quickly resigned his post as Interior Minister. His position was filled by his 'namesake, not relative', Ruslan Alkhanov.<sup>54</sup> Nevertheless, it is important to acknowledge that while there may have been superficial attempts to make it appear as if

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<sup>53</sup> Associated Press, 'Putin Backs Alkhanov as Chechen President', *The Moscow Times*, 16 June 2004. Located at <http://www.themoscowtimes.com/stories/2004/06/16/014-print.htm>. Last accessed 18 June 2004.

<sup>54</sup> Alu Alkhanov claimed that if they were related it was because they were from '...the family of the militia'. ITAR-TASS, 'Alu Alkhanov: moi zamestitel' Ruslan Alkhanov—odnofamilets', *Informatsionnyi kanal Chechenskaya Respublika*, 15

Alkhanov was indeed either 'independent' or was not using his profile to his advantage, in reality, his actions were in accordance with Russia's recent 'managed elections'.

After the Chechen Electoral Commission called the election, candidates had until 15 July 2004 to collect signatures and officially register. Alkhanov became the first registered candidate on 15 July 2004.<sup>55</sup> It is indeed significant to note that although Abdula Bugaev was a member of United Russia, the pro-Kremlin party threw its support behind Alkhanov.<sup>56</sup> This again reinforces the weaknesses of political parties in contemporary Russian politics: the Kremlin's preferred candidate did not belong to the Kremlin's party, and the Kremlin did not endorse a member of its party of power.

Nevertheless, the list of candidates dwindled down significantly, with many aspirants excluded due to irregularities in their documents. The most significant of these exclusions was

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June 2004. Located at <http://kavkaz.strana.ru/print/218375.htm>. Last accessed 22 June 2004.

<sup>55</sup> Izbiratel'naya Komissiya Chechenskoj Respubliki, 'Postanovlenie Izbiratel'noj Komissii Chechenskoj Respubliki O registratsii A. D. Alkhanova kandidatom na dolzhnost' Prezidenta Chechenskoj Respubliki'. Document no. 247/104-3, 15 July 2004. Located at <http://chechnya.gov.ru/bulletins/reports/1810/htm>. Accessed 26 July 2004.; ITAR-TASS, 'Alu Alkhanov stal pervym kandidatom v prezidenty Chechni', *Informatsionnyi kanal Chechenskaya Respublika*, 15 July 2004. Located at <http://kavkaz.strana.ru/print/221264.htm>. Last accessed 22 July 2004.

<sup>56</sup>ITAR-TASS, 'Alu Alkhanov podderzhala "Yedinnaya Rossiya"', *Informatsionnyi kanal Chechenskaya Respublika*, 4 August 2004. Located at <http://kavkaz.strana.ru/print/222717.htm>. Last accessed 5 August 2004; Izbiratel'naya Komissiya Chechenskoj Respubliki, 'Avtobiografiya zaregistrirovannykh kandidatov na dolzhnost' Prezidenta Chechenskoj Respubliki'.

Moscow-based Chechen businessman Malik Saidullaev. It was widely believed that his inclusion in the campaign could have forced a second ballot. He was, however, excluded from the final list of candidates because of an alleged irregularity on his passport. In it he declared the Chechen Republic as his place of birth. However, the Electoral Commission ruled that this was invalid because the Chechen Republic did not exist on the date listed in his passport. At the time it was the Chechen-Ingush ASSR. Therefore, his place of birth was declared to be incorrect, and he was not permitted to contest the Presidency. The Russian Central Election Commission upheld the ruling. Indeed, following the 29 August poll, US State Department spokesperson Richard Boucher claimed: 'There were serious flaws in the election process, especially the earlier disqualification of a leading candidate based on a mere technicality.'<sup>57</sup>

Indeed it is possible to suggest that some media attention on Alkhanov constituted a virtual monopoly. For instance the semi-official website *Informatsionnyi Kanal Chechenskaya Respublika* did not contain any information on alternative candidates throughout the campaign. RFE/RL reporter Liz Fuller cited Council of Europe

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Located at <http://www.chechen.izbirkom.ru/candidate.html>. Last accessed 18 August 2004.

<sup>57</sup> Interfaks, 'V Groznom ne ponyali reaktsiya SShA na vybory v Chechne', *Informatsionnyi kanal Chechenskaya Respublika*. 31 August 2004 Located at <http://kavkaz.strana.ru/print/224953.htm>. Last accessed 1 September 2004;

rapporteur Andreas Gras who claimed 'the state-controlled media demonstrated an unfair bias in favour [sic] of Alkhanov.'<sup>58</sup>

Alkhanov's campaign resembled one being conducted by an incumbent. The media concentrated on his daily activities. Additionally, Alkhanov maintained an extremely high media profile as a result of his elevation to the Chair of the Public Council for the Re-Establishment of the Chechen Economy and Social Sphere, a body formed in late June 2004 responsible for reimbursing Chechens for property they lost during the war.<sup>59</sup> In addition to his work with the Council within Chechnya, Alkhanov received the distinction of representing this body to discuss plans for Chechen reconstruction in Moscow at the Federation Council. This was an opportunity the state did not extend to the other candidates. Hence, in addition to potentially building voter loyalty by being linked to financial compensation payments from the Public Council, Alkhanov was also cast as a candidate with significant political clout, who well in advance of the elections, was speaking on the republic's behalf before the Russian Federation's upper house of the legislature.

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Liz Fuller, 'International Commission Slams Chechen Ballot as Undemocratic', *RFE/RL Newslines*, vol. 8, no. 166, Part I (31 August 2004).

<sup>58</sup> Liz Fuller, '...Which Council of Europe Brands Undemocratic', *RFE/RL Newslines*, vol. 8, no. 165, Part I (30 August 2004).

<sup>59</sup> Obshchestvennyi Sovet po Kontrolyu za Vosstanovleniya Ekonomiki i Sotsial'noi Sfery Chechenskoii Respubliki, 'Polozhenie Ob Obshchestvennom Sovete po Kontrolyu za Vostanovleniya Ekonomiki i Sotsial'noi Sfery Chechenskoii

Despite being well-supported by the Kremlin and media, Alkhanov did not play the role of a passive candidate. Indeed, some of his initiatives and statements suggest that Alkhanov, while retaining the confidence of the status quo, at least for the campaign, had no intention of being a political puppet. These may have had some resonance with an embattled Chechen population. For instance, Alkhanov criticised Russian forces' brutality towards Chechen civilians in 'clean-up' operations. He even went so far as to suggest that policemen should shoot anyone who covered his face on a military operation. Alkhanov declared: 'I'm categorically against security and law enforcement agencies working in masks.... A man serving the law and protecting his people mustn't cover his face. It's criminals who are supposed to cover their faces'.<sup>60</sup> Additionally, Alkhanov left open the possibility to begin peace talks with the deposed separatist Chechen President, Aslan Maskhadov.<sup>61</sup> However, upon winning the presidency he retracted this offer. He did, nonetheless, leave open the possibility for Chechens who

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Respubliki', Located at <http://chechnya.gov.ru/bulletins/reports/1792.htm>. Last accessed 30 August 2004.

<sup>60</sup> Associated Press, 'Alkhanov Criticizes Raids in Chechnya', *The Moscow Times*, 19 August 2004. Located at <http://www.themoscowtimes.com/stories/2004/08/19/016-print.htm>. Accessed 19 August 2004; Reuters, 'Alkhanov: Shoot Anyone in Masks', *The Moscow Times*, 27 August 2004. Located at <http://www.themoscowtimes.com/stories/2004/8/27/016-print.htm>. Accessed 27 August 2004. Acting Interior Minister Ruslan Alkhanov prohibited the wearing of masks as a result of these criticisms. ITAR-TASS, 'V Chechne siloviki zapretili nosit' maski', *Informatsionnyi Kanal Chechenskaya Respublika*, 27 August 2004. Located at <http://kavkaz.strana.ru/print/224670.htm>. Last accessed 30 August 2004.

participated in military actions against the Federal Forces to lay down their weapons in an amnesty and to try to re-establish their places in Chechen society.<sup>62</sup> That Alkhanov was demonstrating independence (within the sphere of the Kremlin's confidence) may have been illustrated in President Putin's stop to lay flowers on Kadyrov's grave on the anniversary of his 53<sup>rd</sup> birthday on 23 August 2004. It had been suggested in *Nezavisimaya gazeta* that: 'Putin's visit to Chechnya was intended to avert a split between Alkhanov and [Ramzan] Kadyrov, who was [sic] seen as backing a rival candidate, Vakha Visaev....'<sup>63</sup>

Alkhanov also began to win other significant policy victories, often with Putin's endorsement. For example, Putin supported Alkhanov's suggestion that the revenues from Chechen oil exports be returned to the republic in order to help its economic reconstruction. Previously, Kadyrov had tried to win this concession from the Kremlin but was rebuffed. Putin also offered to prepare amendments to the existing tax laws for the State Duma if it was necessary to get the initiative adopted.<sup>64</sup> Additionally, Alkhanov was

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<sup>61</sup> Interfaks, 'Alkhanov ne isklyuchaet peregovorov s Maskhadovym', *Informatsionnyi kanal Chechenskaya Respublika*, 18 August 2004. Located at <http://kavkaz.strana.ru/print/223883.htm>. Last accessed 19 August 2004.

<sup>62</sup> Interfaks, 'Alkhanov ne isklyuchaet peregovorov s Maskhadovym'.

<sup>63</sup> Liz Fuller, '...In a Bid to Avert Leadership Split', *RFE/RL Newslines*, vol. 8, no. 160, Part I (23 August 2004).

<sup>64</sup> RIA Novosti, 'Vyruchka ot eksporta chechenskoi nefti ostanetsya v respublike', *Informatsionnyi kanal Chechenskaya Respublika*, 22 August 2004. Located at <http://kavkaz.strana.ru/print/224196.htm>. Last accessed 23 August 2004; RIA Novosti, 'Neftyanye dokhody Chechni vernutsya v respubliku', *Informatsionnyi*

able to get cellular phones registered in Chechnya.<sup>65</sup> This is particularly important for the republic because its communications infrastructure had been ravaged during the conflicts and it enabled Chechen residents and citizens some form of functional telecommunications. Moreover they had been previously prohibited because of their role in insurgents' activities. In addition to convenience, lifting the ban on registrations also suggested that stability and control over the region were returning. Another pre-election sweetener which could have portrayed both Alkhanov and the status quo in a positive light was the introduction of programming from the television channel TVTs into Chechnya. This 'increased the number of channels' operating in the republic and Acting President Sergei Abramov considered this an 'information breakthrough'.<sup>66</sup> Moreover, despite arguably being out of favour with Ramzan Kadyrov, Alkhanov led other candidates in voters' preferences. ITAR-TASS reported the results of a poll published on 19 August 2004 by the Chechen Republican Ministry for National Policy, Information and Foreign Communications which revealed

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*kanal Chechenskaya Respublika*, 23 August 2004. Located at <http://kavkaz.strana.ru/print/224276.htm>. Last accessed 24 August 2004.

<sup>65</sup> ITAR-TASS, 'V Chechne v den' registriruetsya 500 sotovykh telefonov', *Informatsionnyi kanal Chechenskaya Respublika*, 22 August 2004. Located at <http://kavkaz.strana.ru/print/224276.htm>. Last accessed 23 August 2004; Anatoly Medetsky, 'Putin flies to Chechnya Ahead of Vote', *The Moscow Times*, 23 August 2004. Located at <http://www.themoscowtimes.com/stories/2004/08/23/002-print.htm>. Accessed 23 August 2004.

<sup>66</sup> ITAR-TASS, 'V Chechne nachal veshchanie telekanal TVTs', *Informatsionnyi kanal Chechenskaya Respublika*, 19 August 2004. Located at <http://kavkaz.strana.ru/print/224007.htm>. Last accessed 20 August 2004.

that some 53.5 per cent of respondents supported Alkhanov, yet 19.4 per cent intended to vote against all candidates.<sup>67</sup>

Given Kremlin-support as well as other factors, such as his high media profile, Alkhanov, not surprisingly, won in the poll. Despite the fact that the elections were scheduled to begin on Sunday 29 August 2004, voting actually began on Wednesday 25 August for residents and border guards of two electoral precincts located in settlements in remote, hill regions in Vedenskii raion. However, a report mentioning these activities published on the internet suggested that there would be no reason for suspense on 29 August. Its headline read: 'Alu Alkhanov Has Already Won. Virtually.'<sup>68</sup> According to official statistics Alkhanov was the runaway winner on election day. Of the 505,936 votes cast (constituting 85.25 of eligible voters) who participated in the poll, 73.67 per cent voted in favour Alkhanov. Hence, he was the winner on the first ballot, and there would be no need to conduct a second round of elections. Table 2 contains data on the 2004 Chechen Presidential Elections.

### **Table 2. 2004 Chechen Presidential Elections Results**

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<sup>67</sup> ITAR-TASS, 'Alkhanova podderzhivaet bol'shinstvo izbiratelei Chechni', *Informatsionnyi kanal Chechenskaya Respublika*, 19 August 2004. Located at <http://kavkaz.strana.ru/print/22394.htm>. Last accessed 20 August 2004.

<sup>68</sup> Fedor Chekhov, 'Alu Alkhanov uzhe pobedil. Virtual'no.', *Informatsionnyi kanal Chechenskaya Respublika*, 25 August 2004. Located at <http://kavkaz.strana.ru/print/224548.htm>. Last accessed 26 August 2004.

<i>Candidate</i>	<i>Votes (%)</i>
Alu Alkhanov	73.67
Movsar Khamidov	8.95
Vakha Visaev	4.67
Abdula Bugaev	4.51
Umar Abuev	2.97
Mukhumd-Khasan Asakov	2.69
Magomed Aidamirov	0.67
Against All Candidates	0.99

*Source:* ITAR-TASS, 'Alu Alkhanov offitsial'no ob"yavlen prezidentom Chechni', *Informatsionyi Kanal Chechenskaya Respublika*, 1 September 2004. Located at: <http://www.kavkaz.strana.ru/225129.htm>. Last accessed 2 September 2004.

There were, however, many alleged violations and discrepancies in the conduct of the elections. Liz Fuller cites a litany of illegal activities that Russian and overseas journalists reported:

A journalist for the Russian newspaper *Kommersant'-Daily*...described in detail in that paper's 30 August issue how he managed to vote at four different polling stations over a period of several hours. *Handelsblatt* on 31 August quoted FSB Colonel and defeated rival candidate Movsar Khamidov as claiming that voting papers were forged. The *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* on 31 August quoted unnamed observers as saying that in many polling stations ballot boxes were removed and others, presumably containing only ballots cast for Alkhanov substituted. The *Los Angeles Times* quoted a second defeated candidate, former Chechen Deputy Prime Minister Abdulla Bugaev, as describing 'the ballots cast for Alkhanov, and especially the turnout figures, as so ridiculously absurd that everyone in the republic understands what happened.' Bugaev has filed a complaint with the

Chechen Prosecutor-General's office claiming that a ballot box was stuffed with pre-marked ballots at a polling station 16 kilometres from Grozny.<sup>69</sup>

Other reports of ballot fraud and intimidation were recorded. Writing in *The Moscow Times*, Timur Aliev recounts that an observer for FSB Colonel Movsar Khamidov who finished second in the poll was informed that in the village of Zakan-Yurt which had 2,000 registered voters, and in which only 350 voters actually participated, an observer was forced at gunpoint to sign an official protocol that 'recorded that about 1,500 people voted.' In addition, he quotes Demelek Khasaev [sic] a local election official in Argun who claimed 'Around midday our representative got a call from the city administration asking how the turnout was going. He said 75 per cent. The other guy yelled down the phone "It's enough". In the end our polling station was given an 84 per cent turnout.' Aliev also notes that the human rights organisation Memorial noted 'a large military presence, and at many polling stations there were no representatives of the election committee.' Memorial's spokesperson Grigorii Shvedov sharply criticised official turnout results and contended that 'low turnout [was a result of] clashes between security forces and rebels in Grozny on 21 August [sic] that Chechen officials said left at least 30 people dead', and he implied low voter turnout was related to the republic's MVD's lack of

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<sup>69</sup> Liz Fuller, '...As More Details Surface of Rigging', *RFE/RL Newslines*, vol. 8, no.

legitimacy amongst the Chechen people, and their beliefs that it could no longer protect them.<sup>70</sup>

However, observers from other organisations were satisfied with the results and the conduct of voting. Responding to the American allegations, Chechen Election Commission Chair Abdul-Kerim Arsakhanov queried which flaws the US identified and how its representatives could have gotten such information. He stated further that they should be concerned about observing democratic norms in the then upcoming Presidential elections: 'In this instance, we would be prepared to go to the USA to give an objective evaluation of the voting.'<sup>71</sup> The Head of the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs Yuriko Kauguti claimed the elections 'were conducted without serious problems and overall in a peaceful environment' and that the Japanese government considered, 'they would become an important step in the creation of the structure of the Chechen Republic and have important significance in respect to conditions undertaken by the Russian government for a political solution to the Chechen conflict.'<sup>72</sup> The Ambassador of the Arab League to the Russian Federation Said al-Barani declared: 'This is my third time at

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166, Part I (31 August 2004).

<sup>70</sup> Timur Aliev, 'Official Results Give Alkhanov 74%', *The Moscow Times*, 31 August 2004. Located at <http://www.themoscowtimes.com/stories/2004/08/31/001-print.htm>. Accessed 31 August 2004.

<sup>71</sup> Interfaks, 'V Groznom ne ponyali reaktsiya SShA na vybory v Chechne'.

elections in Chechnya and each one has been conducted without violations, with necessary levels of security and with a high level of activity and democracy.<sup>73</sup> Observers from the Executive Committee of the CIS noticed some technical flaws and violations of the electoral law, but felt that they did not 'exert significant influence over the path and results of the elections.' A spokesperson for the team claimed 'the electoral campaign basically corresponded to the requirements of the legislation', and summarily considered them to be 'legitimate'.<sup>74</sup>

Within Russia there was defence of the poll and its conduct. Chechen Election Commission Chair Arsakhanov noted that the Commission 'did not receive a single written complaint from the observers', but he indicated that Bugaev lodged 'the sole oral complaint'.<sup>75</sup> Putin himself declared that the elections 'were held in strict accordance with Russian and Chechen laws and claimed...'

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<sup>72</sup> ITAR-TASS, 'Tokio: vybory v Chechne—vazhnyi shag v zhizhni respubliky', *Informatisionnyi Kanal Chechenskaya Respublika*, 31 August 2004. Located at <http://kavkaz.strana.ru/print/224952.htm>. Last accessed 1 September 2004.

<sup>73</sup> ITAR-TASS and RIA Novosti, 'Said Mokhmed al'-Barani: vybory v Chechne proshli s vysokym urovnem demokratichnosti', *Informatisionnyi Kanal Chechenskaya Respublika*, 30 August 2004. Located at <http://kavkaz.strana.ru/print/224864.htm>. Last accessed 31 August 2004.

<sup>74</sup> RIA Novosti, 'Nablyudateli ot SNG priznali vybory v Chechne legitimnyimi', *Informatisionnyi Kanal Chechenskaya Respublika*, 30 August 2004. Located at <http://kavkaz.strana.ru/print/224887.htm>. Last accessed 31 August 2004.

<sup>75</sup> RIA Novosti, 'Yavka na vyborah prezidenta Chechni sostavila 80 protsentov', *Informatisionnyi Kanal Chechenskaya Respublika*, 30 August 2004. Located at <http://kavkaz.strana.ru/print/224824.htm>. Last accessed 30 August 2004.

have not heard one serious person who would have observed the elections who could be in any doubt of their results.'<sup>76</sup>

### **The Cult of Kadyrov?**

It has been clearly established that the state and media favoured Alkhanov throughout the campaign. Surprisingly, Akhmat-Khadzhi Kadyrov was the only other politician the media mentioned with similar regularity. Kadyrov's role in the elections is significant for at least two reasons. First, Kadyrov served as a legitimating force in the elections. As will be demonstrated below, Alkhanov's policies and other Chechen political developments were formed so as to establish a form of both charismatic and legal-rational legitimacy. To a certain extent, it has resembled Soviet attempts to garner support for policy initiatives by declaring them within the spirit of Leninism. In the Chechen case, these instances provided at least the appearance of continuity between the President and his successor. Second, the developing of a cult of personality around the dead Kadyrov served as a very clever reappropriation of martyrdom by the Chechen and Russian authorities. Kadyrov as a martyr could be constructed as a *shakhid* to counter the men and women who killed themselves and others in suicide attacks (and

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<sup>76</sup> 'Putin: narod Chechni podtverdil svoyu prizhennost' razvitiyu v sostave Rossii', *Informatisionnyi Kanal Chechenskaya Respublika*, 1 September 2004.

other forms of combat and terrorism) against federal forces and Russian and Chechen civilians. Certainly, official sources never used the term *shahid* in conjunction with Kadyrov. However, both official and unofficial statements and activities associated with Kadyrov implied that he was indeed a martyr slain in the line of duty while attempting to construct a Chechen state within the borders of the Russian Federation. It was hence a *de facto*, not *de jure* cult.

Mark Galanter argues: 'The term cult used to refer to a minor religious sect that practices its own peculiar rituals. Nowadays it suggests a secretive group, one led by a madman or a charlatan'.<sup>77</sup> However, he argues that in reality, this is too pejorative a term and while some 'cults' certainly function as popularly believed, in general, those groups should be referred to as charismatic groups.

A charismatic group consists of a dozen or more members, maybe hundreds or thousands. It is characterized by the following psychological elements: members (1) have a *shared belief system*, (2) sustain a high level of *social cohesiveness*, (3) are strongly influenced by the group's *behavioural [sic] norms*, and (4) impute *charismatic* (or sometimes *divine*) *power* to the group or its leadership.<sup>78</sup>

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Located at <http://kavkaz.strana.ru/print/224990.htm>. Last accessed 2 September 2004.

<sup>77</sup> Mark Galanter, *Cults: Faith, Healing and Coercion*, Second edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), p. ix.

<sup>78</sup> Galanter, *Cults...*, p. 4, original emphasis.

In his discussion of factors a group needs to be considered a religion R. Scott Appleby argues that 'religion embraces a creed, a cult, a code of conduct and a confessional community.' He claims: 'Cult encompasses the prayers, devotions, spiritual disciplines, and patterns of communal worship that give richly suggestive ritual progression to the creed.'<sup>79</sup> Colin Campbell argues that: 'More than anything else, the cultic world is kept alive by the magazines, periodicals, books, pamphlets, lectures, demonstrations and informal meetings through which its beliefs and practices are discussed and disseminated.'<sup>80</sup> Writing on Palestinian suicide bombers, Assaf Moghadam contends one of the personal motives (mainly) young Gazans have chosen this form of conflict is the 'virtual cult of the suicide bomber among many Palestinians.' This is generated by '...the circulation of posters and leaflets carrying his name and picture. Perhaps most importantly, every attack is followed by a rally commemorating the suicide bomber, where the number may reach into the thousands.'<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> R. Scott Appleby, *The Ambivalence of the Sacred: Religion, Violence, and Reconciliation* (Boulder, CO: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2000), pp. 10-11.

<sup>80</sup> Colin Campbell, 'The Cult, The Cultic Milieu and Secularization' originally published in *A Sociological Yearbook of Religion in Britain* 5 (1972), reprinted in Jeffrey Kaplan and Heléne Lööv (eds), *The Cultic Milieu: Oppositional Subcultures in an Age of Globalization* (Oxford: AltaMira Press, 2002), pp. 12-25, at p. 15.

<sup>81</sup> Assaf Moghadam, 'Palestinian Suicide Terrorism in the Second Intifada: Motivations and Organizational Aspects', *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, vol. 26, no. 1 (2003), pp. 65-92, at p. 72.

Based on the evidence presented below it is possible to suggest that Russian and Chechen elites attempted to construct a cult around Kadyrov. However, it is important to note that they included some novel attempts to generate a cult. Campbell contends, and Moghadam's evidence confirms, cults are often oppositional. Hence, the status quo reappropriated the notion of cult, as well as martyrdom in constructing a Kadyrov cult. The nature of the cult follows Galanter's notion of a charismatic group. In the present case, the group or groups in question (generally the Russian and Chechen elites, but especially the 'Kadyrovtsy') would possess social cohesiveness, certain behavioural norms and they clearly established Kadyrov and his memory within the realms of the charismatic. Additionally, in accordance with Appleby, Moghadam and Campbell's criteria, the elites reproduced this cult through rituals (some of the statements and incidents detailed below suggest that the elections themselves may have been one such ritual), and celebrated his life through the media, art and other rhetorical and policy practices. Therefore, there are some claims to labelling the discursive and actual practices surrounding Kadyrov and his memory throughout the 2004 election campaign as a Cult of Kadyrov, despite the fact that this term was never utilised.

Cults of personality, including those of slain leaders have been fairly common in recent Soviet and Russian history.<sup>82</sup> Personality cults and cults of the leader perform significant political functions, especially in relation to generating myths of nation and national leaders. Myths that concentrate on the real and fictitious exploits of notable individuals personalise these narratives and establish focal points within a dominant or official construction of the nation. All nations exalt certain individuals' contributions to their groups' histories. However, myths surrounding the founding of states are particularly important. Malte Rolf, for instance, argues that these help to 'centre' emerging regimes.<sup>83</sup> Such myths help to establish various forms of legitimacy for the new regime, especially charismatic and traditional modes. Rees argues that in established liberal-democratic states, myth and aura around particular notable figures exist, but they are often more associated 'with offices'.

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<sup>82</sup> On these matters see *Kratkii politicheskii slovar'*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. (Moscow: Politizdat, 1987), pp. 220-21; Nikita Khrushchev, *Khrushchev Remembers*, Introduction, Commentary and Notes by Edward Crankshaw, translated by Strobe Talbott (London: Sphere Books, 1971), pp. 503-62; Stephen White, *After Gorbachev*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), pp. 1-2; Mark Galeotti, *Gorbachev and His Revolution* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1997), p. 41; Nina Tumarkin, *Lenin Lives! The Lenin Cult in Soviet Russia*, enlarged ed. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press).

<sup>83</sup> Malte Rolf, 'Working Towards the Centre: Leader Cults and Spatial Politics in Pre-War Stalinism' in Balász Apor, Jan C. Behrends, Polly Jones and E.A. Rees (eds), *The Leader Cult in Communist Dictatorships: Stalin and the Eastern Bloc* (Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), pp. 141-57, at pp. 141-142.

Hence, liberal democracies have greater potentials for legal-rational legitimation.<sup>84</sup>

However, in political systems with weakly developed institutions or state restrictions on political participation channels, ruling elites often attempt to establish popular veneration for particular leaders that transcends respect and tribute for achievement. Rather, elites seek to generate regime support and legitimacy by personalising the state and social order through particular individuals in leader cults.

Rees defines the leader cult as:

an established system of veneration of a political leader to which all members of the society are expected to subscribe, a system that is omnipresent and ubiquitous and one that is expected to persist indefinitely. It is thus a deliberately constructed and managed mechanism, which aims at the integration of the political system around the leader's persona.<sup>85</sup>

Nevertheless, Rees contends leadership cults can come in a variety of sizes and perform diverse functions. Regarding size, Rees suggests that leadership cults could indeed be reasonably small, and/or exclusive: 'The beneficiaries of Soviet power, particularly

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<sup>84</sup> E. A. Rees, 'Leader Cults: Varieties, Preconditions and Functions' in in Balász Apor, Jan C. Behrends, Polly Jones and E.A. Rees (eds), *The Leader Cult in*

those who were advanced by the new opportunities for upward mobility, may have been the real base of the cult.<sup>86</sup> Leadership cult functions include:

1. Legitimizing political succession;
2. Inventing political traditions;
3. Creating regime consensus and order.<sup>87</sup>

As the following discussion will attempt to argue, Russian and Chechen elites' attempts to construct a cult of the leader around Kadyrov performed these functions.

One manner in which elites foster personality cults is by naming places and events in their honour. This helps to establish a means of legitimacy, as well as create political traditions. It also helps to create the 'omnipresence' that Rees contends is generated through a leader cult. Tumarkin claims, for instance, that:

Lenin's name—like his body, his portrait, and his writings—continued to emote power after his death. An institution bearing his name identified itself as

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*Communist Dictatorships: Stalin and the Eastern Bloc*, pp. 3-26, at p. 8.

<sup>85</sup> Rees, 'Leader Cults: Varieties, Preconditions and Functions', p. 4.

<sup>86</sup> Rees, 'Leader Cults: Varieties, Preconditions and Functions', p. 12.

<sup>87</sup> On these matters see Rees, 'Leader Cults: Varieties, Preconditions and Functions', pp. 9-12; Nina Tumarkhin, *Lenin Lives!*, pp. 1-22; 134-64; 205-51.

having power and status. It also showed that it was loyal and trustworthy, willing to shoulder the responsibility of bearing the name of Lenin.<sup>88</sup>

Russian and Chechen officials followed this pattern and assigned Kadyrov's name to various institutions, sites and public events. On the day after Kadyrov's death President Putin issued a decree entitled 'On the Immortalizing of the Memory of A. Kadyrov'. The decree stated:

I resolve:

1. To recommend to the Government of the Chechen Republic to name one of the squares in the city of Grozny after A. Kadyrov; to establish a memorial plaque on the building of the Administration of the President of the Chechen Republic in the city of Grozny; to name a school located in the village of Tsentroi, Nozhai-Ortov raion in the Chechen Republic after A. Kadyrov.
2. To recommend to the Government in Moscow to decide a question on the immortalization of A. Kadyrov's memory in the city of Moscow.
3. That the Ministry of Culture and Mass Communication of the Russian Federation decide a question on the production of a television film dedicated to the memory of A. Kadyrov and his [life] for Russian Television.<sup>89</sup>

Sporting-related memorials to Kadyrov were constructed and conducted. For instance, '150 million rubles were taken from the

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<sup>88</sup> Tumarkin, *Lenin Lives!*, p. 152.

federal budget to construct' a stadium to accommodate 25,000 spectators named after Kadyrov in Grozny.<sup>90</sup> There was even an Akhmat-Khadzhi Kadyrov Memorial Inter-Regional Boxing Tournament held in late August in Gudermes.<sup>91</sup>

Russian and Chechen officials quickly began implementing the conditions of Putin's decree to immortalize Kadyrov, and this continued throughout the election campaign. For instance on 11 May 2004 the Central Square in Gudermes was named in Kadyrov's honour.<sup>92</sup> The Presidential Press Service stated that a bronze bust of Kadyrov would be erected in Gudermes, and a memorial plaque would be placed on the Government House in Grozny.<sup>93</sup> The Representation of the Chechen Republic in Moscow approved a memorial plaque to be set at the Chechen Government Building in Novyi Arbat on 17 August. Less than a week later the dedication ceremony was conducted, and this was attended by the Deputy Mayor of Moscow Anatolii Petrov, Kadyrov's brother Magomed and

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<sup>89</sup> Prezident Rossiiskoi Federatsii, 'Ukaz Prezidenta Rossiiskoi Federatsii Ob uvekovechivanii pamyati A. Kadyrova', no. 608, 10 May 2004. Located at <http://chechnya.gov.ru/bulletins/reports/1638.htm>. Accessed 23 August 2004.

<sup>90</sup> ITAR-TASS, 'Stadion Kadyrova postroyat na budgetnye 150 millionov' , *Informatsionnyi Kanal Chechenskaya Respublika*, 12 August 2004. Located at <http://kavkaz.strana.ru/print/223358.htm>. Last accessed 17 August 2004.

<sup>91</sup> 'Ramzan Kadyrov: My ne pozvolim sorvat' vybory' , *Informatsionnyi Kanal Chechenskaya Respublika*, 24 August 2004. Located at <http://kavkaz.strana.ru/print/224387.htm>. Last accessed 25 August 2004.

<sup>92</sup> ITAR-TASS, 'Tsentral'naya ploshchad Gudermesa poluchit imya Kadyrova' , *Informatsionnyi Kanal Chechenskaya Respublika*, 11 May 2004. Located at <http://kavkaz.strana.ru/print/214935.htm>. Last accessed 12 May 2004.

<sup>93</sup> RIA Novosti, 'Novorozhdennym Akhmatam vydadut po 10 tysyach rublei' , *Informatsionnyi Kanal Chechenskaya Respublika*, 16 August 2004. Located at <http://kavkaz.strana.ru/print/223634.htm>. Last accessed 17 August 2004.

Putin's special representative to the Chechen Republic Nikolai Aidinov. Similarly, the Chechen Government in Moscow approved that one of the streets in Grozny's Yuzhnoe Butovo district be named after Kadyrov.<sup>94</sup>

Kadyrov was also celebrated in art and culture. These artistic endeavours included the commencement of work on a film entitled *Akhmat*, and an exhibition of nearly 250 photos of Kadyrov that was displayed at the Concert Hall in Grozny on 18 August 2004. The Government also decided on 16 August 'to open a Kadyrov Museum in Gudermes', and the republican television channel in Chechnya increased its broadcasts from 4 hours to 12 and included programming related to 'the memory of the President.'<sup>95</sup> Finally, 'a fund in the name of the Hero of Russia Akhmat Kadyrov was established.'<sup>96</sup>

Tributes came in other forms. For instance, Tumarkhin argues that in honour of Lenin, 'many named their boy babies Vladlen or

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<sup>94</sup> RIA Novosti, 'Odnú iz ulits Yuzhnogo Butova nazovut imenem Akhmata Kadyrova', *Informatsionnyi Kanal Chechenskaya Respublika*, 17 August 2004. Located at <http://kavkaz.strana.ru/print/223785.htm>. Last accessed 18 August 2004; Interfaks, 'V Moskve otkryta memorial'naya doska v chest' Akhmata Kadyrova', *Informatsionnyi Kanal Chechenskaya Respublika*, 23 August 2004. Located at <http://kavkaz.strana.ru/print/224234.htm>. Last accessed 24 August 2004.

<sup>95</sup> ITAR-TASS, 'V Gudermese otkroyut muzdi Akhmata Kadyrova', *Informatsionnyi Kanal Chechenskaya Respublika*, 16 August 2004. Located at <http://kavkaz.strana.ru/print/223645.htm>. Last accessed 17 August 2004.

<sup>96</sup> RIA Novosti, 'Novorozhdennym Akhmatam vydadut po 10 tysyach rublei'.

Vladilen and their newborn girls Ninel (Lenin spelled backwards).<sup>97</sup> In the case of Kadyrov, the Republic's Press Service announced that they would pay 5,000 rubles to 'all Chechen children born on...the anniversary of Kadyrov's birthday (23 August) and 10,000 rubles to all boys named Akhmat-Khadzhi'. Moreover, Kadyrov's birthday would have other elements of celebration and generosity attached to it. The Government gave 10 bicycles to each kindergarten in the republic, and permitted people to ride on public transportation for free.<sup>98</sup>

Tumarkin suggests that the contenders for post-Lenin leadership legitimated themselves and their policies by their personal closeness to the departed Soviet leader and the consistency of their agendas with Lenin's.<sup>99</sup> The Chechen and Russian political elites employed the same tactics. First, it is important to acknowledge that they did so in relation to Alkhanov's nomination, and his competence as a worthy successor to Kadyrov. Second, they and Alkhanov also invoked Kadyrov's policies when he attempted to introduce his visions for Chechen politics and the republic's reconstruction.

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<sup>97</sup> Tumarkin, *Lenin Lives!*, p. 212.

<sup>98</sup> RIA Novosti, 'Novorozhdennym Akhmatam vydadut po 10 tysyach rublei'.

<sup>99</sup> Tumarkin, *Lenin Lives!*, pp. 152-53, 209.

Putin provided Alkhanov with indirect support through the cult of Kadyrov. Shortly after Kadyrov died, the Grozny football team Terek won the Russian FA Cup. The players claimed that they dedicated their victory to Kadyrov. While holidaying in Sochi in late August 2004 Putin declared his support for Terek in the UEFA Cup. During the campaign students of Terek's football school attended the opening of the sport channel along with Alkhanov.<sup>100</sup> In these instances, Alkhanov had a link to Kadyrov through a popularly supported football team that devoted their performance to the slain president — a team that the current Russian president also embraced.

Earlier it was mentioned that Putin made a special trip to Kadyrov's grave on the anniversary of the slain president's 53<sup>rd</sup> birthday. Alkhanov and Ramzan Kadyrov were in attendance. In the process Putin helped to legitimate Kadyrov's memory. Moreover, Alkhanov's presence at this tribute with both the Russian President and the slain President's son helped to legitimate him. Alkhanov was in a sense on sacred ground, at the gravesite of a man who shed his blood in the service of the Chechen Republic, as well as in

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<sup>100</sup> RIA Novosti, 'Putin predlozhit' futbol'nanuyu komandu "Terek"', *Informatsionnyi Kanal Chechenskaya Respublika*, 20 August 2004. Located at <http://kavkaz.strana.ru/print/224146.htm>. Last accessed 23 August 2004; Amir Akhmadov, 'Alkhanov vklyuchil "Sport"', *Informatsionnyi Kanal Chechenskaya Respublika*, 23 July 2004. Located at <http://kavkaz.strana.ru/print/221861.htm>. Last accessed 26 July 2004.

the presence of the Russian President and the 'martyr's' bloodline.<sup>101</sup>

Alkhanov's closeness to Kadyrov during his nomination was manifested in the support of Kadyrov's family members as well as his personal relationship to the former President. During a speech at a wake nine days after the assassination in Tsentroi Kurchaloevskii raion, Kadyrov's eldest son Zelimkhan suggested that Alkhanov should succeed his father. In late May 2004 the Kadyrovtsy held a meeting in the village of Melan-Ort in Nodterechnyi raion, at which its participants adopted an appeal addressed to Alkhanov 'requesting him to submit his candidature in the forthcoming elections.' Ramzan Kadyrov, the Republic's Deputy Prime Minister claimed, 'Alu Alkhanov is a worthy comrade-in-arms of Akhmat Kadyrov. He was chosen unanimously as the candidate of the team of the late President of Chechnya and is backed by his numerous supporters.'

Other Chechen politicians also viewed Alkhanov as a 'successor' to Kadyrov. Acting President Sergei Abramov claimed, 'We consider Alu Dadashevich a worthy person....He can lead the republic and will undoubtedly support that course of reform that was planned under

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<sup>101</sup> RIA Novosti, 'Putin vozlozhil tsvety k mogile Akhmata Kadyrova', *Informatisionnyi Kanal Chechenskaya Respublika*, 22 August 2004. Located at <http://kavkaz.strana.ru/print/224191.htm>. Last accessed 23 August 2004.

Akhmat-Khadzhi Kadyrov.<sup>102</sup> Chairman of the State Council of the Chechen Republic Taus Dzhabrailov declared:

The team of the late Akhmat-Khadzhi Kadyrov with esteemed regard for the opinion of the people, supports the candidacy of Alu Alkhanov in the forthcoming elections if he agrees to stand. Alkhanov is one of the logical choices, a comrade-in-arms and supporter of Kadyrov.<sup>103</sup>

Alkhanov himself also utilised his affiliation with the former President to enhance his candidacy, reaffirm his credentials with the Chechen and Russian political elites, and with the broader public both during and after the campaign. For instance, Alkhanov recounted his physical proximity to Kadyrov on the day of the assassination, noting that only General Baranov, who lost a leg from the blast, was sitting between them.<sup>104</sup> This in itself is significant. First, this claim makes Alkhanov a witness to Kadyrov's 'martyrdom'. Presumably, it also potentially makes him someone who was so physically close to him that he was symbolically consecrated with his blood. Through their efforts to immortalise Kadyrov by naming state buildings and spaces after him, the Russian and Chechen elites established a link between the former Chechen President and the nation. Consequently, Alkhanov was also

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<sup>102</sup> Dmitrii Semenov, "'Kadyrovtsy" opredelilis' s kandidatom v prezidenty'; ITAR-TASS, 'Glava MVD Chechni vydvinut kandidatom na post Prezidenta ChR'.

<sup>103</sup> Dmitrii Semenov, "'Kadyrovtsy" opredelilis' s kandidatom v prezidenty'.

consecrated by the blood of the nation.<sup>105</sup> Second, surviving life-threatening circumstances helps add to charismatic leaders' myths and appeal. For example, it is important to acknowledge that Yeltsin nearly drowned during his christening and lost two fingers in a grenade explosion when he was a boy during World War II.<sup>106</sup> That Alkhanov lived through an assassination attempt, despite being located so close to the target, helps to establish some myth around him, reflected in potential immortality, vitality and strength. Therefore, in the process he became imbued with some form of charismatic appeal.

Continuing Kadyrov's policies also helped Alkhanov legitimate his initiatives. His proposed solution to end the insurgency is a case in point:

'Presently I am not conducting any negotiations with leaders of illegal military formations and other activists.' At the same time, in his words [Alkhanov stressed maintaining] the course of the deceased President of

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<sup>104</sup> Andrei Yugov, 'Byt' prezidentom posle Akhmata-Khadzhi ochen' slozhno', *Informatisionnyi Kanal Chechenskaya Respublika*, 21 June 2004. Located at <http://kavkaz.strana.ru/print/218833.htm>. Last accessed 23 June 2004.

<sup>105</sup> On the importance of blood, identity and nation see Kim Hewitt, *Mutilating the Body: Identity in Blood and Ink* (Bowling Green, OH: Bowling Green State University Popular Press, 1997), pp.16-17; and Robert Burgoyne, *Film Nation: Hollywood Looks at US History* (Bloomington, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1997).

<sup>106</sup> Boris Yeltsin, *Against the Grain: An Autobiography*, translated by Michael Glenny (Sydney: Summit Books, 1990), pp. 22, 29.

Chechnya Akhmat Kadyrov of contacts with rank-and-file fighters wishing to lay down their weapons....'I consider that this must continue....'<sup>107</sup>

It is also important to acknowledge that Alkhanov was not the only politician who invoked Kadyrov's legacy to legitimate the Chechen government's policy direction. Commenting on the initiatives and achievements of the Chechen status quo, the Representative of the Chechen Government in Moscow Ziyad Sabsabi claimed on Kadyrov's birthday that '...the present government of the Republic is able to guarantee the continuation of Kadyrov's policy course.'<sup>108</sup> For example, shortly thereafter, it was reported that the Islamic Development Bank's first 'instalment of \$100,000 for the restoration of Secondary School No. 34 in the Oktyabr'skii district of Grozny [was paid and that this]...was achieved by the late President of Chechnya in the course of his visit to Saudi Arabia at the beginning of [2004].' Sabsabi claimed further that '...after the elections...the new President of Chechnya will continue "the process of cooperation with Islamic countries in the humanitarian sphere, to facilitate the rebirth of Chechnya and the improvement of people's lives" Akhmat Kadyrov began.'<sup>109</sup>

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<sup>107</sup> Interfaks, 'Alkhanov ne isklyuchaet peregovorov s Maskhadovym'.

<sup>108</sup> Yelena Zemskova, 'U Akhmata Kadyrova byl shans spastis'', *Informatisionnyi Kanal Chechenskaya Respublika*, 23 August 2004. Located at <http://kavkaz.strana.ru/print/224304.htm>. Last accessed 24 August 2004.

Kadyrov's legacy and memory assisted in legitimating Alkhanov's candidacy and policy direction. However, it is possible to suggest that the slain president's presence was so fulsome that his memory and persona overshadowed his successor, even in his election victory. Items which ran in *Informatsionnyi Kanal Chechenskaya Respublika* on election day and 30 August 2004 are pertinent examples. For instance, the headline of an article with statements from Acting President Abramov on the voting declared: 'Sergei Abramov Voted for The Successor of Kadyrov's Causes'.<sup>110</sup> Another contained an article under the headline: 'Alu Alkhanov is Akhmat Kadyrov's Successor', rather than declaring Alkhanov specifically and more precisely, as President of the Chechen Republic. The article itself contained other statements that marginalised Alkhanov's success and position and emphasised Kadyrov, such as: 'Although the final election results are still not compiled, it is possible to ascertain, that the lone comrade-in-arms of the slain President Akhmat Kadyrov, Alu Alkhanov, carried the day.' Kadyrov's father, Abdul-Khamid, also referred to Alkhanov as his son's former comrade-in-arms. However, most of his praise for the President-elect came through his former association with his son. He stressed that Alkhanov is a 'wise, strong-willed and

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<sup>109</sup> ITAR-TASS, 'Islamskii bank vydalil dengi na vosstanovlenie shkoly v Chechne', *Informatsionnyi Kanal Chechenskaya Respublika*, 24 August 2004. Located at <http://kavkaz.strana.ru/print/224383.htm>. Last accessed 25 August 2004.

purposeful man...imbued with the sense of understanding of Akhmat's ideas and thoughts...[and possesses]...the resolve to invest all his strength into fulfilling them....' Finally, the article declared 'Kadyrov the elder is touched and proud that the elections for the President of Chechnya were held in the name of Akhmat Kadyrov: "What can a father feel when the people honour the memory of his son. Pride in him."'111

ITAR-TASS also stressed Kadyrov's importance as opposed to Alkhanov's victory in one of its 30 August 2004 headlines: 'Abramov: High Participation in the Elections is a Tribute of Respect to Kadyrov'. The report claims that through their high voter turnout Chechens 'demonstrated their sincere respect for the Republic's first President Akhmat Kadyrov.' Paraphrasing Acting President Abramov ITAR-TASS reported: 'He thinks that the mandate of trust that the new President receives from the hands of the majority of voters of Chechnya will oblige him to act in order to achieve the projects for the republic's rebirth begun by Akhmat Kadyrov and the restoration of its good name.'112

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<sup>110</sup> RIA Novosti, 'Sergei Abramov progolosoval za prodozhatelya dela Kadyrov', *Informatsionnyi Kanal Chechenskaya Respublika*, 29 August 2004. Located at <http://kavkaz.strana.ru/print/224803.htm>. Last accessed 30 August 2004.

<sup>111</sup> RIA Novosti and ITAR-TASS, 'Alu Alkhanov—preemnik Akhmata Kadyrova', *Informatsionnyi Kanal Chechenskaya Respublika*, 30 August 2004. Located at <http://kavkaz.strana.ru/print/224825.htm>. Last accessed 31 August 2004.

<sup>112</sup> ITAR-TASS, 'Abramov: vysokaya aktivnost' na vyborakh—dan' uvazheniya Kadyrovu', *Informatsionnyi Kanal Chechenskaya Respublika*, 30 August 2004. Located at <http://kavkaz.strana.ru/print/224837.htm>. Last accessed 30 August 2004.

Kadyrov and his legacy may have also played a potentially positive role in bringing consensus among the Chechen political elites. Earlier it was mentioned that there were some alleged tensions between Alkhanov and Ramzan Kadyrov. Both men's relationships to Kadyrov were invoked by the other as markers for their mutual esteem or perhaps reconciliation in the election's aftermath. Moreover, they could also be interpreted as a form of public affirmation to reassure Chechens that there were not bitter divides amongst the top levels of their leadership.

Following the announcement of the preliminary results of Alkhanov's victory, Ramzan Kadyrov claimed:

I took in the results of the voting with great satisfaction, for from the moment of the tragic events, taking away the life of the first President of the Chechen Republic Akhmat Kadyrov and Gossovet Chairman Khusein Isaev in the Dynamo Stadium in Grozny, I was extremely confident that Alkhanov was just the person with the capacity to complete the business begun by Akhmat Kadyrov....I know my father rarely made mistakes in his evaluation of people and, therefore, he added a strength so that those who considered themselves on the team of Akhmat Kadyrov rendered their support to Alkhanov in the current elections....My father knew that this person never

showed weakness, nor feebleness, nor would he tread the path of unwholesome forces.<sup>113</sup>

Alkhanov also praised Ramzan through the person of his deceased father. At a gathering of security officers discussing terrorism in Grozny, Alkhanov stated:

As vice-premier he has done much: he has successfully struggled with bandits....In particular Kadyrov has done much so that the elections have occurred peacefully and he's guaranteed security....I have very good relations with Ramzan Kadyrov. I respect him as the son of Akhmat Kadyrov.<sup>114</sup>

### **In Lieu of a Conclusion: Alkhanov, and Legitimation through the Cult of Kadyrov?**

Using Akhmat-Khadzhi Kadyrov as a legitimating factor in the election campaign may have enhanced Alkhanov's electoral appeal. However, as previously noted above this may not have been necessary given recent Russian electoral practices and the examples of the Kremlin's electoral assistance. Nevertheless, it may have increased his credibility amongst actual and potential rivals for the

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<sup>113</sup> Intefaks, 'Ramzan Kadyrov udovletvoren pobedoi Alu Alkhanova', *Informatsionnyi Kanal Chechenskaya Respublika*, 30 August 2004. Located at <http://kavkaz.strana.ru/print/224856.htm>. Last accessed 31 August 2004.

presidency during the campaign, and may translate to longer-term stability in his relationship with contemporary Chechen political elites. Popular support may be a useful, albeit secondary concern. While Alkhanov may not entirely have broad-based support, that he has the Kremlin's favour must be acknowledged. Moreover, that the ruling clique in Chechen politics is also backing him provides him with at least their tacit affirmation.

It may be too early to query the extent to which Alkhanov is his own man as opposed to someone who fulfils the criteria that Cheglyaeva and Ul'yanov established would make a Kremlin-preferred candidate, or a politician who is just warming the seat until Ramzan Kadyrov reaches the age when he can legally become Chechen President. Indeed, an editorial in *The Moscow Times* noted that the new Chechen President may be hampered from establishing his own policy platforms and push through his own initiatives because:

...he lacks Kadyrov's charisma and influence..., has no real power base of his own..., [and this forces him to]...rely on key figures in Kadyrov's clan, including Ramzan Kadyrov...who has up to 5,000 loyal fighters under his command and who harbours [sic] presidential opinions of his own..., and the

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<sup>114</sup> 'Alkhanov: siolviki smogut novborut' terroristov', *Informatisionnyi Kanal Chechenskaya Respublika*, 30 August 2004. Located at <http://kavkaz.strana.ru/print/224888.htm>. Last accessed 31 August 2004.

Kremlin owes Alkhanov no favours [sic], as it owed Kadyrov for becoming the first rebel leader to side with Moscow....<sup>115</sup>

Moreover, insurgents have vowed to kill Alkhanov.

Alkhanov appears to have extracted some significant concessions from Moscow, such as a guarantee that the republic will be able to use its oil revenues to help finance its reconstruction. It has been established that Kadyrov tried to wrest such a commitment from the Federal centre but had been unsuccessful. However, there are other signs that suggest that Alkhanov's visions may still have to be filtered through either the Kremlin or Kadyrov clan, or both. For instance, while Alkhanov claimed during the campaign that he was willing to engage in discussions with Maskhadov to end the conflict, shortly after the election he retracted this offer.<sup>116</sup> Nevertheless, he still held the doors open for those rebels who were not involved 'in serious crimes' and 'guaranteed [sic] personal security and work places' if they chose to relinquish their arms and return to society.<sup>117</sup> It is significant to note that shortly after Alkhanov's retraction of the offer to negotiate

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<sup>115</sup> 'Between a Rock and a Hard Place', *The Moscow Times*, 31 August 2004. Located at <http://www.themoscowtimes.com/stories/2004/08/31/005-print.htm>. Accessed 31 August 2004.

<sup>116</sup> RIA "Novosti", 'Alkhanovu ne o chem. Govorit' s Maskhadovym', *Informatsionnyi Kanal Chechenskaya Respublika*, 30 August 2004. Located at <http://kavkaz.strana.ru/print/224886.htm>. Last accessed 31 August 2004.

with Maskhadov some of the President-elect's key supporters released statements on the same topic. President Putin stressed that 'Russia was prepared for contacts, negotiations and compromises with those interested in a political settlement of the conflict', but stressed he would not give away 'Russia's territorial integrity'.<sup>118</sup> Hence, this excluded any who supported Chechen independence. Similarly Ramzan Kadyrov slammed Boris Nemtsov's desire to initiate measures to resolve the problem 'including talking with separatists', by claiming 'It is better to remain silent than to talk such gibberish'.<sup>119</sup> Alkhanov stated further that Chechnya needed to establish a new, strong ideology that was anti-Wahhabist and anti-extremist and that Chechen media would play a decisive role in disseminating this.<sup>120</sup> Moreover, although Ramzan Kadyrov stated that he felt that creating an entirely new Chechen Government should be the President's first major task, Alkhanov quickly declared that he did not intend to restructure either 'the Government of Chechnya or other management structures' that radically. He emphasised that he would prioritize re-establishing

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<sup>117</sup> ITAR-TASS, 'Alu Alkhanov prizval boevikov vernuts'ya domoi', *Informatisionnyi Kanal Chechenskaya Respublika*, 30 August 2004. Located at <http://kavkaz.strana.ru/print/224939.htm>. Last accessed 31 August 2004.

<sup>118</sup> 'Putin: Russia Prepared to Compromise With Parties Interested in Political Settlement', *News From Russia*, vol. VII, no. 9 (1 September 2004). Located at <http://www.india.mid.ru/nfr2004/nf37.html>.

<sup>119</sup> Interfaks, 'Kadyrov-Nemtsovu: "luchshe molchat', chem nesti podobnyi bred'", *Informatisionnyi Kanal Chechenskaya Respublika*, 2 September 2004. Located at <http://kavkaz.strana.ru/print/225224.htm>. Last accessed 2 September 2004.

<sup>120</sup> ITAR-TASS, 'Alkhanov: Chechne nuzhna novaya ideologiya', *Informatisionnyi Kanal Chechenskaya Respublika*, 30 August 2004. Located at <http://kavkaz.strana.ru/print/224875.htm>. Last accessed 31 August 2004.

stability and economic reconstruction projects.<sup>121</sup> Indeed, Ramzan Kadyrov has maintained his position as a Deputy Prime Minister. Moreover, he has also been made a special advisor to Dmitrii Kozak, Putin's Presidential Plenipotentiary responsible for Southern Russia. While it could be argued that this move was an indication that the Kremlin was attempting to raise Kadyrov's stakes in Russian and Chechen politics, it is also possible that the move may have provided Alkhanov with a greater degree of manoeuvrability and fewer obstacles to govern Chechnya. While there is little debate that Alkhanov campaigned under the shadow of Akhmat-Khadzhi Kadyrov's martyrdom during the 2004 Presidential elections, the extent to which the new Chechen Chief Executive remains overshadowed by the Kremlin, the Kadyrovtsy, and the slain Chechen President's memory remains to be seen.

However, the real function of the cult lies in its 'centring' of the post-2003 Chechen Constitution regime. New institutions, buildings, practices and policies are elevated in stature and legitimated through Kadyrov's name and legacy. Most important, however, new political elites can also claim some degree of legitimacy. This factor may be particularly important in helping to

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<sup>121</sup> ITAR-TASS, 'Ramzan Kadyrov vmeste s pravitel'svom uidet v otstavku', *Informatsionnyi Kanal Chechenskaya Respublika*, 29 August 2004. Located at <http://kavkaz.strana.ru/print/224800.htm>. Last accessed 30 August 2004; ITAR-TASS, Alkhanov: v Chechne ne budit rezkikh kadrovyykh peremen',

normalise a society and help embed political and other institutions in a war-torn society. Symbolically, Kadyrov provides Chechens and Russians with a founding statesman who possessed the attributes of a religious figure, freedom fighter and pro-Moscow politician who lost his life serving a region of Russia attempting to establish peace and rebuild itself after a decade of conflict. He is also someone whose policies have set the tone for post-conflict reconstruction. In addition to now having new political institutions, including a Gossovet elected in late November 2005,<sup>122</sup> Chechens now have a figure around which elites can construct narratives of national identity. This can help contribute to the process of national consolidation, even if Kadyrov and his legacies are contentious political topics. In the post-Beslan political climate in which Federal subjects' leading executive officials (regional governors and republican presidents) are now appointed by the Russian President and approved by the regional and republican parliaments, those

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*Informatsionnyi Kanal Chechenskaya Respublika*, 30 August 2004. Located at <http://kavkaz.strana.ru/print/224897.htm>. Last accessed 31 August 2004.

<sup>122</sup> On these matters see Federal'nyi Tsentri Informatizatsii pri Tsentral'noi izbiratel'noi komissii Rossiiskoi Federatsii, 'Itogi golosovaniya (protocol no. 2)'. Located at [http://www.izbirkom.ru/way/1269570/viboryrefer\\_obj/103037824/tvd\\_brn/103037831/VRNATD/16951/UROVPROVED/2.html](http://www.izbirkom.ru/way/1269570/viboryrefer_obj/103037824/tvd_brn/103037831/VRNATD/16951/UROVPROVED/2.html). Accessed 20 December 2005. RIA Novosti, 'V Chechne 5-protsentnyi bar'er preodeli tri partii', *Informatsionnyi kanal Chechenskaya Respublika*, 29 November 2005. Located at <http://www.kavkaz.strana.ru/print/266294.html>. Accessed 6 December 2005; ITAR-TASS, 'V parlament Chechni voshli "Edinaya Rossiya", SPS i KPRF', *Informatsionnyi Kanal Chechenskaya Respublika*, 3 December 2005. Located at <http://www.kavkaz.strana.ru/print/266795.html>. Accessed 6 December 2005. ITAR-TASS, 'V parlament Chechni izbrany chetyre zhenshchiny', *Informatsionnyi Kanal Chechenskaya Respublika*, 3 December 2005. Located at <http://www.kavkaz.strana.ru/print/266801>. Accessed 6 December 2005.

aligned with Kadyrov's memory and his policies (and even bloodline) may have significant political advantages.

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