

REPUBLIC OF INGUSHETIA. POLITICAL CONTEXTS

as of October 2025



Aishat Daurbekova. Deportation of the Ingush and Chechens

Demographic situation and socioeconomic status of the region

Ingushetia has traditionally been among the subjects of the Russian Federation with the highest natural population [growth](#). Over the past quarter-century, the population of the republic has [increased](#) by almost 200,000, reaching 534,000 at the beginning of 2025. Ingushetia is the smallest region of the Russian Federation in terms of area, while its population [density](#) is among the highest in the country.

However, official statistical data on the population of the Republic of Ingushetia, as well as the North Caucasian Federal District in general, have repeatedly been the subject of debate. In 2021, demographer Aleksey Raksha noted that the authorities deliberately [inflate](#) population figures in order to receive larger amounts of federal subsidies.



„It is in Ingushetia that the greatest overestimation of the total population and the largest undercount of those who have left is observed. The republic supposedly shows a migration increase of two to three thousand people each year, although in reality, I am convinced, the opposite is happening – people are leaving, as in other labor-surplus republics of the Eastern Caucasus. Over ten years, this has thus “accumulated” into 50, or perhaps even 100 thousand of fictitious migration increase”. (Aleksei Raksha, 2021).

A similar position is held by researcher Natalia Zubarevich. She notes that official statistics are often distorted due to [double counting](#): residents who actually live in urban centers remain registered in rural areas, artificially inflating the total population. Another factor potentially inflating the figures is the regional authorities' desire to maintain population numbers at a level sufficient to preserve the status of a federal subject, since low population density could call it into question.

Ingushetia is one of the youngest regions of Russia: the [average age](#) of the population is 30 years. [Almost a third](#) of residents are between 15 and 34 years old. This demographic feature is caused by high birth rates in past decades, which remained significantly above the Russian average, as well as the traditional large families of Ingush households. This creates a certain “demographic reserve” for future reproduction but at the same time exacerbates the employment problem, which triggers migration outflows.

Migration processes in Ingushetia have a pronounced interregional orientation and are characterized by minimal participation of international flows. According to the latest public data, from January to October 2023, about [6.7 thousand](#) people arrived in the republic, over 60% of whom were resettlers from other regions of Russia, while the share of international migrants did not exceed 6%.

Historically, Ingushetia has one of the largest communities of internally displaced persons in the North Caucasus. According to official data, about 165 thousand people live in the republic, mostly from Chechnya and North Ossetia. Chechen refugees have lived for decades in the tent camps of the Karabulak district since the First Chechen War, experiencing social [marginalization](#). The resettlers repeatedly went on [hunger strikes](#),

demanding from the authorities proper living conditions, access to housing, and social guarantees. Although the camps were eventually liquidated, tensions persist: in 2024, the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Ingushetia illegally [deprived](#) one resettler of his status, once again causing public outcry and appeals to Putin.

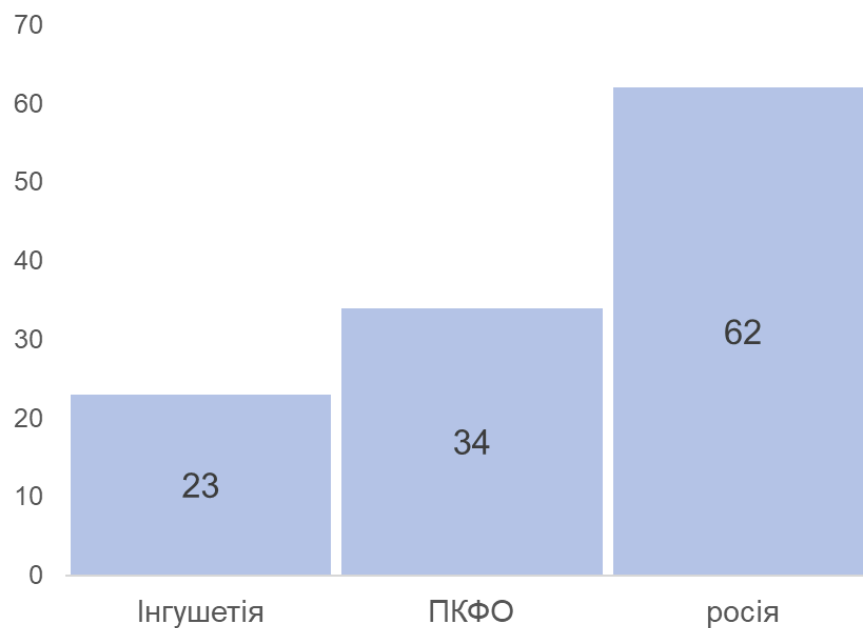
Chechen refugees lived for years in tent camps in Ingushetia
(photo [BBC](#))



In addition, thousands of internally displaced persons live in Ingushetia, having lost their homes as a result of the Ossetian-Ingush armed conflict of 1992. For decades, Ingushs were forced to live in [refugee camps](#) under extremely difficult conditions, unable to return to the Prigorodny district, which was transferred to North Ossetia. The sense of deep injustice was exacerbated by the fact that the state actively provided assistance to victims of the war in South Ossetia, while the problem of Ingush resettlers remained unresolved. In 2011, the authorities [decided](#) to liquidate 29 internal displacement camps without providing permanent housing for Ingush families, which provoked sharp criticism from Amnesty International and Russian human rights activists.

In 2023–2024, Ingushetia received several groups of refugees from Palestine: in December 2023, the first 55 people arrived in the republic, including 34 children, and by January 2024, another 32 resettlers, including 23 children, had arrived. In total, by the beginning of 2024, about 130 Palestinians were in the region, accommodated in hotels and specially prepared facilities, with authorities [stating](#) their readiness to accept up to 200 people from the Gaza Strip and provide them with employment.

By the end of 2024, Ingushetia remained the leader among Russian federal subjects in terms of unemployment, with more than a quarter of residents [unemployed](#). 27% of the republic's population lives below the poverty line. Ingushetia ranks last among Russian regions in terms of [household income](#): in the first half of 2025, the average [income](#) per person was 23 thousand rubles (for comparison, the average in the [North Caucasus Federal District](#) was 34 thousand, and in [Russia](#) – 62.5 thousand rubles).

**Average income per person in the first half of 2025
(thousand rubles)**

The lack of an industrial and manufacturing base, insufficient investment, and inefficient management have prevented the creation of new jobs in the region. The largest industrial facility of recent decades (a [flour mill](#) with 1,500 jobs) was built back in 2013, while other attempts to develop business mostly ended in failure. As a result, Ingushetia remains among the most subsidized regions (approximately 83% of the republican budget is formed from [federal transfers](#)), and even with federal support, the regional budget runs a deficit (376 million rubles in 2025).

Socio-economic problems are exacerbated by an excess of young labor without corresponding employment opportunities. A significant portion of the population is forced to engage in [shadow practices](#), including fictitious social benefits, turning central assistance into a mechanism for keeping the region dependent. Economists note that Moscow controls Ingushetia's key natural resources (oil, gas, minerals), preventing large-scale development for the benefit of the republic. This deprives the region of its own sources of development, creating a persistent model of poverty and dependence on federal subsidies.

The Republic of Ingushetia is traditionally considered the “least Russian” region of the federation. According to the 2021 census, ethnic Russians make up only about 0.6% of the population, the lowest share among all Russian federal subjects. The absolute majority of residents are Ingush (93% of the population), with the remainder primarily Chechens (2.4%), Turks, Azerbaijanis, Ossetians, and representatives of other North Caucasus peoples. Chechens in Ingushetia have a relatively compact area of residence: they are mainly concentrated in the city of Nazran and in the Sunzhensky and Malgobeksky districts.

Ethnographic map of the Republic of Ingushetia



In summary, Ingushetia emerges as a region of contrasts: high natural population growth and a young demographic structure coexist with unemployment, low incomes, and dependence on subsidized funding. The situation is complicated by a large number of resettlers, limited opportunities to utilize the labor potential, and widespread informal economic practices. At the same time, the republic's ethnic composition remains almost monolithic, with an overwhelming majority of Ingushs.

Ossetian-Ingush conflict: 1924–1992

The roots of the Ossetian-Ingush conflict date back to 1924, when the city of Vladikavkaz simultaneously served as the administrative [center](#) for both the Ossetian and Ingush autonomous oblasts. The administrative institutions of the two regions were located on opposite banks of the Terek River, which already created a basis for disputes over jurisdiction of the city. In 1928, a decision was made to transfer Vladikavkaz to North Ossetia; however, its implementation was postponed due to protests among the Ingush population. The final transfer, which at that time was accompanied by renaming the city to Ordzhonikidze, took place in 1933. The following year, the Ingush autonomy was merged

with Chechnya, forming the Chechen-Ingush Autonomous Oblast, which in 1936 was granted the status of the Chechen-Ingush Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic (ASSR).

During World War II, anti-Soviet armed groups were formed in the territory of the Chechen-Ingush ASSR, numbering around 3,000 people within a total population of over 400,000. The Soviet authorities interpreted their activities as being impossible without support from the local population and accused Chechens and Ingush of mass desertion. In 1943, the Soviet leadership developed a special operation codenamed “Lentil”, which involved the deportation of both peoples to Kazakhstan and Central Asia. As a result of this forced action, about 650,000 people were resettled. The Chechen-Ingush ASSR was abolished, and its territory was divided among neighboring administrative units: the North Ossetian and Dagestan Autonomous Republics, the Georgian SSR, and the Grozny Oblast.

***Ingush couple in exile in Kazakhstan
next to the body of their deceased daughter, 1944
(photo Wikimedia Commons)***



In 1956, Chechens and Ingushs were officially rehabilitated and granted permission to return to their traditional places of residence. The Chechen-Ingush ASSR was restored; however, key territories of particular importance to the Ingush people were not returned. Notably, the Prigorodny district remained part of North Ossetia, even though it was considered the historical core of the Ingush area, including the village of Angusht, from which the name “Ingushetia” originates. In addition, the Ingush lost the Mozdok corridor—a strategically important area that provided transport and territorial connections with Kabardino-Balkaria.

Despite formal rehabilitation and permission to return, Ingushs were effectively forbidden from settling in the Prigorodny district and the city of Ordzhonikidze: they were not allowed to purchase property or rent housing in these areas. In 1957, an Ingush [delegation](#)

traveled to Moscow to argue the historical rights of the people to the Prigorodny district and expressed their unwillingness to live under Ossetian jurisdiction. However, the initiative yielded no results, and the situation remained unchanged until the early 1970s. In 1972, Ingush activists submitted an [open letter](#) to the Soviet leadership, “On the Fate of the Ingush People”, demanding the return of the district to Ingushetia, but the appeal was again ignored.

In 1973, the Ingush intelligentsia publicly [demanded](#) the return of the Prigorodny district in Grozny. The action prompted some [concessions](#) from the authorities: restrictions on Ingush settlement in the region were lifted, Ingush language instruction was introduced in schools, and representatives of the people received parliamentary mandates in the council of the Prigorodny district for the first time in decades. However, by the early 1980s, tensions escalated again. In 1981, a conflict between an Ingush and an Ossetian in Ordzhonikidze ended with the killing of the Ossetian, sparking mass unrest. In response, authorities imposed new restrictions on Ingush registration in the Prigorodny district. Throughout the 1980s, tensions between Ingushs and Ossetians persisted, occasionally erupting into [clashes](#), often with fatal consequences.

In 1990, Ingushs again appealed to the central authorities to return the Prigorodny district. Shortly afterward, an article in the newspaper *Pravda* claimed that Ingushs had settled the territory for only 22 years and allegedly acquired it illegally with Bolshevik support. This prompted a mass protest rally in Nazran. The Soviet leadership later officially recognized the Ingush claims as historically justified; however, this stance provoked large-scale anti-Ingush demonstrations in North Ossetia, involving about 100,000 participants.

The following year, two police officers were killed in North Ossetia. Their funerals turned into mass anti-Ingush demonstrations, further heightening interethnic tensions. Subsequently, two more Ossetian law enforcement officers were killed in the village of Tarskoye in the Prigorodny district. As Ingush individuals were mainly suspected, local outrage increased, further complicating the situation in the Ingush village of Tarskoye.

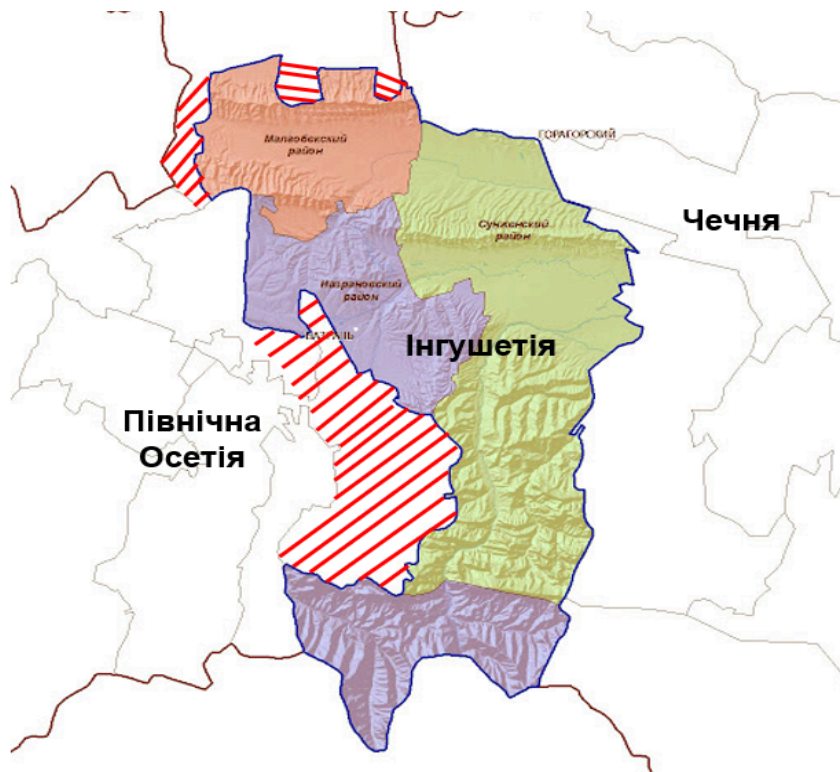
In November 1991, a [referendum](#) was held among the Ingush population on creating their own republic with the return of lost territories and designating Vladikavkaz as the capital. Ninety-two percent of voters supported the initiative. After the collapse of the USSR, Chechnya declared independence, while Ingushetia remained part of Russia, as secession would have meant the permanent loss of the Prigorodny district.

In 1992, tensions escalated after an incident in which an Ossetian armored personnel carrier ran over an Ingush schoolgirl, followed by the killing of several Ingush individuals. A shootout between Ossetian police and local Ingush became the immediate cause for Kremlin intervention, which decided on administrative delimitation of the two republics, assigning the Prigorodny district to Ingushetia.

Before the official delimitation, Ingush units deployed their own detachments in the Prigorodny district, in violation of Russian law. North Ossetia demanded their disarmament and removal of road blockades, threatening a military operation, while the Ingush side called for the withdrawal of Russian troops from the republic. At the end of October 1992, armed clashes between Ossetian and Ingush units escalated into open [conflict](#). On

November 1, Russian President Boris Yeltsin signed a decree on deployment of the federal troops to resolve the situation by force. As a result of the operation, Vladikavkaz and the Prigorodny district were permanently secured under North Ossetia, and the Ingush population was almost entirely forced to leave these territories.

**Territories separated from Ingushetia
in favor of North Ossetia in 1992
(shaded)**



The 1992 armed conflict resulted in the deaths of over 600 people and the near-total destruction of Ingush settlements in the Prigorodny district: 13 out of 15 villages were burned or demolished. [Mass graves](#) of unidentified victims appeared in these territories. In the following years, there were repeated attempts to resolve the situation. In 2006, a plan was adopted for the return of internally displaced persons, but it faced objections from local deputies and was not fully implemented. Tens of thousands of Ingushs continued to live as refugees in difficult conditions in temporary camps. Although the authorities of North Ossetia declared their readiness to accept resettlers, the process was complicated by the issues with IDs, territorial restrictions, and the lengthy construction of the new settlement, Novoe.

Tensions between the two republics remained high, accompanied by rising crime and terrorist acts in the region. By the early 2010s, approximately 25,000 of the 30,000 internally displaced Ingushs were able to return to the Prigorodny district. Today, Ingush and Ossetian populations live side by side, although relations periodically flare up.

Thousands of Ingushs who have not returned still remain in the status of forcibly displaced persons.

Ingushetia and Chechnya: History of Relations

Ingushs and Chechens are closely related peoples, they belong to the Vainakh group, share ethnonym “Vainakhs” (“our people”). Nakh languages are closely related, they have a high degree of mutual intelligibility. Chechens and Ingushs have similar cultural traditions, customs, and social institutions, particularly the clan system—teips. Both peoples follow Sunni Islam and share a common historical experience, including the 1944 deportation, which remains etched in collective memory as one of the most tragic events of the 20th century.

At the same time, several differences define the distinct identity of the two ethnic groups and help explain the divergence in their modern developmental trajectories. In Ingushetia, Islam was adopted later than in Chechnya, which led to the preservation of numerous pre-Islamic elements in culture and toponymy, as well as a more traditionalist character of society. Ingushs place great importance on ancestral memory, with each person expected to know the lineage of their family up to ten generations and the location of their ancestral tower. Differences also appear in socio-political models: Chechnya is characterized by a rigid, centralized power under the leadership of Ramzan Kadyrov, whereas in Ingushetia, teip structures retain significant influence, limiting full centralization. Politically, Ingushetia has traditionally emphasized loyalty to Russia since the 18th century, while Chechnya, after the collapse of the USSR, pursued independence, resulting in divergent models of interaction with the federal government.

Chechen-Ingush conflict of 2018–2019

During the Soviet period, Ingushetia and Chechnya existed within a single autonomous republic. After the collapse of the USSR, however, their political trajectories diverged: Chechnya declared independence, while Ingushetia chose to remain part of the Russian Federation, hoping in this way to retain control over the Prigorodny district, which had already been lost due to the Ossetian-Ingush conflict. For a long time, the border between the republics remained largely formal: its delimitation had been agreed upon in 1991 between the leadership of Ingushetia and the government of the Chechen Republic of Ichkeria, headed by Dzhokhar Dudayev. The current Chechen authorities under Ramzan Kadyrov, however, do not recognize either the legitimacy of Dudayev’s government or the agreements reached at that time.

In 2012, Kadyrov publicly announced for the first time his intention to raise the issue of establishing an official administrative border between Chechnya and Ingushetia at the federal level. The main point of contention was the Sunzhensky district, which is administratively part of Ingushetia and simultaneously holds key significance for its historical and cultural identity. It is home to the Erzi reserve, featuring a complex of

medieval towers that are central both to Ingush collective memory and to scholarly discourse within the republic.

***Medieval clan towers in the Erzi reserve.
Every Ingush is expected to know which tower belongs to their teip (clan).***



“It is well known that the Sunzhensky district is a part of Chechnya. We, as always, value friendship and fraternal relations with Ingushs, but we are compelled to clearly define the administrative boundary line between the republics. This will strengthen good-neighborly relations and make it impossible for anyone to shift the border”.

Ramzan Kadyrov, 2012

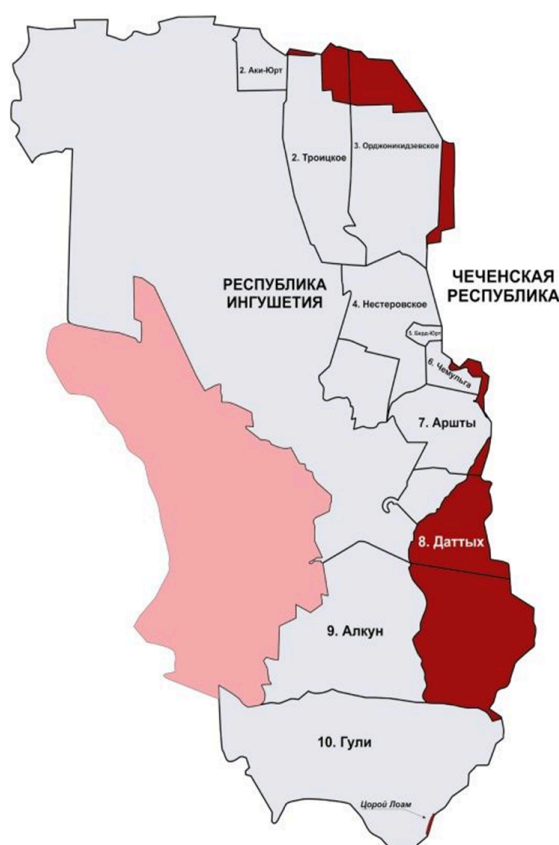
In August 2018, residents of a settlement in the Sunzhensky district noticed the beginning of road construction from Chechnya across the Fortanga River. [Chechen security forces](#) were already present on the site and informed local residents of plans to set up a checkpoint. This caused concern among Ingushs, prompting activists to seek official clarification from the head of the republic, Yunus-Bek Yevkurov. In response, he publicly assured that “not a single centimeter of Ingush land will be transferred to Chechnya”.

On September 26, 2018, the leaders of Ingushetia and Chechnya signed an Agreement on the Establishment of the administrative bBorder between the republics, which meant the transfer of part of the Sunzhensky district to Chechnya. The agreement referenced the 1934 boundaries, when the district had temporarily been part of the Chechen Autonomous Oblast. However, this period was short (about six to eight years in the first half of the 20th century), whereas the territory had otherwise consistently belonged to Ingushetia.

The signing of the agreement was conducted behind closed doors, bypassing the procedures required by law: no referendum was held among the local population, and the text of the document was only published in October 2018—without maps clearly defining the transferred lands. The total ceded area was about 2,000 hectares, roughly 10% of Ingushetia's territory.

After signing the agreement, Ingushetia's head, Yunus-Bek Yevkurov, addressed the public in a video statement, claiming that the agreement was based on the principle of “historical justice” and that no Ingush land had been transferred to Chechnya—it was merely a legal formalization of a previously undefined border. This interpretation was strongly rejected by the local population. By early October 2018, mass peaceful protests against the agreement erupted in Ingushetia. The protests occurred daily, becoming large and organized. Initially unsanctioned for the first three days, the organizers later obtained official permission, and a special protest site was established in Magas. The demonstrations featured disciplined lines of participants and collective prayers, giving the events a peaceful yet symbolically spiritual character. The protests were joined by the first and second presidents of Ingushetia, Ruslan Aushev and Murat Zyazikov, demonstrating solidarity with the demonstrators' demands.

Territories ceded from Ingushetia
(light pink – Prigorodny district, transferred to North Ossetia in the 1990s;
red – territories transferred to Chechnya in 2018)



Federal media largely ignored the events in Magas, omitting them from news broadcasts, while locally, protesters faced widespread [mobile internet outages](#). To reach a broader

audience, a group of activists traveled to Moscow and attempted to hold a press conference on the Dozhd TV channel. However, the event attracted little attention, with only a few journalists attending. Later, the protest organizing committee sent an open letter to Vladimir Putin, but no response was received. On October 14, 2018, a [phone conversation](#) took place between Putin and Yunus-Bek Yevkurov, during which the Russian president emphasized the inadmissibility of using force. Following this, a working commission was created to [liaise](#) with representatives of the Presidential Administration.

The situation had internal political repercussions: one of the most influential Ingush teips, the Nalgiyevs, publicly renounced their fellow clansman, parliament deputy Ruslan Nalgiyev, during a rally, accusing him of systematic ignoring sessions and facilitating the transfer of land. On October 16, [negotiations](#) were held in Pyatigorsk between representatives of the protest movement and the plenipotentiary of the North Caucasus Federal District, Alexander Matovnikov, along with Andrey Yarin, head of the Internal Policy Department of the Presidential Administration. Kremlin representatives stressed that the law had already been passed, parliamentary voting results could not be revised, and the only avenue for contesting the decision was for the Ingush delegation to appeal to the courts.

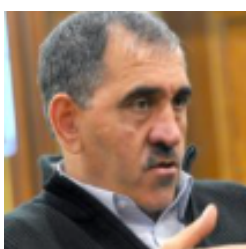


“Alexander Matovnikov urged us to focus not on protests, but on corruption. We were surprised by the rude attitude of the federal authorities. Matovnikov told us directly: ‘Your boyars are the same as your people’. He said that it is our Ingush deputies who vote this way. It’s all very sad. It turns out that the authorities acknowledge the violation but will not review the voting results, and they tell us: go to court”.

Musa Malsagov, head of the protest organizing committee in Magas

Upon returning from Moscow, Ingush activists appealed to the Constitutional Court of Ingushetia, requesting a review of the legality of the agreement signed between Yunus-Bek Yevkurov and Ramzan Kadyrov. This marked the end of the first wave of protests. Meanwhile, Vladimir Putin signed a decree transferring 100% of the shares of the company Chechennaftakhimprom, whose expanded activities were directly linked to the annexation of lands in the Sunzhensky district. Ramzan Kadyrov awarded the Chechen Minister of Property and Land Relations an [order](#) for the “successfully conducted operation” of territorial transfer, while in Ingushetia, the Kremlin responded to public dissatisfaction by dismissing the local head of the Ministry of Internal Affairs.

Subsequently, in an interview, Yunus-Bek Yevkurov [admitted](#) that the initial takeover of part of Ingushetia’s territory by Kadyrov’s forces was coercive, and that he had been forced to sign the agreement under the threat of armed conflict.



“When a conflict arose at the border, Alexander Matovnikov, the plenipotentiary of the North Caucasus Federal District, called me, visited us and also met with Ramzan [Kadyrov], and said: make sure there is no use of force, discuss the matter among yourselves”.

Yunus-Bek Yevkurov, then Head of the Republic of Ingushetia

The freeze in the crisis proved short-lived: Ramzan Kadyrov began targeting participants of the protests. He personally visited the village where the elder of the Nalgiyev teip, Mukhazhir Nalgiyev, lived, having first consulted with members of the Belkharoev clan and secured their mediation. At the meeting with the Nalgiyevs, Kadyrov stated that the initiative to transfer the land originated with Yunus-Bek Yevkurov himself, so the Ingush should not make claims against the Chechen side.

One of the protest organizers, Akhmed Barakhoev, was summoned by Kadyrov to a session of the Sharia Court. Later, Kadyrov's forces visited former Ingush Minister of Internal Affairs and public activist Akhmed Pogorov, surrounding his home with armed Chechen security officers and behaving aggressively. During such actions, Kadyrov publicly apologized to the Ingush people while simultaneously emphasizing that it was time to remove Yunus-Bek Yevkurov.

Ingushetia's authorities, taking advantage of a pause in mass protests, launched a campaign supporting the border agreement. A series of visits to government institutions and universities was organized, during which officials spread the narrative that protesters were provocateurs. Political pressure was also reported by some deputies of the Ingush People's Assembly, who stated that Yevkurov's administration tried to force them to retract statements submitted to the Prosecutor's Office and Investigative Committee of Russia regarding alleged falsifications during the ratification vote on the agreement with Chechnya.

The Constitutional Court of Ingushetia reviewed the activists' appeal and ruled that the border agreement with Chechnya violated the republic's legislation. This decision was unprecedented, as it was the first time a judicial body openly supported the people's position. Despite this, Yevkurov continued to pressure state institutions to formalize the new borders as quickly as possible. He later [appealed](#) to the Constitutional Court of Russia to review the legality of the republican court's verdict, which had sided with the protesters.

In November 2018, the first wave of reprisals against protesters began: administrative proceedings were opened against 22 individuals. This only further mobilized the population, and Ingushs organized a new action in the form of a community workday (subotnik), which ended with police intervention, beatings, and mass arrests.

In December 2018, the Constitutional Court of Russia ruled that the border agreement between Ingushetia and Chechnya complied with the Russian Constitution, the decision of the Ingush Constitutional Court that had supported the protesters was overturned. That same month, key figures of the protest movement reported that their Instagram accounts had been blocked so as to pressure them.

At the beginning of 2019, activists sent a letter to Putin demanding the return of the ceded territories and the dismissal of Yunus-Bek Yevkurov. Protests resumed with renewed intensity and gradually transformed into calls for a change in the republic's leadership. In March 2019, the largest rally took place in Magas, gathering around 30,000 participants. It ended with a harsh crackdown, beatings, and arrests by security forces. Protesters whose faces were recorded on camera were later sought out and transported to unknown

locations. It was later revealed that the detainees were held under investigation in Nalchik (Kabardino-Balkaria). This practice of illegal arrests and forced transfers became known as the “Ingush Case”.

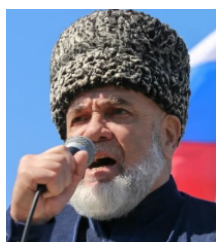
In June 2019, Yevkurov resigned, and Mahmud-Ali Kalimatov became the new Head of Ingushetia. Kalimatov adopted a cautious approach, attempting to balance federal demands with stabilization of the internal situation, but the population generally viewed him negatively.

“The Ingush Case”

Throughout 2019, activist Zarifa Sautieva, along with her sisters who had participated in solo pickets, was arrested. Sautieva’s name became a symbol of resistance in Ingushetia. By the end of that year, 30–35 Ingush individuals were imprisoned for participating in protests against the administrative border agreement, with some sent to serve their sentences in Stavropol Krai.

From 2020 to 2022, court proceedings continued against participants in the so-called “Ingush Case”. Authorities employed a strategy of isolation: defendants were held in detention facilities outside the republic, and trials were conducted in other regions, significantly complicating access for lawyers and relatives. In total, [35 sentences](#) were handed down, while criminal cases against three individuals (Idris Abadiyev, Magomed Bekhov, and Islam Arapiyev) were closed. Protest organizers, including Akhmed Barakhoev, Musa Malsagov, and Malsag Uzhakhov, received prison terms of seven to nine years. Other participants were sentenced to varying terms, ranging from several months to several years.

Human rights organizations, including Memorial, recognized the majority of those convicted as political prisoners.



Akhmed Barakhoev — elder and member of the Ingush Committee of National Unity. In December 2021, he was sentenced to nine years in prison. In May 2024, Barakhoev was [transferred](#) to a general-regime colony in Yaroslavl. As of 2025, he continues to serve his sentence. He is currently [71 years old](#).



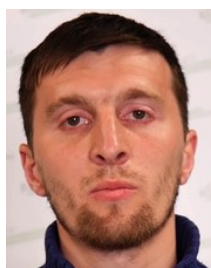
Maslag Uzhakhov — at the time of his arrest, he was the head of the Ingush Teip Council and a member of the Presidium of the World Congress of the Ingush People. In 2021, he was sentenced by the Stavropol court to nine years in prison. In 2023, the sentence was [upheld](#), and Uzhakhov is currently serving his term outside Ingushetia. As of 2025, he is 73 years old.



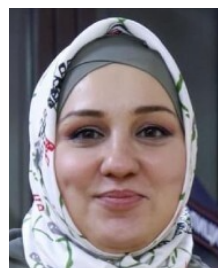
Musa Malsagov — co-chair of the World Congress of the Ingush People, head of the Ingush branch of the Russian Red Cross, and former deputy of the People's Assembly of the Republic of Ingushetia from the United Russia party. He has been in custody since 2019 and was sentenced to nine years in [prison](#) for “organizing violence dangerous to the life or health of government representatives in connection with the performance of their official duties”.



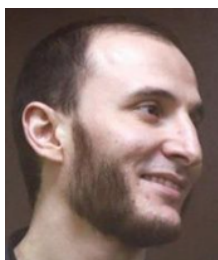
Akhmed Pogorov — former Minister of Internal Affairs of Ingushetia (2002–2003), co-chair of the Ingush National Congress and the World Congress of the Ingush People, and member of the Ingush Committee of National Unity. Pogorov was wanted for nearly two years until February 2021, when he was arrested by the Center “E” of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the FSB. Initially placed under house arrest, he was returned to a pre-trial detention facility the following day. His trial has been ongoing in Nalchik since 2023, but hearings are repeatedly [postponed](#) — officially because most of the alleged [victims](#), including 67 law enforcement officers, are fighting in Ukraine and cannot be questioned. Despite the prolonged delays and Pogorov's deteriorating health, the court has repeatedly extended his detention.



Ismail Nalgiyev — former head of the human rights organization “Ingush Committee of National Unity”. He was [arrested](#) in 2019 while attempting to fly from Minsk to Prague and sentenced to eight years in prison. In spring 2025, he was released and immediately [married](#) another figure from the case, Zarifa Sautieva.



Zarifa Sautieva — former deputy director of the Memorial Complex for Victims of Repression in Nazran. In December 2021, the Stavropol court sentenced her to 7.5 years in a general-regime colony. In 2024, she was placed in a [disciplinary cell](#) for 15 days for wearing “the wrong color of tights”. Later that year, she was released.



Bagaudin Khautiev — head of the Council of Youth Organizations of Ingushetia and member of the Ingush Committee of National Unity. In 2019, he was sentenced to eight years in a general-regime colony; the appellate court upheld the sentence. In February 2025, Khautiev was [released](#) after completing his full term.



Barakh Chemurziev — human rights activist and head of the public movement “Support of Ingushetia”. He was sentenced to eight years. In June 2024, the European Court of Human Rights ruled that there were no justified grounds for his detention and ordered compensation. In February 2025, Chemurziev was [released](#) after serving his full sentence.

Boycott of the constitutional amendments and the liquidation of the Teip Council

In 2020, a number of Ingush teips — including Ozdoevs, Shoukhalovs, Shoankhoy, and Khukhloy — officially announced a [boycott](#) of the nationwide vote on amendments to the Russian Constitution. The proposed changes, which allowed for the resetting of presidential terms for Vladimir Putin, caused significant dissatisfaction within Ingush society. Despite low actual turnout, official results showed high support for the amendments in the republic, raising suspicions of widespread falsifications. Although teips as traditional social structures were not directly repressed, some of their members who publicly expressed opposition faced administrative or criminal pressure. Local authorities and law enforcement targeted activists who called for a boycott.

In 2021, the Russian Ministry of Justice [declared](#) the Ingush Teip Council an “extremist organization”, suppressing traditional mechanisms of self-governance. The liquidation of the Council, which had served as a representative body of traditional society and expressed teip positions critical of federal policy, deprived the Ingush community of an institutional tool for collective defending of its interests.

Despite the ban, the Teip Council continues to exist as a public association, remaining one of the few civil society institutions in the region that retains public trust. According to its representative, former political prisoner Bagaudin Myakiyev, the Council operates solely on a [voluntary basis](#) and is funded by its members. The Council continues to perform functions of popular representation, responding to social, economic, and legal issues, including the rights of political prisoners, housing provision, access to utilities, preservation of cultural heritage, and development of the Ingush language. It submits appeals to regional and federal authorities, including the Prosecutor General’s Office, but its members report that these appeals mostly go unanswered. The Council’s activities remain under constant supervision by Center “E” (the department for countering extremism).

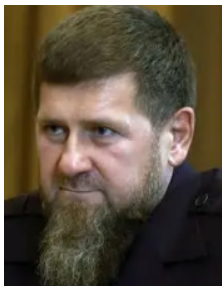
In 2024, amid efforts to restore political manageability in the region under Ingushetia’s head Mahmud-Ali Kalimatov, a new structure — the Council of Elders — was created. Officially presented as a consultative-advisory body, it is intended to “strengthen social cohesion, preserve cultural identity, and promote teip unity”. The head of the Council is Magomed Girey-Gandaloev, known as a former law enforcement officer, while the press secretary is Alaudin Chapanov, who had previously publicly criticized protest movements and supported the authorities’ position during the 2018–2019 events. The administration envisions that the Council of Elders has the right to submit appeals to government bodies, request official information, and participate in socio-cultural projects.

Military training ground project in the Sunzhensky District

In 2021, the Russian Ministry of Defense announced plans to establish a military training ground in the Sunzhensky District of Ingushetia. The project involved the transfer of approximately 9,000 hectares of land, which sparked widespread public outcry and protests.

Key reasons for local opposition included the scarcity of land resources in the region, the presence of historical and archaeological sites on the proposed site, general distrust of the federal authorities, and fears of further territorial dispossession. Elders, civil activists, archaeologists, and environmentalists joined the protests. They emphasized the potentially destructive impact of the project on Ingushetia's natural environment and cultural heritage.

The Teip Council sent an official appeal to the Russian Minister of Defense, demanding a review of the decision. During one of the public discussions, Ramzan Kadyrov also voiced his opinion, supporting the federal center's position.



"If you do not calm down, I will take back everything that Dudayev illegally transferred. If I take all of this back, it will not be good. We have the strength to return everything, but despite that we have not made a single move, not said a single word. This is our republic; we will build and decorate it. If Ingushs want to live here, we will lease them any land, allow them to build any tourist base, restaurant, hotel, and we will register them."

Ramzan Kadyrov, 2021

Renewal of the Chechen-Ingush conflict against the backdrop of the Wildberries office incident in Moscow

On September 18, 2024, an armed [incident](#) occurred at the Moscow office of Wildberries between individuals from Ingushetia and Chechnya, attracting wide public attention and taking on a political dimension. The conflict began when the company's co-founder, Vladislav Bakalchuk, attempted to enter the building accompanied by his own security, which led to a clash with the other side connected to his wife, Wildberries CEO Tatyana Bakalchuk. The dispute, which had elements of a corporate struggle for control over the company, quickly escalated into a shooting. Two Ingush security guards, Islam Elmurziev (31) and Adam Almazov (41), were killed; four others were injured — Abubakar Mestoev, Rashid Kodzoev, Bekhan Ozdoev, and Umar Chichaev. The Investigative Committee of Russia opened criminal cases for murder, illegal possession of weapons, and assault on authorities. [More than 30 participants](#) were detained, including Umar Chichaev and Vladislav Bakalchuk, who was released after questioning.

The incident caused significant resonance in Russian media and social networks, intensifying interethnic tensions between Chechen and Ingush communities. The funeral of the deceased on September 21 in Ingushetia gathered thousands of people and became a major public event with symbolic significance. On September 24, negotiations took place between representatives of Ingushetia and Chechnya with the participation of public figures — Musa Albogachiev, entrepreneur Mikhail Gutseriev, and State Duma deputy Adam Delimkhanov. Despite attempts to reach an understanding, the meeting ended unsuccessfully. Ingushs sharply criticized the delegation for the lack of an official mandate from the families of the deceased and excessive compliance. In particular, the Leymoev clan publicly declared the participation of Albogachiev in the negotiations [illegitimate](#).

The position of the Chechen side, represented by Adam Delimkhanov, [involved](#) accusations against Ingush deputy Bekhan Barakhoev, who was responsible for organizing the office security and supposedly initiating the shooting. Delimkhanov claimed that Chechen guards fired in response, but released video footage indicated the opposite — aggressive actions were first carried out by Vladislav Bakalchuk's people. During the negotiations, Delimkhanov used harsh language toward the Ingush representatives, which was perceived as an attempt at public humiliation. He accused Ingushs of inciting interethnic hostility.

After this, the conflict began to escalate, taking on political and security dimensions. On October 10, 2024, Ramzan Kadyrov accused State Duma deputies Bekhan Barakhoev, Rizvan Kurbanov, and Senator Suleiman Kerimov of conspiring against him and even mentioned [“blood revenge”](#). Against this background, an [assassination attempt](#) occurred in Moscow Oblast on former Chechen official Sherip Alikhadzhiev, who was seriously injured; the incident was linked to rising tensions between influential groups in the North Caucasus.

On October 13, in Nazran, there was an [attack](#) on a vehicle of the Center for Countering Extremism, resulting in the deaths of three Ingushs — Ilez, Amir, and Beslan Aushev. The deputy head of the Center, Adam Khamkhoev was the likely target of the attack, but he was unharmed. The event heightened anxiety in the republic, with calls for revenge against Chechens spreading. The Ingush authorities officially warned the population against participating in provocations.

Shortly thereafter, a search was conducted at the house of Imam Muhammad Tamakhanov following his public criticism of the republic's leadership; the cleric was briefly detained but later released without charges. Meanwhile, the media [reported](#) that Ramzan Kadyrov had received support from Putin in the Wildberries conflict, indicating that this incident had become part of a broader political context.

Political dynamics and key actors in the region

In 2024–2025, Ingushetia became one of the most prominent examples of a regional corruption crisis in Russia. During this period, dozens of [criminal cases](#) were initiated across nearly all major state structures — from the government apparatus to ministries of health, education, economic development, and the pension fund. The most high-profile case involved the brother of Ingushetia's head, Mahmud-Ali Kalimatov, who was accused of embezzling over half a billion rubles. Mass searches, arrests of former ministers and officials, and the involvement of security agencies indicate a crisis in administrative governance, where corruption functions as an institutionalized mechanism for resource distribution.

Analysts and opposition figures interpret these developments as part of an internal political purge aimed at renewing loyal elites and preventing the formation of autonomous centers of influence. In this context, Ingushetia appears as a space where a clan-bureaucratic model of power combines with deep socio-economic dependence on the federal center.

This model of controlled instability allows the Kremlin to maintain authority over the region, using anti-corruption campaigns as an instrument of political pressure.

Administration of the Head and Government of Ingushetia



Mahmud-Ali Kalimatov has been the Head of the Republic of Ingushetia since 2019. He previously worked in prosecutorial structures in Samara Oblast, served as the Prosecutor of Ulyanovsk Oblast, and later as an advisor to the Prosecutor General of Russia. He is seen as a “technocratic administrator” appointed by the Kremlin to stabilize the situation following the 2018–2019 protests. His political stance is characterized by loyalty to the federal center, a focus on depoliticizing the regional sphere, and maintaining control over security structures.

Among Kalimatov’s key advisors, **Oleg Fursov** plays a central role. Fursov, a former mayor of Samara and [long-time associate](#) of Kalimatov, shares extensive experience in the Volga Federal District. After a period of political isolation, Fursov was invited to Ingushetia in 2020 and became one of the most influential advisors, responsible for administrative-economic issues and personnel policy. Other advisors, **Igor Alyoshin** and **Yelena Rozhkova**, primarily perform bureaucratic and consultative functions.

The administration of the Head and Government of the Republic has undergone significant staff renewal in recent years, reflecting a broader trend toward increased federal oversight. A key figure is **Anzor Markhiev**, head of the Administration after the 2024 personnel rotations. His first deputy, **Ruslan Koloiev**, coordinates major administrative issues, while deputies **Magomet-Ali Gadaborshev** and **Madash Kurskieva** oversee the Secretariat and protocol matters.

Government of the Republic

After Mahmud-Ali Kalimatov’s re-election in the fall of 2024, the cabinet of ministers was reorganized, with **Vladimir Slastyonin** [reapproved](#) as Prime Minister. He first headed the cabinet in 2020, and in 2024 the parliament again supported his candidacy; the government was dissolved and re-formed. This setup reinforced a model of “administrative stability”, relying on leaders with experience outside the region. In September 2025, additional [rotations](#) occurred among deputy prime ministers: social policy was assigned to **Khadzhibekir Mutaliev**, and financial-economic affairs to **Adam Kukurkhoev**. Amid this overall “clean-up” of governance, high-profile anti-corruption investigations affecting government-linked or subordinate sectors continued.

- Ministry of Finance — **Tamerlan Vishegurov**. Former head of the regional tax service, acting as finance minister since December 2022; in 2025, he was simultaneously promoted to deputy prime minister. His portfolio covers budget discipline and the transition to an “electronic budget”.

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- Ministry of Health — **Zara Albakova**. Appointed in September 2024 (previously [chief physician](#) of the Karabulak City Hospital and winner of the All-Russian “Best Chief Physician” award). In 2025, a criminal case continued against former minister Magomedbashir Balayev over the [embezzlement](#) of more than 50 million rubles in federal medical equipment funds.
 - Ministry of Education and Science — **Akhmed-Bashir Tsoroev**. Appointed minister in December 2024. In July 2025, law enforcement conducted [searches](#) in the ministry.
 - Ministry of Labor, Employment, and Social Development — **Beslan Ozdoev** (acting). During 2024 and early 2025, the ministry was led by **Khadzhibekir Mutaliev**, who in September 2025 was promoted to deputy prime minister while retaining oversight of the social sector.
 - Ministry of Agriculture and Food — **Magomed Gagiev**. In 2024, Gagiev [announced](#) plans to increase agro-exports to Georgia, Iran, and Iraq by 1.5 times.
 - Ministry of External Relations, National Policy, Press, and Information — **Ruslan Miziev**. In office since 2023 (previously served nearly a decade as deputy minister).
 - Ministry of Culture and Tourism — **Zalina Lyanova**. In office since 2022.
 - Ministry of Energy and Housing/Utilities — **Umar Sultigov**. Head of ministry since 2022.
 - Ministry of Highways and Transport — **Batyr Khamatkhanov** (since 2024).
 - Ministry of Construction — **Mussa Iliev** (since 2024).
 - Ministry of Sports — **Ruslan Belkhoroev**. Appointed in 2024; concurrently heads the Republican Wrestling Federation.
 - Ministry of Property and Land Relations — **Murad Vishegurov**. In office since 2023.
 - Ministry of Economic Development — **Israpil Gireev**. Appointed in 2024.
 - Ministry of Natural Resources and Ecology — **Mikail Miziev**.
 - Ministry of Civil Defense and Emergency Situations — **Alexander Yevloev** (acting).

Coordination and administrative support between the Head’s Administration and the government is handled by the Office of Administration. In September 2025, the prosecutor demanded the dismissal of its head, **Ruslan Tambiev**, over “false information” in his asset declaration (following [FSB verification](#)). This case served as a public signal of stricter standards for bureaucratic officials.

Republican Parliament (People’s Assembly)

The People’s Assembly of the Republic of Ingushetia (7th convocation) was elected in September 2021 through party lists; United Russia secured 27 of 32 seats. **Magomet Tumgoev**, who previously headed the United Russia faction, was unanimously elected Speaker.

Deputy Chair — **Aza Khashieva**, who also chairs the Committee on Education, Culture, and Interaction with Religious Organizations. Another deputy, **Ruslan Parov**, leads the

Committee on Local Self-Government, National Policy, Public Relations, and Religious Organizations.

Islam Gadiev leads the Committee on State Building and Legislation. **Ibrahim Bokov** – the Committee on Economic Policy; **Beslan Gorchkhanov** – the Committee on Health and Social Policy; **Magomet-Sali Dobriev** – the Committee on Budget and Taxes; **Magomet Parchiev** – the Committee on Agrarian Policy and Natural Resource Use.

Ingush Teips

During the 2018–2019 protests against the border agreement with Chechnya, the Ingush Council of Teips acted as the channel for the “collective voice”, convening assemblies of elders and producing joint resolutions. This institution set the framework for legitimate participation of clan communities in public politics in the republic.

In 2020, during the nationwide vote on constitutional amendments, positions were voiced by specific clans: **the Ozdоеvs** published public open letters calling for a boycott, later joined by the **Bekovs, Gagievs, Khulhoy, Shoukhalovs, and Mestoevs**. The authority of the Aushev clan also played a role: the first president of Ingushetia, Ruslan Aushev, attended a rally in Magas in October 2018, further legitimizing the protest in public perception.

In recent years, clan institutions have continued to play a role in crisis-sensitive issues. The **Yevloevs** were at the center of a high-profile conflict over a tower complex: mediation attempts between the Yevloev and Polonkoev clans were not officially supported by the relevant ministry, and the dispute escalated into legal proceedings—highlighting the influence of clan authority in matters of inheritance and property. The **Leimoev** clan publicly distanced itself from the participation of its representative, Musa Albogachiev, in the meeting with the Chechen delegation after the shooting near the Moscow Wildberries office, emphasizing the absence of a mandate from the affected families and the community. Thus, the most prominent Ingush teips act as moral and mobilization centers, retaining the ability to define the societal boundaries of acceptable behavior.

Business elite



Mikhail Gutseriev is one of the most influential Russian businessmen, active in the oil industry, real estate development, politics, and cultural philanthropy. He is the founder and owner of the diversified holding company Safmar, which includes enterprises in energy, finance, real estate, and media. His entrepreneurial path began in Grozny in the late 1980s with the creation of the cooperative bank Kavkaz, while his significant rise came after founding the oil company RusNeft in 2002. Despite criminal prosecutions that temporarily forced him to leave Russia, he returned in 2010, regained control of his assets, and transformed Safmar into one of the country's most influential business groups.

Economically, his most successful venture has been the A101 development project, which he acquired in 2015 from Vadim Moshkovich for \$800 million. By the end of 2024, the total constructed area exceeded 2 million square meters, and Gutseriev ranked 28th on the Forbes list with a net worth of \$5.8 billion. He is known for his ability to adapt to political and economic changes, a skill that has repeatedly safeguarded his business empire from bankruptcy.

Politically, Gutseriev remains a figure with a complex reputation. His ties to Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko led to EU and UK sanctions in 2021. From a foreign policy perspective, he symbolizes Russian big capital caught between the West and the Kremlin. In October 2024, several Czech media outlets [reported](#) alleged meetings of Gutseriev with the FBI and Czech intelligence in Prague in 2022, where he purportedly offered information about Putin and Lukashenko in exchange for sanctions relief. While these reports have not been officially confirmed, they illustrate his attempts at political maneuvering amid isolation.

Since 2022, there have been public signs of Gutseriev's rapprochement with the Chechen leadership. In July 2024, Ramzan Kadyrov awarded him the Kadyrov Order, and in June 2025, he was [granted](#) the title of "Honorary Citizen of the Chechen Republic". It reflects his integration into informal interregional alliances in the North Caucasus.

Gutseriev stands out among contemporary Russian elites for his cultural engagement. As a poet and patron, he has authored over 250 songs performed by artists such as Iosif Kobzon, Grigory Leps, Valeriya, Filip Kirkorov, and Stas Piekha. His Safmar Charitable Foundation funds projects in healthcare, culture, and education.

In recent years, Gutseriev's name has again attracted public attention due to scandals related both to his private life and assets outside Russia. Ukrainian media reported the seizure of warehouses in the village of Chaiky near Kyiv, linked to Gutseriev's business structures but registered under nominees, including Ukrainian singer Viktoria Kokhan (Kush), a close associate of Gutseriev. After the 2022 seizure, the case was closed, and the official owner is now a Turkish citizen.

At the end of 2024, the situation escalated: British press reported the arrest of Viktoria Kokhan in London. She allegedly attempted to blackmail Gutseriev, demanding two million pounds in exchange for "concealing his assets" from international sanctions. This episode highlighted the vulnerability of large Russian capital under sanctions. Gutseriev himself traditionally refrains from public comment, maintaining his characteristic distance from conflicts and political assessments.

Opposition media and civil movements

Independent media outlets and civic initiatives remain key carriers of alternative discourse in Ingushetia, despite systemic pressure and restrictions on freedom of speech. The news [agency Fortanga](#) is one of the most notable examples. From its inception it became one of the few sources of independent information on political processes, human rights violations, and the activities of security structures in the republic. **Izabella Yevloeva** is the editor-in-chief and public face of the project. She is known for her coverage of the protests

against the administrative border changes between Ingushetia and Chechnya in 2018–2019. Due to political pressure, criminal prosecutions, and threats of arrest, she was forced to leave the region and continues to manage the editorial team from outside Russia. Several criminal cases have been filed against her for “spreading false information” and “discrediting the Russian armed forces”. Despite website blocking, Fortanga maintains its audience via Telegram.

Alongside local initiatives, **Kavkazsky Uzel (Caucasian Knot)** plays an important role. This independent media outlet, established in 2001 by the human rights society Memorial, is one of the most authoritative sources of information on events in the North Caucasus, regularly documenting political persecutions, court proceedings, and human rights violations. In the context of Ingushetia, Caucasian Knot acts as a chronicler of socio-political processes—from the 2018–2019 protests to the activities of contemporary activists, including the Anti-Lyrics movement. It holds the status of a foreign agent.

The Anti-Lyrics movement occupies a special place in Ingushetian civil life. This informal civic association declares its fight against drug distribution and immorality among youth. Initially a local volunteer movement, it has evolved into a social phenomenon, combining civic activism with the traditional cultural self-regulation of teip (clan) communities. However, in 2025, the movement faced repressive actions: several participants were [arrested](#) on charges of kidnapping, robbery, and abuse of power. The activists themselves describe the case as politically motivated, and their supporters see it as an attempt to destroy an independent civil initiative.

The Batakhadzins are a closed Sufi religious brotherhood (wird), formed in the late 19th century around Sheikh Batal-Hadzhi Belkhoroev. The village of Surkhakhi in Ingushetia is the historical center of the community. Individual members of the wird have held notable positions in regional elites (for example, Yakub Belkhoroev, former head of the regional Social Insurance Fund, [convicted](#) in 2022 for embezzlement), enhancing the brotherhood’s reputation as an actor with its own social resources. Amid rising tensions between the community and Russian security agencies, the “military wing of Batal-Hadzhi’s followers” was designated a [terrorist organization](#) by the Russian authorities. Parallel investigations are examining the 2019 murder in Moscow of Ibrahim Eldzharkiev, head of the Ingush Center for Countering Extremism, in which investigators saw a [motive](#) of “blood revenge” (the case names Kureysa Kartoev as a suspect). These developments highlight the long-term and conflict-laden intersection of religious, clan, and security politics in the republic.

In 2024–2025, the narrative surrounding the Batakhadzins became more complex due to new nationwide cases. A terrorist attack on Crocus City Hall in March 2024 was officially claimed by the Islamic State – Khorasan Province. Meanwhile, Russian investigators reported the arrest or search of individuals from Ingushetia, some of whom media linked to the wird in the context of potential assistance to the perpetrators (these claims remain under investigation and have not resulted in court verdicts).

On December 17, 2024, in Moscow, Lieutenant General Igor Kirilov, head of Russia’s Radiation, Chemical, and Biological Defense Troops, was killed. A source in the Ukrainian

Security Service (SBU) claimed responsibility, as reported by leading international media. Russian authorities also detained a suspect, whom they alleged acted under orders from Ukrainian intelligence. There are currently no direct legally confirmed conclusions implicating the entire brotherhood in these events; meanwhile, security agencies continue criminal proceedings against individuals, and expert assessments differ between viewing the wurd as a closed religious community and as an environment with potential radicalization risks among certain members.

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Thus, the Republic of Ingushetia emerges as a region with high demographic growth but deep structural imbalances in socio-economic development. The youthfulness of the population and high natural increase coexist with chronic unemployment, a subsidy-dependent budget, and limited economic autonomy. Political life remains under strict federal control, which ensures stability through administrative loyalty but does not resolve systemic crises—from corruption to a deficit of political trust. The 2018–2019 protests and the “Ingush Case” demonstrated a high level of civic mobilization, where teip (clan) structures played a key role as carriers of traditional legitimacy. Despite repression, the Teip Council still performs functions of social self-representation.

Relations with Chechnya and North Ossetia remain points of tension, particularly due to unresolved territorial issues and historical grievances. In the socio-cultural dimension, Ingushetia maintains a high level of ethnic homogeneity and the resilience of local institutions—teips and Sufi brotherhoods. At the same time, the role of religious communities, particularly the Batakhadzins, is growing, around which contested security narratives are forming. Concurrently, independent media in the region, such as Fortanga and Caucasian Knot, remain active, serving as centers of alternative public space. Overall, Ingushetia functions under a regime of “managed instability”, where traditional social structures, federal administrative control, and local initiatives coexist in a fragile balance between subordination and resistance.