

**THE NORTH CAUCASUS: THE CHALLENGES OF INTEGRATION (II),  
ISLAM, THE INSURGENCY AND COUNTER-INSURGENCY**

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## **NORTH CAUCASUS: THE CHALLENGES OF INTEGRATION (II), ISLAM, THE INSURGENCY AND COUNTER-INSURGENCY**

### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Armed conflict in the North Caucasus is the most violent in Europe today. Insurgents seeking a regional political unit founded on Sharia (Islamic law) attack Russian officials and security forces, whose main response till recently has been a tough focus on eradicating the insurgency with a massive security presence, leaving little room for dialogue. While this policy has had successes, some 574 insurgents, security forces and civilians have died through September 2012, and there are almost daily attacks in the region and, occasionally, as far afield as Moscow. A dialogue with moderate Salafis and efforts to reintegrate insurgents who surrender has started, especially in Dagestan, but is challenged by opponents of soft power measures among security services and the insurgency. The root causes of violence are as much about ethnicity, state capacity and the region's poor integration into Russia as about religion. To succeed in conflict resolution, Russia needs to design and implement a long-term comprehensive approach joining ethnic policies, intra-confessional dialogue, institution building and reintegration of ex-fighters.

Fundamentalist Islam, in particular Salafism, has been growing in the region since the end of the Soviet Union. The manner in which it has evolved in the several republics has depended largely on how the government and its security forces have treated conservative Muslim communities, the historical role of religion and ethnicity, ties to the Chechnya conflict and local religious leaders' teachings. Islamisation tends to be more prominent in the east, but Salafi communities are also growing in the west. In the east, an acute conflict with followers of a more traditional form of Islam, mainly Sufis, with whom the state tends to side, contributes to Salafi radicalisation. Most Salafis remain peaceful but have difficulties integrating into the local social space and economy. An effort to reduce the sectarian schism by civilian dialogue and increased co-operation between religious groups has been underway in Dagestan since spring 2011, but this was seriously undermined in August 2012, when the most influential Sufi sheikh in the North Caucasus was killed by a suicide bomber.

The insurgency behind most of the armed clashes and the terrorism that haunts local communities declared itself a

unified force, with its own cause, modes of operation and communication, funding sources, leadership and cadre, in 2007 when it created a regional Caucasus Emirate to bring disparate groups under a central command. Much of the original leadership has been killed by security forces and replaced with a much younger, less experienced and unified cadre. The insurgency is less able to carry out large, spectacular acts of terror or engage in lengthy battles with Russian military forces, but it has not given up the tactic of terror attacks in other parts of Russia, especially on transport lines and hubs, such as Domodedovo Airport (2011) and the Moscow Metro (2010). The vast majority of its attacks in the North Caucasus are now against security services, local officials and traditional clergy and involve improvised explosive devices (IEDs), shootings and, at times, suicide bombers.

The government's counter-terrorism policy has mainly been led by the interior ministry and the Federal Security Service (FSB) and focused on law enforcement. Commanders have significant room for manoeuvre, including establishment of zones for operations that can last several months and cover extensive territory in which many constitutional rights and liberties are suspended. Until recently suspected insurgents were most often killed in special operations or detained. Torture is applied widely for investigative or intelligence purposes; enforced disappearances target not only alleged insurgents, but also those believed to be aiding them or prominent Islamists; retributive punishment is applied to family members in some republics. These harsh measures do little to convince radicalised parts of the population to give their allegiance to the Russian state. They seem instead to stimulate a new generation of disillusioned youth to "join the forest" (go over to the insurgency) in search of revenge or a different political order.

Many in the Russian government have come increasingly to understand the limitations of a counter-insurgency that employs only hard security measures and does very little to win the hearts and minds of local communities. Local authorities in Dagestan have been testing a novel approach that includes dialogue with and more tolerance of moderate Salafis and negotiations to encourage insurgents to lay

down their weapons and reintegrate into peaceful life. A similar approach in Ingushetia has significantly improved the situation since 2009. Chechen officials also go beyond hard security measures but apply a very different approach, seeking to promote a Sufi Islam while eradicating Salafi ideology and applying very tough measures to suspected fighters and often their supporters.

This second report of Crisis Group's new North Caucasus Project analyses the Islamic factor in detail: the growth of fundamentalist Islam; radicalisation of parts of the community; the insurgency; and the state's approaches to counter-insurgency. It should be read in conjunction with the first report, published simultaneously, that outlines the region's ethnic and national groups, their grievances and disputes, including a more extensive discussion of the Chechen conflict. A subsequent report will further elaborate the government's regional policies, governance and the local economy and offer specific policy recommendations relevant to all aspects of the three-part series.

**Moscow/Istanbul/Brussels, 19 October 2012**

## NORTH CAUCASUS: THE CHALLENGES OF INTEGRATION (II), ISLAM, THE INSURGENCY AND COUNTER-INSURGENCY

### I. INTRODUCTION

For a generation following the collapse of the USSR, Russia has been the victim of some of the worst terrorist incidents in the world. Since 1996 at least 26 major attacks have been committed in Moscow, with at least 1,561 casualties, including 627 people killed and 934 injured.<sup>1</sup> As recently as 24 January 2011, a suicide bomber killed 37 and injured 173 in the international passenger arrival lounge at Moscow's Domodedovo Airport. Terrorism has profoundly affected the lives of many North Caucasus residents. The school siege and massacre at Beslan (North Ossetia, 2004), which took the lives of 331, was the most horrendous act on Russian soil.

Acts of terror continue. In September 2010, nineteen were killed and 233 injured by a suicide bomber in the Vladikavkaz market of North Ossetia. In 2011, in the Chechen capital, Grozny, three suicide bombers killed seven and injured 23. The most deadly attack so far in 2012, a double bombing in Dagestan's capital, Makhachkala, in May, killed thirteen civilians and injured over 100. In Ingushetia on 19 August a suicide bomber blew himself up at a funeral of a policeman killed by insurgents the day before, killing seven and injuring fifteen. In Dagestan nine days later, a female suicide bomber killed one of Russia's most influential contemporary Sufi sheikhs, Sheikh Said Afandi al-Chirkavi Atsayev (Sheikh Said Afandi), and six followers.

While the first terrorist acts were linked to Chechen separatists, most violence of the past several years is considered the work of radical Islamist fundamentalists seeking to establish a Sharia (Islamic law)-based emirate in the North Caucasus. The insurgency has spread through the region, from Chechnya to Ingushetia, Dagestan, Kabardino-Balkaria, North Ossetia, Karachay-Cherkessia and even the overwhelmingly Russian-populated Stavropol Krai. Militants primarily attack security services, government officials and traditional clergy. Violence has diminished

in Chechnya and since 2009 waned significantly in Ingushetia, but clashes and armed attacks are increasing elsewhere, particularly in Dagestan. Overall in 2011, more than 750 security personnel, insurgents and civilians were killed and at least 628 were injured in the region. In the first nine months of 2012, 574 people were killed and 422 wounded.<sup>2</sup>

As analysed in a companion report, North Caucasus tensions are also linked to ethnic grievances that, when left unanswered, encourage youth to turn to violent protest, including jihadism. Unresolved territorial conflicts, land disputes, ethnic clashes and claims to autonomy and power sharing contribute to feelings of injustice and create good soil for radical Islamist propaganda. The Chechen conflict, initially a separatist struggle, became two brutal wars that transformed a national movement into a powerful jihadi insurgency now operating throughout the region. Combatants who in the first war fought under a national liberation banner to create a secular nation-state were gradually Islamised. The first Sharia courts were introduced in 1996, and in 1999 de facto independent Chechnya declared full Sharia rule. An Islamist training camp near Serzhen-Yurt village (1996-1999) reportedly introduced thousands of youths from the region to the basics of Islamist and jihadi ideology and warfare. Many returned to their republics to form the nuclei of local Salafi congregations (*jamaats*), some of which later espoused violence.

<sup>1</sup> "За последние 15 лет в терактах в Москве пострадал 1561 человек" ["In the past 15 years 1,561 people have been killed and injured in terrorist attacks in Moscow"] Caucasian Knot, www.kavkaz-uzel.ru, 25 January 2011.

<sup>2</sup> "В ходе вооруженного конфликта на Северном Кавказе в 2011 году погибли и были ранены 1378 человек" ["1,378 killed and injured during the armed conflict in the North Caucasus in 2011"], Caucasian Knot, 12 January 2012. "Жертвами вооруженного конфликта на Северном Кавказе в первом квартале 2012 года стали 258 человек" ["258 persons killed and injured during the armed conflict in the North Caucasus in the first quarter of 2012"], *ibid*, 12 April 2012. "Жертвами вооруженного конфликта на Северном Кавказе во втором квартале 2012 года стали 355 человек" ["355 persons killed and injured during the armed conflict in the North Caucasus in the second quarter of 2012"], *ibid*, 11 July 2012. "Жертвами вооруженного конфликта на Северном Кавказе в третьем квартале 2012 года стали 383 человека" ["383 persons killed and injured during the armed conflict in the North Caucasus in the third quarter of 2012"], *ibid*, 5 October 2012.

This report focuses on the Islamic factor in the North Caucasus. Islam is the majority's religion, especially in Dagestan, Chechnya and Ingushetia, where the internal factors of the *umma* (Islamic community) have an increasingly profound impact on society. Most of the region's Muslims follow a form of Islam perceived as "traditional" in the region because it is deeply interwoven with local customs, practices and beliefs. The east has a strong tradition of Sufism, whose brotherhoods (*tariqas*) have been in conflict with the Salafis for over a decade. In the west, where Sufism has not taken root, differences between traditional Muslims and Salafis are less prominent.

Traditional Muslims are more successfully integrated into the Russian secular system and recognise its institutions and law; their religious boards have become semi-government institutions. Integration of Salafi communities is a much greater challenge. The presence of a fundamentalist strain of Islam has become a fact of life, and a small minority of Salafis has turned to violence. For over a decade, the state has subjected fundamentalists to repression, contributing to their radicalisation and marginalisation. Though new religious policy in several republics now aims to include the Salafi communities, they remain largely self-contained and insular. Difficulties to access jobs, education and some state services hinder members' participation in republic life.

The Islamist insurgency consists of underground militant factions and cells operating largely autonomously under the banner of the regional Caucasus Emirate. Young persons' motivations to join are varied. In the first years of war, the Russian government's sole strategy to counter insurgents was heavy-handed, reliant upon killings and detentions, reinforced by disappearances, summary executions and retributive punishment of relatives.<sup>3</sup> In 2006 the reconstruction of post-war Grozny was launched, and in 2010 a new state Strategy for the North Caucasus focusing on economic development was adopted; a presidential envoy for the region, Aleksandr Khloponin, was appointed; and senior officials, such as then-President Dmitry Medvedev, admitted that the situation had deteriorated and spoke out against the causes of violence, including high unemployment, corruption, poor economic development and organ-

ised crime.<sup>4</sup> Since then, the government has repeatedly demonstrated awareness that counter-insurgency operations are not enough to restore peace and development.

Two main counter-terrorist approaches are now being used: one, applied mainly in Chechnya, treats the insurgency as a monolith and aims to eradicate the Salafi ideology, including through tough measures against fighters and often their support base. The more inclusive model implemented in Dagestan seeks to combine law enforcement with mechanisms for safe return to peaceful life for fighters, greater religious freedom and dialogue with various factions of the society, including the moderate Salafi communities.

Crisis Group's North Caucasus Project will produce analytical reports and detailed recommendations with the aim to advance peaceful, sustainable resolution of the ethnic, sectarian and insurgency-related conflicts. The first two, simultaneously-published background reports describe the challenges of integrating the region within the broader Russian Federation. The ethnic clashes and tensions affect comparatively small groups (all except the Chechens are under one million), but the cleavages they produce cut deep, and their consequences can be ruinous. The companion to this report focuses on ethno-cultural diversity and the tangled relations between ethnic and national groups and looks at the revival of national movements and their claims. A third report, to be published in early 2013, will conclude the series on the challenges of integration by examining the region's political and economic situation, including an analysis of the government's response to the conflict challenges. It will offer policy recommendations for all three parts of the integration series.

Follow-up reporting will give additional background on the response to the challenges and focus on particular aspects of the conflicts in individual republics. All will seek to analyse and disentangle the knots of complex disputes and offer recommendations aimed to assist in the development and application of more effective policies (including counter-insurgency measures).

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<sup>3</sup> "Russian Federation: The circle of injustice: Security operations and human rights violations in Ingushetia", Amnesty International, 21 June 2012. Oleg Orlov and Ekaterina Sokirianskaia, "Новый курс Магомедова? Ситуация с правами человека и попытки консолидации общества в республике Дагестан. Март 2010-Март 2011" ["Magomedov's new course? The human rights situation and the attempt of societal consolidation in the Republic of Dagestan. March 2010-March 2011"], Memorial, 2011. "Legal remedies for human rights violation in the North-Caucasus Region", Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly (PACE), 31 May 2010.

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<sup>4</sup> "Медведев призвал уделять особое внимание безработице на Кавказе" ["Medvedev call to pay special attention to unemployment in the Caucasus"], RIA Novosti, 13 September 2011. Oleg Orlov and Ekaterina Sokirianskaia, op. cit.

## II. THE ISLAMIC FACTOR AND ISLAMIST PROJECT

Islam profoundly affects regional social and political processes and local identities. Historically Islamic identity has interplayed and competed with ethnic ones.<sup>5</sup> The *umma* (Islamic community) is heterogeneous and fragmented. That Islamisation is more prominent in the east but also increasingly relevant in the west is explained by varying degrees of integration and secularisation during Soviet, even Imperial times. Most North Caucasus Muslim organisations are united under eight Spiritual Boards of Muslims that work closely with local authorities, and many imams in registered mosques receive various forms of state support. Salafi religious organisations (except to a limited extent in Karachay-Cherkessia, Ingushetia, North Ossetia and Stavropol Krai) are not affiliated with the Spiritual Boards.<sup>6</sup>

Salafi groups became conspicuous in the region in the mid-1990s. Some of their members fought beside the separatists during the second Chechnya war, and those who returned brought jihadi ideology with them. Illegal violence against suspected insurgents and repression against Salafi believers further radicalised local groups, and local insurgencies emerged that now carry out attacks. In more religiously diverse republics like Karachay-Cherkessia, Stavropol Krai and North Ossetia, local authorities have made some effort to develop more inclusive policies toward moderate Salafis. The most thorough attempt, after years of violence, to bring Salafis into a dialogue with the state and Sufi leaders, is in Dagestan. The insurgency itself is not interested in dialogue and seeks to undermine it with new terrorist attacks, while the security services also disrupt the process by further heavy-handed measures.

The North Caucasus also has a large secular community. It identifies with no Islamic strand and feels increasingly threatened in rapidly Islamising societies, where shops selling alcohol are burned, explosives planted on beaches, New Year school celebrations cancelled and dress-codes imposed, and Islamic discourse penetrates education and politics.

## A. THE SECTARIAN CONFLICT

For over fifteen years, a deep sectarian conflict has divided North Caucasian Muslims into traditionalists and fundamentalists, mostly Salafis, especially in Dagestan, Chechnya and Ingushetia. Traditional Islam is closely linked to local ethno-cultural traditions, adapted to nation-specific lifestyles and focused on local cultural identity rather than the idea of a global *umma*. Its religious leaders tend to recognise secular authority and law and be willing to keep religion a private affair. In Chechnya, Ingushetia and Dagestan, the majority of followers of this traditional trend are Sufis; and in Chechnya today Sufism is a state-enforced ideology.<sup>7</sup>

Sufism, as it is practiced in the region's eastern republics, contains strong elements of mysticism and has incorporated traditions and pre-Islamic beliefs of the North Caucasus. It encourages deep loyalty among followers and to their leaders. Sufi *tariqas* are fragmented into smaller units (*virids*) uniting followers (*murids*) of a sheikh (*murshid*). In Ingushetia and Chechnya, *virid* leaders are historical figures; in Dagestan, where numerous *virids* appealing mostly to specific ethnic groups appeared in the 1990s, many are still living.

One of the strongest sheikhs, Sheikh Said Afandi, a Naqshbandi and Shadhili leader who mainly attracted followers among the republic's largest ethnic group, Avars, including top government, security officials and business elite, was killed by a female suicide-bomber in his home on 28 August 2012. His supporters dominated the Dagestan Spiritual Board and were often accused of monopolising the official Islamic institutions, Islamic educational establishments, media, and organisation of the *hajj*. Relations between *murids* of various sheikhs are sometimes tense, particularly in Dagestan and especially when there are ethnic differences.<sup>8</sup> *Murids* tend to have very strong, affectionate links to their sheikh that transform tensions between

<sup>5</sup> Aleksei Malashenko, *Исламские ориентиры Северного Кавказа* [Islamic Guidelines of the North Caucasus] (Moscow, 2001).

<sup>6</sup> The north east includes Dagestan, Chechnya and Ingushetia. The west includes Kabardino-Balkaria, Karachay-Cherkessia, Adygea and North Ossetia. The eight Spiritual Boards are for Dagestan, Chechnya, Ingushetia, North Ossetia, Kabardino-Balkaria, Karachay-Cherkessia, Stavropol Krai and Adygea/Krasnodar Krai.

<sup>7</sup> Aleksei Malashenko, op. cit., p. 48. Sufism was brought to the region in the eleventh century but consolidated only during anti-colonial wars in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. It was largely banned during Soviet times but survived underground.

<sup>8</sup> There are around twenty sheikhs in Dagestan. Other influential contemporary sheikhs include: M. Kurbanov (Avar), A.V. Magomedov (Avar), M. Rabadanov (Dargin), M. Akayev, G. Tagirov (Avar), I. Saidov, M.M. Babatov (Kumyk), Ilyas Ilyasov (Kumyk). The recently assassinated Sirazhutdin Israfilov (Khuriksky, Tabasaran), very influential in Southern Dagestan, had serious tensions with Sheikh Said Afandi. Crisis Group interview, expert, Moscow, September 2012. "Энвер Кисриев: 'Клановая система порождает людей, обреченных на гибель и создающих массу проблем для общества'" ["Enver Kisriev: 'The clan system generates people who are doomed to failure and create many problems for society'"], Caucasian Knot, 13 August 2010.

religious leaders into schisms in local communities.<sup>9</sup> In recent years the nationalities ministry of Dagestan assisted Sheikh Said Afandi in broadening the ethnic composition of his supporters.<sup>10</sup>

Since the late 1990s, Sufis have increasingly seen their predominant position questioned by Salafis, whom their opponents often refer to as Wahhabis and whose numbers and influence are steadily growing.<sup>11</sup> Salafis define themselves as fundamentalist Muslims who seek return to the pure Islam of the Prophet Muhammad and his first followers. They condemn veneration of saints and pilgrimages to shrines, deny any influence of traditional beliefs in religious practices, seek to overcome the division of Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*) into four schools (*madhhabs*) and call for simplification of rituals and literal interpretation of

Islam. They reject a division of private and public life and seek prevalence of Islamic norms in both.<sup>12</sup>

The conflict between Salafis and Sufis began in the mid-1990s, when Islamic youths who had studied abroad, mainly in Middle Eastern universities, returned and began to contest Sufi religious practice, refusing to follow traditional imams and calling the adoration of living sheikhs polytheism. Salafis tried to replace old imams or establish their own places of worship. This quickly escalated, as the official clergy replied with strongly antagonistic rhetoric. A former mufti of Dagestan went so far as to call Wahhabism a “pseudo-religious” and “alien” trend that “denies Dagestanis their 1,000-years-long history” and added: “Any Muslim who kills a Wahhabi will get to paradise”.<sup>13</sup>

The state generally supported traditional Muslims and in effect banned Salafism, deepening the sectarian schism. It saw the “hunt for Wahhabis” as part of an anti-terrorist struggle, especially after the August 1999 incursion of Chechen insurgents into Dagestan.<sup>14</sup> Officials in Dagestan, Ingushetia, Kabardino-Balkaria and Karachay-Cherkessia created lists of Salafis in every district. Police referred to these after an incident and allegedly systematically detained, intimidated and tortured those on them. This pressure radicalised the Salafi community and fed the insurgency.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Avar dominance in the Spiritual Board is often seen as a reason why the latter has limited influence over representatives of Dagestan’s other ethnic groups, especially Nogay, Kumyk, Lak and Dargin populations. Experts say, up to 50 per cent of believers are not influenced by the Spiritual Board. Crisis Group interview, Akhmet Yarlykapov, senior researcher, Institute of Ethnology and Anthropology, Russian Academy of Sciences, Moscow, September 2012.

<sup>10</sup> Especially among Kumyks and Nogays after the rector of the Islamic University in Bujnaks, ethnic Kumyk Arslanali Afandi Gamzatov, was declared a sheikh and the successor of Sheikh Said Afandi. Later Sheikh Said Afandi changed his mind and appointed another successor. Nonetheless, *murids* of Gamzatov automatically became followers of Sheikh Said Afandi. In recent years, some Lezgins joined Sheikh Said Afandi’s *vir*. However, the south of Dagestan remained largely in opposition to him and the Spiritual Board. Crisis Group interview, Akhmet Yarlykapov, op. cit.

<sup>11</sup> See Crisis Group Middle East Report N°37, *Understanding Islamism*, 2 March 2005. The term “Wahhabi” was used in the Soviet Union to designate dissident Islamic movements and is now commonly and pejoratively applied to all followers of the Hanbali school of law. Salafi organisations in the North Caucasus never use this term. North Caucasus Salafis generally deny they rely purely on the Hanbali school for guidance. They recognise the authority of the founders of *madhhabs* (schools) but say there should be only one school of law, based on the Quran and *Sunnah*. Crisis Group interviews, Salafi leaders, Dagestan, December 2011, May 2012; Akhmet Yarlykapov, senior researcher, Institute of Ethnology and Anthropology, Russian Academy of Sciences, Moscow, September 2012. Salafism first appeared in the North Caucasus in the early twentieth century, and began to spread in the late 1970s-1980s. Fundamentalist Islamic circles emerged in several regions, including Dagestan, but were quickly suppressed. In June 1990, the Constituent Congress of the Islamic Renaissance Party of the Muslims of the Soviet Union gathered thousands of Muslim religious leaders in Astrakhan, including some from the North Caucasus who later played prominent roles in the regional Salafi communities.

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<sup>12</sup> Crisis Group interviews, Abas Kebedov, Kamil Sultanakhmedov, Salafi scholars, Makhachkala, Dagestan, May 2012. The divisions between Sufis and Salafis are not that rigid, however. Both are heterogeneous, with different positions and various degrees of radicalisation. Some smaller Sufi groups reject the secular state and recognise the legitimacy of jihad against it. De facto many Sufi communities also introduce Sharia in the areas they dominate. Some Salafis are ready to recognise a secular state de facto. All this makes agreement between them possible. Akhmet Yarlykapov, senior researcher, Institute of Ethnology, Russian Academy of Sciences, Moscow, September 2012.

<sup>13</sup> “Муфтий Дагестана о ваххабитах” [“The Mufti of Dagestan on Wahhabis”], youtube.com/watch?v=RfX1CkqWwBg; “Убийство Рамазанова – знак муфтию” [“The murder of Ramazanov is a sign for the Mufti”], Argumenty i Fakti Dagestana, 1 August 2007. Mufti Abubakarov was killed in an explosion in August 1998.

<sup>14</sup> Crisis Group Europe Report N°192, *Russia’s Dagestan: Conflict Causes*, 3 June 2008, p. 8. Crisis Group Europe Report N°220, *The North Caucasus: The Challenges of Integration (I), Ethnicity and Conflict*, 19 October 2012.

<sup>15</sup> E. Sokirianskaia, O. Orlov “Новый курс Магомедова? Причины гражданского противостояния, ситуация с правами человека и попытки консолидации общества в республике Дагестан. Март 2010-март 2011” [“Magomedov’s new deal? Roots of civic conflict, situation with human rights and attempts at consolidating the society in the Republic of Dagestan March 2010-March 2011”], Moscow, “Zvenya”, 2012. Alexandr Zhukov, “Кабардино-Балкария на пути к катастрофе. Предпосылки вооруженного выступления в Нальчике 13-14 октября 2005” [“Kabardino-Balkaria on the road to disaster. The



Foreign fighters and the training they offered in Chechnya (see below) also helped spread jihadi ideology.

The majority of Salafis focus on promoting Islamic mores and Sharia rules, remain non-violent and do not seek independence from Russia. According to a leader, “there has been no purely Islamic state since the time of pious caliphs. ... We will preach the Islamic norms to the people until they choose Sharia. But I will not force them to accept it, since a nation does not deserve Sharia until it willingly accepts it”.<sup>16</sup> Salafis tend to be critical of the government, corruption, nepotism, the low morale of the authorities and traditional clergy, and their ideologues gain support from dissatisfied youth with that message. Salafi ideology is effectively disseminated through mosques, universities and prisons. The majority of clashes between Salafis, Sufis and adherents of Sufi *virds* are over the selection of local imams, in which the Spiritual Board plays a dominant, often decisive role.

## B. SALAFISM’S SPREAD AND RADICALISATION: INGUSHETIA AND KABARDINO-BALKARIA

Ingushetia, in 1995, was among the first republics in the North Caucasus to found a religious institution of higher Islamic learning; its rector and prominent fundamentalist leader, Issa Tsetchoyev, taught Islam and Arabic to children and youths for free. In 1998, the then mufti of Ingushetia called it the “breeding ground of banditism”, the republic’s Federal Security Service (FSB) closed it, and Tsetchoyev was accused of radicalising youth.

After the second Chechen war began, Ingushetia accommodated some 300,000 displaced Chechens in tent camps and temporary or private residences. President Ruslan Aushev generally prevented both radical Islamists from taking root and federal anti-terrorism operations from entering his republic, but when he resigned in 2001 and Russian President Vladimir Putin’s protégé, FSB General Murat Zyazikov, succeeded him, counter-terrorism operations began in the tent camps and spread to Ingush settlements. Human rights organisations reported grave violations, as people disappeared or were found dead with traces of apparent torture. The insurgency increased its activities, notably during the night of 21-22 June 2004, when militants led by the Chechen terrorist Shamil Basayev carried

out a major attack on Ingushetia’s three major settlements, killing 78 and injuring over 100 (mostly security servicemen).<sup>17</sup> There were ups and downs thereafter, including dramatic deterioration in 2006 after Basayev was killed and almost daily attacks on security personnel and police in 2007-2008 by semi-autonomous groups.

The security situation began to improve after President Yevkurov took office in October 2008 and by 2010 had significantly stabilised, as casualties decreased. Salafism’s influence is not so deeply felt, probably due to local ethnic traditions and Sufism’s predominance. Ingushetia still widely celebrates non-Muslim holidays, especially New Year, which Salafis target as un-Islamic. Six Salafi mosques function, but there are no Salafi enclaves. In August 2012, the chair of the republic Security Council, Akhmet Kotiyev, told Crisis Group no Ingush had joined the insurgents for over ten months, and there were no more than 50 residents of Ingushetia in the insurgency, which, if correct, is a very impressive change from 2007-2008.<sup>18</sup> Unfortunately the situation appears to be deteriorating again, with 41 police, insurgents and civilians killed in July, August and September 2012.<sup>19</sup>

In Kabardino-Balkaria, a *jamaat* uniting 40 local organisations and with several thousand mostly young bearers of Salafi ideology, many who had studied in the Middle East, existed in 1998-2005. Its leader, Musa Mukozhev, a moderate Salafi seen as a civic activist and expert in Russian academic circles, was strongly against armed activity in Kabardino-Balkaria but considered war in Chechnya jihad (though not one obligatory for all Muslims) and Chechen fighters *mujahidin*, for whom he led collective prayers (*du’a*).<sup>20</sup> In 2002 Mukozhev and his two close associates,

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roots of the armed uprising in Nalchik 13-14 October 2005”], Memorial, 2008. Murat Gukemukhov, “Аресты и смятение в Карачаево-Черкессии” [“Arrests and turmoil in Karachay-Cherkessia”], Panorama, 22 December 2005. “В МВД Карачаево-Черкессии считают, что в республике 293 ваххабита” [“MVD of Karachay-Cherkessia announced 293 Wahhabis live in the republic”], Sova Centre, 27 October 2003.

<sup>16</sup> Crisis Group analyst interview in previous capacity, Salafi activist Abbas Kebedov, Makhachkala, March 2011.

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<sup>17</sup> “Генпрокуратура отчиталась за Ингушетию” [“The Office of the Prosecutor General reported on Ingushetia”], *Rossiyskaya Gazeta*, 22 June 2005. “Ингушетия 2007. Куда дальше?” [“Ingushetia 2007. Where to next?”], Memorial, 2008; “‘As If They Fell From the Sky’, Counterinsurgency, Rights Violations, and Rampant Impunity in Ingushetia”, Human Rights Watch, 25 June 2008. The three attacked settlements were Nazran, Karabulak and Ordzhonikidzevskaya.

<sup>18</sup> Crisis group interviews, Akhmet Kotiyev, chair, Security Council of the Republic Ingushetia, December 2011, August 2012. Ingush human rights activists say young people most likely continue to join the insurgency. Crisis Group email correspondence, Magomed Mutsolgov, head of human rights organisation “Mashr”, October 2012.

<sup>19</sup> “В Ингушетии – 83 жертвы вооруженного конфликта за третий квартал 2012 года” [“83 casualties in Ingushetia for the third quarter of 2012”], Caucasian Knot, 4 October 2012.

<sup>20</sup> Mukozhev participated in the Congress of Peoples of Ichkeria and Dagestan with Shamil Basayev and Dagestani radical Bahaiddin Magomedov before the second Chechen war. He considered jihad in Chechnya *fard kifaya*. Under Sharia, duties of Muslims are of two types: *fard kifaya*, sufficient if some *umma* members perform; and *fard ayn*, the responsibility of all.

Anzor Astemirov and ex-KGB officer and businessman Ruslan Nakhushiev, founded the Kabardino-Balkar Institute of Islamic Studies, which was never registered but had significant influence on the republic's religious affairs. In summer 2002 the radical Muslim Atayev refused to recognise Mukozhev's authority, formed the "Jamaat Yarmuk" and began armed attacks in Kabardino-Balkaria.<sup>21</sup>

Radicalisation of the *jamaat* happened gradually, as the local security services launched repression against Salafi Muslims in 2003-2004, sanctioned and inspired by the interior affairs minister, Khachim Shogenov. These actions were accompanied by an "anti-Wahhabi" media campaign and exacerbated by an acute conflict with the Spiritual Board in the republic over alleged misuse of money raised for the central mosque and organisation of the *hajj*. Most Arabic and Quranic courses, spiritual centres, including the Kabardino-Balkar Institute of Islamic Studies, and mosques were closed. Salafis were arrested and reportedly often tortured. After security services learned that Shamil Basayev spent significant time in Baksan in August 2003, there was another wave of mop-up operations and arrests accompanied by allegations of beatings and religious humiliations.<sup>22</sup> Atayev was killed in a raid on his house in January 2005.

The repression followed by radicalisation provided the background for the 13-14 October 2005 events, when the *jamaat* leaders Mukozhev and Astemirov led 100-200 insurgents in an attack on security services in the republic capital, Nalchik. 35 security servicemen, fourteen civilians and 89 attackers were killed; 36 insurgents were captured; and more than 100, mostly law enforcement officers, were wounded. Up to 2,000 were detained on suspicion of involvement in the incident.<sup>23</sup> The population of the small republic (860,000) was deeply divided and traumatised.

Nakhushiev was abducted in November 2005, Mukozhev and Astemirov were killed in 2009-2010, and militant activity slowed. But the insurgency resurfaced in 2010 and

significantly radicalised with new young leaders.<sup>24</sup> Security casualties doubled compared to 2009, and there were attacks on tourists and tourist infrastructure in February 2011, though some improvement in the security environment is evident again. The republic's Salafi community is smaller than Dagestan's but stronger than in other Caucasus republics, though it has no political or civic organisations. Previously it was widely believed that Balkars more frequently joined fundamentalist groups (especially the *jamaat* "Yarmuk"), but now the Salafi community is equally made up of Kabardins and Balkars. The regime has become more liberal toward Salafis, though a group was apparently detained and humiliated on 12 June 2011 (Baksan region). On 20 September 2012, at least eight suspected insurgents, including two women, were killed during a raid on a house, after another suspected insurgent was killed at a checkpoint two weeks earlier.<sup>25</sup>

### C. SALAFISM IN RELIGIOUSLY MIXED REPUBLICS

Karachay-Cherkessia, Stavropol Krai and North Ossetia have significant Christian populations. In Karachay-Cherkessia 63 per cent identify themselves as Muslims (the majority of ethnic Karachays); in Stavropol Krai 7 per cent and North Ossetia up to 20 per cent. The Salafi-Sufi distinction is not an issue, since Sufism has not been adopted by local Sunnis. But in these republics also, the 1990s saw the development of Salafism that clashed with traditional clergy and became increasingly radical and violent due to links with Chechen fundamentalists and reaction to discrimination, arrest and abuse. There is much less violence than in Dagestan and Kabardino-Balkaria, but the security situation began to deteriorate in 2011 in Stavropol Krai and Karachay-Cherkessia.<sup>26</sup>

<sup>21</sup> Alexandr Zhukov, op. cit.

<sup>22</sup> For example, in September 2003 some 100 were detained from two prayer houses in Nalchik and detained for three to ten days. After release, about 70 applied to the prosecutor's office claiming they had been beaten and tortured. Many attached forensic expert certificates attesting to traces of violence. There were mass arrests in Volny Aul and Sormakovo mosques, Volny Aul's mosque was closed by officials. Ibid. Crisis Group analyst interview in previous capacity, Larisa Dorogova, Salafi community lawyer, December 2010. Olga Allenova, "Мы решили не вмешиваться в войну" ["We decided not to intervene in the war"], *Kommersant*, 3 October 2005.

<sup>23</sup> Steven Lee Myers, "In Caucasus, delay of burials stirs local anger", *The New York Times* (online), 1 November 2005; Irina Gordienko, "Процесс 58-ми" ["The process of 58"], *Kavkazskaya politika*, 30 June 2012.

<sup>24</sup> "Руслана Нахушева признали жертвой похищения" ["Ruslan Nakhushiev was acknowledged as the victim of abduction"], *Kommersant*, 9 November 2005.

<sup>25</sup> Sixteen servicemen died in 2009, 32 in 2010, 31 in 2011. "Ситуация в зоне конфликта на Северном Кавказе: оценка правозащитников. Зима 2011-2012 гг" ["The situation in the zone of conflict in the North Caucasus: an evaluation by human rights activists Winter 2011-12"], Memorial, May 2012. "Примеры массовых задержаний и избиений мусульман представителей фундаментальных мусульманских общин на Северном Кавказе в 2011 году" ["Examples of mass detention and beatings of fundamentalist Muslim communities' representatives in the North Caucasus, 2011"], ibid, 2011. "Police foil apparent terror plot in Kabardino-Balkaria", *Ria Novosti* (online), 2 September 2012. "Russia police launch deadly raid in Kabardino-Balkaria", *BBC* (online), 20 September 2012.

<sup>26</sup> All-Russia population census 2010, [www.perepis-2010.ru](http://www.perepis-2010.ru). According to the Human Rights Centre Memorial, four security servicemen were killed and five wounded in Stavropol Krai, something which had not happened since 2007. Seven were

One of the first and most radical North Caucasus fundamentalist groups was the Karachay-Cherkessia *jamaat* led by Magomed Bidzhiyev (Bidzhi-Ulla), who in 1991 declared creation of the Imamate of Karachay, a parallel structure to Karachay-Cherkessia's and Stavropol Krai's Spiritual Board, with a youth wing, the "Islamic Jamaat". A network of *jamaats* quickly formed, and the mosque and madrasa in Uchkiken became centres of Islamic learning, with instructors from the Middle East. "Islamic Society #3" was officially registered by the Karachay-Cherkessia justice ministry in 1996. Under the leadership of Achemez Gochiyayev, it radicalised and became notorious for terrorist attacks outside the region.<sup>27</sup>

Achemez Gochiyayev was accused of organising the 1999 bombing of blocks of Moscow flats that helped justify the second war in Chechnya; he escaped, but others were arrested and given life-sentences. Links between Karachay-Cherkessia and Kabardino-Balkaria Islamist *jamaats* developed, with a minority pushing for violent jihad.<sup>28</sup> By 2002, the Islamic Jamaat had virtually ceased to exist after a significant part was arrested for terror crimes, though individuals continued to engage in violence outside the republic.<sup>29</sup> Since 2006, a radical wing has again attacked security officers and clergy, but in 2007 the *jamaat* leader Rustam Ionov, his wife (supposedly head of its female branch), and more than twenty militants were killed and others arrested. In 2010-2011 insurgent activity in Karachay-Cherkessia was significantly less than in other repub-

lics; though victims increased eight-fold in 2011, numbers remain low.<sup>30</sup>

Karachay-Cherkessia's relative stability has been explained by the ability of various local Muslim communities to reach negotiated agreements aimed at preventing instability, as well as the government's deliberate attempts to learn the Kabardino-Balkaria lessons and prevent Islamic radicalisation:

There were problems; in the 1990s there was a heated discussion about banning Wahhabism, but we realised that if we try to define Wahhabism, we will end up banning the entire Islam. Our main aim is to prevent prosecution for religious beliefs and make sure that those who committed crimes are punished.<sup>31</sup>

In the first decade of the new century, after a series of arrests of imams and believers, the representative of the republic's head and the Spiritual Board told police chiefs that people could not be arrested for their appearance and facilitated meetings between them and imams. A dispute over the construction of a central mosque in Cherkessk was resolved, and the Spiritual Board created a Council of *ulama* (religious authorities), including Salafi leaders respected by local youth, that helps the authorities keep contact with the Salafi community.<sup>32</sup>

Police abuse still happens: believers were checked en masse in Uchkiken in November 2011. Two months previously, after an attack on a police checkpoint in Stavro-

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killed and seven wounded in Karachay-Cherkessia, the highest numbers in six years. "The situation in the zone of conflict .... Winter 2011-12", Memorial, May 2012.

<sup>27</sup> Fatima Tlisova, "Не жильцы. Штурм квартир в Нальчике и Карачаевске: итоги спецоперации" ["No survivors. Storming of flats in Nalchik and Karachaevsk: results of a special operation"], *Novaya Gazeta* (online), 24 February 2005.

<sup>28</sup> In August 2001, the then prosecutor general announced that a plot had been discovered which aimed to depose the governments of Karachay-Cherkessia and Kabardino-Balkaria and create a Sharia state. At a July 2002 trial in Pyatigorsk, the first of its kind in the North Caucasus, sixteen people received prison sentences of from four to fifteen years. Olga Allenova, "Мы решили не вмешиваться в войну" ["We decided not to intervene in the war"], *Kommersant*, 3 October 2005.

<sup>29</sup> Gochiyayev remains internationally wanted for organisation and implementation of terrorist attacks related to the *jamaat* in Moscow, Mineralnye Vody, Essentuki and the suburbs of Cherkessk. "Gochiyayev, Achimez", *Lenta.ru*, 9 November 2006. One part of Islamic Jamaat escaped to the Pankisi Valley (Georgia) but was arrested by Georgian border police and handed over to Russia. Gochiyayev reportedly hid in Pankisi for several years after the terrorist attacks in Moscow. The February 2004 bombs in Paveletskaya-Avtovozovskaya metro stations; the suicide bomber in the Rizhskaya metro station in August 2004; and bombs in Krasnodar and Voronezh were attributed to radicals from Karachay-Cherkessia.

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<sup>30</sup> "Карачаево-Черкесский джамаат" ["Karachay-Cherkessk Jamaat"], *Agentura.ru*, 2007. Two persons died, two were injured in armed conflict in Karachay-Cherkessia in 2010; in 2011, 22 died and twelve were injured. "1,378 killed and injured", *op. cit.* Five persons died in the first eight months of 2012 in Karachay-Cherkessia. *Caucasian Knot*, 5 September 2012.

<sup>31</sup> Crisis Group interview, Yevgeniy Kratov, plenipotentiary to religious organisations, Karachay-Cherkessia, Cherkessk, March 2012. A senior researcher at the Institute of Ethnology, Russian Academy of Science claimed that Salafisation of Karachay-Cherkessia is on the way, but proceeding peacefully, due to strong self-regulating mechanisms of the local religious communities. Though there are quite radical Islamists, the Karachay, who went through the Stalinist deportation, have become skilled in controlling them internally and making sure the situation in the republic does not escalate. Crisis Group interview, Akhmet Yarlykapov, Moscow, September 2012.

<sup>32</sup> According to Yevgeniy Kratov, the talks were emotional, but had a positive impact. There is no Djuma (central/Friday) mosque in Cherkessk, so the Islamist community uses the same room in the ex-billiard club allocated to it in the 1990s as its main meeting place. Two small mosques function in the republic's capital. The authorities and the religious community had difficulty agreeing on where to build the central mosque, but construction now is proceeding, sponsored by local businessmen, Crisis Group interview, Cherkessk, March 2012.

pol Krai, over 100 bearded men were reportedly detained (over 80 in Uchkeken), humiliated and beaten at the police station, forced to shave while being told they “dishonour the republic”, before being released. Female representatives of the Salafi community told Crisis Group they are not routinely harassed for wearing Islamic dress or praying. However, individuals arrested on suspicion of aiding the insurgency reportedly are usually badly mistreated until they produce “confessions”. In October 2011, 29 alleged insurgents were sentenced for attempting to take power and change the constitutional order. A trial of another fourteen was completed the same month. A case against thirteen alleged insurgents started in March 2012. Four people were sentenced for involvement in illegal armed formations in September 2012.<sup>33</sup>

There are small Islamist communities in predominantly Christian Stavropol Krai and North Ossetia. In the latter, 15 to 20 per cent of the population identify as Muslims. According to local experts in North Ossetia, Salafis are perceived as a threat, and a woman in hijab is associated with danger, probably due to the high number of terrorist acts in the republic.<sup>34</sup> In the 1990s, two parallel Muslim structures were created in North Ossetia, like elsewhere: the followers of traditional Islam consolidated around the Spiritual Board; an informal organisation, “Jamaat”, unified several hundred young people and was officially registered as the “Islamic Cultural Centre” in 1996. In the early 2000s, there were around 500 Salafis in Vladikavkaz, mostly ethnic Ossetians. After the Beslan hostage-taking crisis and massacre in September 2004, many “Jamaat” activists were prosecuted: in 2005, its leader was sen-

tenced to 2.5 years in prison for illegal handling of guns, and his deputy was forced to leave for Turkey.<sup>35</sup>

In 2008, Ali Yevteyev, generally seen as a moderate Salafi, was elected mufti of North Ossetia. In the late 1990s, he had been an active member of “Jamaat”, but disillusioned with the radicalism left to study at the University of Medina (Saudi Arabia) and Al-Azhar University in Cairo. Upon return he was among the best-educated muftis in the North Caucasus. His election was supported by the authorities, who told Crisis Group he was a good example of deradicalisation. He argues that armed struggle in the North Caucasus contradicts Sharia.<sup>36</sup>

Yevteyev organised intensive educational programs, and youth flocked to his mosques. Though he resigned in 2010 after a media smear campaign on his radical past, the new mufti, his deputy Khadzhimurat Gatsalov, continues his policy.<sup>37</sup> After the murder of the Ossetian poet Shamil Dzhigkayev on 28 May 2011, eighteen Ossetian Salafis, including the imam of a Vladikavkaz mosque, were arrested, allegedly badly mistreated, and sentenced for illegal possession of arms and drugs. Gatsalov told Crisis Group he invested much effort in their defence because persecution would lead to the community’s radicalisation. A local expert asserted the general public knows the charges are false but wants the suspects behind bars because it considers their beliefs dangerous.<sup>38</sup>

The Spiritual Board of Stavropol Krai was founded in 2010 to deal with alleged rapid Islamisation of the traditionally Russian region. It unites 42 active Muslim communities. In 2011 a local Salafi *jamaat* appealed to then-President Medvedev to take measures against illegal arrests and searches.<sup>39</sup> Religious authorities’ security appears increasingly precarious: in February 2012, a deputy mufti, Kurman

<sup>33</sup> “Далеко ли до Нальчика?” [“How far is it to Nalchik?”], *Novaya Gazeta* (online), 1 November 2011. “За попытку захвата власти – за решетку” [“Behind bars for attempting to seize power”], *Vesti.ru*, 18 October 2011. 27 of the 29 received prisons terms of from two to fourteen years; two were acquitted. “В Карачаево-Черкесии суд над 13 обвиняемыми в подготовке к захвату власти начнется 4 апреля” [“In Karachay-Cherkessia the trial of 13 defendants, charged with the attempt to seize power will start on 4 April”], *Caucasian Knot*, 31 March 2012. “Четверо жителей Карачаево-Черкесии приговорены к тюремному заключению по делу об участии в НВФ” [“Four Karachay-Cherkessia residences sentenced to prison for alleged involvement in illegal armed formations”], *ibid*, 18 September 2012. Crisis group interviews, female Salafis, relatives of the accused, local activists, Cherkessk, March 2012.

<sup>34</sup> According to the Spiritual Board of North Ossetia, there are 25 mosques in the republic, six in Prigorodny district. The main Muslim areas are the Digorsky and Ironsky districts (Ossetian Muslim), Mozdok (Kumyks), Prigorodny district (Ingush), and the town of Beslan (Ossetian Muslim). Crisis Group interviews, Igor Dulayev, expert from North Ossetia, Moscow, May 2012; Khasan Dzutsev, director, North Ossetian Centre for Social Research, Institute for Social-Political research, Russian Academy of Sciences, Vladikavkaz, December 2011.

<sup>35</sup> Mikhail Roschin, “К истории появления джамаатов в Северной Осетии” [“On the history of *jamaats* in North Ossetia”], *Kavkazskaya politika*, 18 June 2012.

<sup>36</sup> Crisis Group analyst interview in previous capacity, North Ossetian experts, officials and clergy, Vladikavkaz, Beslan, March 2011.

<sup>37</sup> Crisis Group interview, North Ossetian experts, officials and clergy, Vladikavkaz, Beslan.

<sup>38</sup> Eleven received prison terms, two suspended sentences; four were paroled early, in September 2012. Crisis Group interviews, Khadzhimurat Gatsalov, August 2012; Igor Dulayev, Moscow, May 2012; “В Северной Осетии освобождены из мест заключения члены мусульманской общины” [“Muslims released in North Ossetia”], *Regnum*, 21 September 2012.

<sup>39</sup> The complaint included the allegation that law enforcement had tried to plant an explosive in a flat to incriminate a believer. “Ставропольские мусульмане пожаловались Д. Медведеву на давление силовиков” [“Stavropol Muslims complained to Medvedev about the pressure of the security forces”], *Sova Centre*, 17 May 2011.

Ismailov, a graduate of an Islamic university in Medina and influential among moderate Salafis, was killed when his car was blown up, and three months later, the imam of a Neftekumsk mosque was wounded in an assassination attempt.

#### **D. DAGESTAN: SALAFIS, SUFIS AND DIALOGUE**

For almost a decade after the second Chechen war began, Dagestan authorities made no distinction between moderate and radical, violence-oriented Salafis, which contributed to radicalisation of the entire community. In 2010, the new president, Magomedshams Magomedov, said he was ready for dialogue with fundamentalist communities. Today Dagestan has the largest and most vibrant Salafi community in the North Caucasus, with mosques, schools, civic and human rights organisations, charities, madrasas, an orphanage for 300 boys, a centre for Sharia mediation, media and a football league. Salafi scholars resolve family, land, property, commercial and community disputes under Sharia.<sup>40</sup> Salafis are still a minority of all Dagestani believers, but an active and visibly growing one, especially among urban youth. Some villages have become almost fully Salafi: all their females are covered, no alcohol is sold, and weddings have no dancing. Many villages have a significant Salafi population.

Salafis took the first steps to organise as a civic force after Magomedov's statements in 2010, setting up the Association of Scholars Akhlu-Sunnah in Dagestan. It delivered a document to the representative of Dagestan's president, analysing instability in the republic and suggesting a roadmap to overcome it, including an end to repression against Muslims; unhindered peaceful preaching of Islam; construction of Djuma [central/Friday] mosques in several big cities; inclusion of Salafi representatives on the Spiritual Board; Islamic kindergartens and religious schools; and Sharia civil courts for those who desire to use them.<sup>41</sup> Moderate Salafis created an NGO, "Dagestan – the territory of peace and development", with strong, non-fundamentalist civil society actors, that engaged in dialogue with repre-

sentatives of Moscow-based civil society groups in the dialogue.

The government took steps to consolidate society and include Salafi leaders, creating a Congress of Peoples of Dagestan and a "Commission for Assistance to Adaptation to Peaceful Life of Persons Who Decided to Stop Terrorist and Extremist Activity" (referred to henceforth as the "commission for the rehabilitation of fighters") that one moderate Salafi was invited to join.<sup>42</sup> Magomedov has significantly liberalised matters for Salafis. Security services no longer harass women in hijabs, but they are still discriminated against on the job and in the housing market. In state institutions, most supervisors accept hijab, but some are aggressively against, particularly in schools, where acute conflicts between parents and administrators occurred in the last two years. Two principals were killed due to their hijab ban. Some parents reportedly stop sending girls to school after puberty if they cannot wear hijab.<sup>43</sup> The Akhlu-Sunnah was allowed to organise Islamic courses for women in Makhachkala, with instruction by female scholars educated in the Middle East.

Indiscriminate violence and humiliation of non-conventional believers still occurs: on 13 May 2011 in Sovetskoye village, police broke into a mosque during Friday prayers and arrested, beat and humiliated some 80 Salafis, including by shaving their beards.<sup>44</sup> In February 2012 in Tatlyar village, police allegedly desecrated Qurans, an action that caused a public outcry but local authorities denied ever happened. In July 2012, three people were reportedly shot dead by security forces while peacefully exiting a mosque after Friday prayers in the village of Leninkent, and a witness who expressed indignation was also apparently killed.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> For more on this commission, which a moderate Salafi leader, Abas Kebedov, joined, see Section V.A below.

<sup>43</sup> "В Дагестане общество стало спокойнее реагировать на хиджабы, но проблемы остались, считают правозащитники" ["In Dagestan society reacts more calmly to hijabs, but challenges remain, human right defenders say"], *Caucasian Knot*, 24 April 2012. On the killing of the school principals, see Section III.D.2 below.

<sup>44</sup> For details and photos of the Sovetskoye incident, see "Дагестан: массовое избивание жителей Магарамкентского района" ["Dagestan: mass beating of citizens of the Magaramkent district"], *Memorial*, 17 May 2011.

<sup>45</sup> The witness angrily addressed the police after the incident, was publicly beaten and taken away. His corpse was returned a few days later with gunshot wounds, according to the brother of the victim and another witness. Crisis group interviews, Makhachkala, Dagestan, August 2012. Akhmednabi Akhmednabiyev, "Лес рубят – невиновных казнят" ["Cutting forest – Executing innocents"], *Kavkazskaya politika*, 8 July 2012. "Глава Дагестана и МВД отвергают информацию об осквернении Корана силовиками" ["Dagestan's Head and MVD deny the desecration of the Quran by security forces"], *Caucasian Knot*, 2 March 2012.

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<sup>40</sup> Crisis Group observations and interviews, Salafi lawyers Khalilrahman Shamatov, Kamil Sultanakhmedov, Israil Akhmednabiyev (Abu Umar Sasitlinsky) and Ziyautdin Uvajsov, Makhachkala, August 2012. Irina Gordienko, "Салафиты, которые рядом" ["Salafis, who are at hand"], *Novaya gazeta*, 8 August 2012. For example, in the village of Lvovskoye-1, a dispute over distant pasture land was solved in the mosque. K. Kazenin, "Элементы Кавказа. Земля, власть и идеология в северокавказских республиках" ["Elements of the Caucasus: Land, power and ideology in the North Caucasus republics"], *Regnum*, 2012, p. 44. For more on the development of Salafism in Dagestan, see Crisis Group Report, *Russia's Dagestan*, op. cit., pp. 6-8.

<sup>41</sup> Oleg Orlov and Ekaterina Sokirianskaia, op. cit.

Large groups of believers were detained from mosques in Makhachkala, Novokayakent and Kaspijsk during the last few months. Khalilrakhman Shamatov, the Jordan-educated leader of the Akhlu-Sunnah, claims that systematic violence against Muslims is the key problem impeding the peace process: "Today youth is being systematically eliminated without trial; there is a directive from the very top: to kill".<sup>46</sup>

In April 2011 in Makhachkala, a first civil dialogue meeting took place. It aimed to set parameters for cooperation in the name of non-violence and tolerance and look jointly for mechanisms to prevent youth from joining the insurgency. The start was not easy, but it was decided to go gradually, as Salafi leader Kamil Sultanakhmedov urged: "If we are not yet ready to unite, let's start by celebrating holidays together". Two months later, due to efforts of Moscow civil society leaders, a two-day session of the federation president's Council for Civil Society and Human Rights took place in Makhachkala. During the session on insurgency issues, Magomedov participated in a long and meaningful discussion with Salafi leaders that was broadcast on republic television.<sup>47</sup> The dialogue unfolded while the security situation was deteriorating, with insurgents carrying out numerous attacks against police and civilians and security services committing human rights abuses while combating the insurgency.

On 21 and 25 November 2011, moderate Islamists organised large rallies in Makhachkala against abductions by security services. In the preceding month, at least seven people were apparently kidnapped, at least four of whom are still missing. The 25 November protest was the biggest

for several years, attended by over 5,000. Participants marched shouting "Allahu Akbar", and speakers used Islamist rhetoric, some stating clearly that unless the state respected its law, Islamists would introduce their own law. Deputy Premier Kurbanov promised measures to find the abducted. Rally leaders met with Magomedov and his interior minister.<sup>48</sup>

The dialogue continued in spring 2012, when Dagestan's mufti, Akhmad Abdulaev, issued a statement urging residents to be tolerant of fundamentalist Muslims and not call them "Wahhabis" and asked imams not to report on believers who visit their mosques. He also called on policemen not to resort to illegal violence and punishment when dealing with non-conventional Muslims, an important statement in a republic where "Wahhabism" is officially banned and the sectarian cleavage is very deep.<sup>49</sup> Crisis Group sources confirmed that since most policemen are traditional Muslims, the mufti's statement was taken seriously.<sup>50</sup>

Sufis were represented by the Spiritual Board, Salafis by the Association of Scholars Akhlu-Sunnah, which by mid-2012 grew to unite around 60 Salafi scholars, at an historic meeting (*majalis*) organised by community leaders on 29 April in Makhachkala's central mosque. It focused on the need to overcome fifteen years of conflict, prejudices and hatred and unify Muslims. Mufti Abdulayev urged participants to stop accusing each other of *kufir* (disbelief) and to ask Allah's forgiveness for the conflict. It was decided to create a special committee, with equal representation of scholars from both sides, to resolve disputes. Mufti Abdulayev noted that the environment would not have been ripe for the meeting a year earlier.<sup>51</sup>

The leader of the Akhlu-Sunnah said dialogue was launched because the Salafi community had grown significantly, and it was impossible to ignore it any longer. He asserted:

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<sup>46</sup> Olympic champion Mavlet Batirov, Artur Babayev, the head of the republican branch of the "Yabloko" party, and Akhmed Chililov, the chief editor of a major Dagestan newspaper, *Novoye delo*, were among those detained in Makhachkala on 10 October. They were released later in the day. "Мавлет Батилов, Артур Бабаев и Ахмед Чилилов были задержаны в Махачкале на уроке арабского языка" ["Mavlet Batirov, Artur Babayev, Akhmed Chililov were detained at Arabic lesson in Makhachkala"]; "Прихожане мечети дагестанского села Новокайекент освобождены" ["Worshippers of the mosque of the Dagestani village of Novokayakent have been released"], *Caucasian Knot*, 12 October 2012; "Около ста прихожан мечети Каспийска были задержаны и дактилоскопированы в городском ОВД" ["About 100 worshippers of the Kaspijsk Mosque were arrested and fingerprinted in the city police department"], 25 June 2012. Crisis Group interviews, Makhachkala, Dagestan, August 2012 and Moscow, October 2012.

<sup>47</sup> On the civil dialogue, Crisis Group interview, Kamil Sultanakhmedov, Salafi leader, Dagestan and Moscow, June 2012. "В Махачкале прошло выездное заседание Совета по развитию гражданского общества и правам человека" ["The Council for the development of Civil Society and Human Rights held a field meeting in Makhachkala"], regional TV channel "RGVK Dagestan", 1 June 2011.

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<sup>48</sup> In the preceding month, at least seven people were apparently kidnapped, at least four of whom are still missing. Videos of 25 November 2011 protest rally, [youtu.be/IFDhPXjUYV4](http://youtu.be/IFDhPXjUYV4); [youtu.be/FMK3Os78vF4](http://youtu.be/FMK3Os78vF4).

<sup>49</sup> "Обращение муфтия Дагестана" ["An appeal from the Mufti of Dagestan"], *RIA Dagestan*, 29 March 2012.

<sup>50</sup> Crisis Group interview, MVD colonel, Makhachkala, Dagestan, August 2012.

<sup>51</sup> A resolution on the need to consolidate the republic's Muslim community stated that all disputes should be settled between knowledgeable people, and reporting on each other is prohibited for all Muslims. It was also agreed that it is unacceptable to prevent Dagestanis from studying at Islamic universities abroad. Videos, [youtu.be/qz7lg-x4W-k](http://youtu.be/qz7lg-x4W-k); and [youtu.be/T7sxr9yN2eY](http://youtu.be/T7sxr9yN2eY); "Первый шаг (video)" ["The first step (video)"], *Islam v Rossii*, [www.islam.ru](http://www.islam.ru), 1 May 2012; "Реальные действия по объединению мусульман" ["Real actions on unification of the Muslims"], video, *IslamDag*, [islamdag.ru/analitika/9884](http://islamdag.ru/analitika/9884).

"We are in every village; we are thousands, around 25 per cent of believers. 2,000-2,500 students are now studying Islam in the Middle East; they will come back and all join the Akhlu Sunnah".<sup>52</sup>

The spokeswoman for the Spiritual Board and the wife of Mufti Abdulayev said that it had been hard for Sufi leaders to start dialogue: "We gave long thought and finally decided to start a dialogue and work together with some of the Salafis, as it was much easier to resolve disputes at the level of scholars". She argued it would take longer for average people to reconcile: "Older people have greater difficulty understanding our position. They remember old grievances that Salafis tramped on their flag twenty years ago. But we should treat them with understanding, so the reconciliation process will go faster". According to her, Salafi youth have no idea of the roots of the conflict in the 1990s, when "the first Salafi preachers were very insulting toward Sufi scholars and Imams. They said our parents were not Muslims, and their marriages were not Muslim marriages, so we were all born in sin. This resulted in acute conflicts". Sheikh Said Afandi, the *murshid* of the mufti, supported the dialogue, since "without his blessing Mufti [Abdulayev] would never have gone forward".<sup>53</sup>

The dialogue quickly transformed into routine, daily work, mainly aimed at unification of divided local communities. Sufi and Salafi leaders worked at the local level in distant mountain villages, held meetings with village *jamaats* and explained the need to overcome the schism.<sup>54</sup> Thus, an acute conflict between Sufi and Salafi believers over the selection of the imam was successfully resolved in Kurush, a Lezgin village, due to mutual efforts.<sup>55</sup> By early summer 2012, areas of cooperation were expanding, including the co-authoring of the Spiritual Board publication. Local experts claim that in the areas where Akhlu-Sunnah is active, fewer youth are joining the insurgency, as many prefer the activities of peaceful Salafis: "The outflow to the hills stops because they give youth a chance to fully ad-

here to their religion, and if to protest, then in peaceful ways permitted under Sharia".<sup>56</sup>

The insurgency is apparently not interested in such developments, and after the launch of the dialogue has alleged that the Spiritual Board wants to fragment the Salafi community and alienate it from the insurgency. A major terrorist attack only a few days after the *majalis* took thirteen lives and injured 89.<sup>57</sup> The security services, elements of which may also be trying to halt the momentum, allegedly retaliated with illegal measures: one of seven persons abducted in May was found killed; the rest are still missing. In summer 2012, respected Salafi preacher Abu Mustafa Ilyasov was abducted and is still missing, an attempt on the life of the Akhlu-Sunnah chair, Khalilrakhman Shamatov, was made, as were two attempts to abduct a Salafi imam of Novokayakent, Kamil Sultanakhmedov. Shamatov said:

My trusted people among security services have repeatedly advised me to leave Dagestan, since there is an order to kill me. I know they will not leave us in peace. But I will stay; I am ready to sacrifice myself to stop this tragedy. Even if we manage to save one life, the award from Allah will be great.

Throughout the summer spontaneous unarmed clashes between Salafis and police occurred, usually over alleged abductions or torture of suspects by law enforcement agents.<sup>58</sup>

The dialogue may have come close to its end with the killing of Sheikh Said Afandi, the most influential sheikh in the North Caucasus, by a newly converted Islamist in his home on 28 August 2012.<sup>59</sup> More than 150,000 attended

<sup>52</sup> Crisis Group interview, Khalilrakhman Shamatov, Makhachkala, Dagestan, August 2012.

<sup>53</sup> Crisis Group interview, Ajna (Patimat) Gamzatova, spokeswoman, Spiritual Board, Makhachkala, Dagestan, August 2012.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

<sup>55</sup> When the old imam resigned, the majority of the village believers were Salafis who wanted to elect an Egypt-educated scholar, Muhammad. *Murids* of Sheikh Said Afandi pushed for their own imam, and the situation was getting tense, when the mufti stepped in and together with five Salafi representatives, organised a village council that elected Muhammad but allocated Sufis an additional premise and praying room near the cemetery. Crisis Group interview, Khalilrakhman Shamatov, Makhachkala, August 2012.

<sup>56</sup> Crisis group interview, local expert, Makhachkala, Dagestan, August 2012.

<sup>57</sup> "Дагестан, май 2012 года; теракты и спецоперации: логика эскалации противостояния" ["Dagestan, May 2012. Terrorist attacks and special operations: the logic of escalation and confrontation"], Memorial, 29 May 2012. A group of Islamist students in Egypt appealed to the Muslims of Dagestan to be cautious in the face of enemies prepared to use any trick to destroy Islam or prevent its spread.

<sup>58</sup> Crisis Group interview, Khalilrakhman Shamatov, Makhachkala, August 2012. "После спецоперации – Махачкала 19 мая 2012 Кировский ровд" ["After the special operation, Kirovsky district police station, Makhachkala, 19 May 2012"], [www.youtube.com/watch?v=HC8glb4-ViE](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HC8glb4-ViE) 19 May 2012. "В Дагестане разблокировали железную дорогу" ["The railway was unblocked in Dagestan"], Lenta.ru, 5 August 2012.

<sup>59</sup> The suicide bomber was an ethnic Russian, Aminat Kurbanova (born as Alla Saprikina), a former actress of the Russian Drama Theatre in Makhachkala whose former husbands were insurgents killed in special operations. Six bystanders were killed in the blast. A few days later, the Dagestani front of the insurgent battalion "Riyadus-Salikhin" took responsibility for the murder.



the funeral. When the moderate Salafi organisation condemned the killing and called for continuation of dialogue, insurgents threatened its leaders. The leader of the Caucasus Emirate (Imarat Kavkaz), Doku Umarov, made a video asserting that Sufis who do not cooperate with the authorities are “brothers in Islam” and invited them to join jihad. In response to the killing, Dagestan authorities ordered the creation of self-defence groups to work with law enforcement agencies in combating terrorism. Many believe the assassination aimed to make intra-confessional dialogue impossible and cause Dagestan to explode into conflict. The republic’s mufti has yet to make a statement on the dialogue, but the Spiritual Board’s press secretary published a passionate anti-Salafi article soon after the tragedy.<sup>60</sup>

## **E. CHECHNYA: IDEOLOGICAL COMBAT AND ERADICATION**

Unlike the spiritual leaders in Dagestan, Ingushetia, North Ossetia and Karachay-Cherkessia, who are seeking ways to somehow integrate moderate Islamists and overcome the sectarian schism, Chechnya’s leader, Ramzan Kadyrov, vigorously enforces Sufi Islam and demands that the official clergy enlighten “the visitors of the mosques about the pernicious influence of Wahhabism and extremism”. In return, they say, “the government headed by Ramzan Kadyrov offers colossal support to the representatives of clergy, and we should not only be grateful but pay back”; Sufi clergy prominently back the republic government, including during elections.<sup>61</sup> In contrast to the temperate statements of the Dagestan mufti, Kadyrov asked his clergy in spring 2012 to reinforce their efforts to protect society from “alien elements in Islam” and strengthen their fight against “Wahhabism”, whose supporters “killed devout Muslims, burnt Qurans, destroyed the property of

the people”.<sup>62</sup> Civil servants and religious leaders at various levels emphasise that protecting youth from “Wahhabism” is one of the major methods to combat terrorism and extremism in Chechnya. Dialogue with Salafis or their inclusion in the republic’s religious life is ruled out.

The foundations of this policy were laid by Ramzan’s father, former President Akhmad Kadyrov, who openly opposed the Salafis, condemned their beliefs and proclaimed them enemies of Islam.<sup>63</sup> The incumbent republican head has repeatedly and publicly ordered the elimination of Salafis:

Adherence to radical groups is visible not only from words. Clothes, manner of communication and behaviour should be taken into consideration. A person who puts the lives of Muslims in danger should be eliminated by any possible means.<sup>64</sup>

The Chechen leadership was behind a conflict that broke out among official North Caucasus clergy when, in April after a meeting of regional muftis, the republic’s Spiritual Board announced it was leaving the Coordination Committee of Muslims of the North Caucasus that Ramzan’s father had founded in 1998. The decision was taken by Mufti Sultan Mirzayev, who said the committee no longer “actively interact[s] with the state agencies in countering radicalisation of youth, extremism and Wahhabism” and did not sufficiently succeed in ideologically combating the insurgency.<sup>65</sup> The Chechens are said to be unhappy with the re-election as chair of Ismail Berdiyev, the mufti of Karachay-Cherkessia; the conflict is probably linked with Mirzayev’s and Kadyrov’s ambitions to lead on religious policy in the region.<sup>66</sup> At the same time, a mufti said, Mirzayev’s claims were reasonable, and the committee was

<sup>60</sup> Irina Gordienko, “Мирная проповедь и ее аудитория” [“Peace preaching and its audience”], *Novaya Gazeta*, 5 September 2012. “В Дагестане создадут отряды самообороны” [“Self-defence units created in Dagestan”], *Rossiyskaya gazeta*, 29 August 2012.

<sup>61</sup> “Рамзан Кадыров встретился с представителями духовенства” [“Ramzan Kadyrov met with representatives of the clergy”], The Spiritual Board of Muslims of the Chechen Republic, dumm.ru, 22 April 2012; “В селе Итум-Кали состоялась встреча представителей духовенства с жителями района” [“A meeting between representatives of the clergy and citizens of the region was held in the village of Itum-Kali”], *ibid* (statement by a regional *qadi*, an Islamic judge and official), 19 April 2012. “Кадий Веденского района встретился со старейшинами с. Ведено” [“The Qadi of Vedeno district met the elders of Vedeno”], *ibid*, 16 February 2012.

<sup>62</sup> “Чечня – Рамзан Кадыров против арабов и ваххабитов” [“Chechnya – Ramzan Kadyrov against Arabs and Wahhabis”] [www.youtube.com/watch?v=Kp3qR7VpIok](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Kp3qR7VpIok), 12 March 2012.

<sup>63</sup> “Депутат Государственный Думы РФ А. Делимханов: ‘Аллах ниспослал великую благодать на чеченскую землю’” [“MP of the State Duma A. Delimkhanov: ‘Allah sent down a great grace to the Chechen lands’”], Grozny inform, 15 May 2012.

<sup>64</sup> “Спецоперация под руководством Рамзана Кадырова” [“Special operation under the leadership of Ramzan Kadyrov”], [youtu.be/xxmlAEjxb4I](http://youtu.be/xxmlAEjxb4I).

<sup>65</sup> “Заявление муфтия ЧР Султана-Хаджи Мирзаева о выходе Чеченской Республики из состава Координационного центра мусульман Северного Кавказа” [“The statement of the Mufti of Chechnya Sultan Mirzayev about the withdrawal of the Chechen Republic from the Coordination Committee of Muslims of the North Caucasus”], Spiritual Board of Muslims of the Chechen Republic, dumm.ru, 14 April 2012; “Султан-Хаджи Мирзаев: мы готовы и впредь помогать коллегам” [“Sultan Mirzayev: We are ready and continue to help our colleagues”], *ibid*, 17 April 2012.

<sup>66</sup> Crisis Group interview, expert on Islam, Moscow, August 2012.



not working systematically.<sup>67</sup> The Kremlin understands the symbolic importance of the committee, and while it has supported Kadyrov's approach, it is not interested in having Chechens take it over entirely.<sup>68</sup>

A large international symposium of Islamic scholars, "Islamic doctrine against radicalism", in Moscow on 25-26 May, adopted a *fatwa* (judicial opinion) condemning radicalism and jihadism. Its final session, on 27 May in Grozny, Ramzan Kadyrov said in advance, should prove again that "the Islamic scholars of the whole Islamic world condemn the actions of Wahhabis ... the enemies of religion and the enemies of Muslims".<sup>69</sup>

### III. THE INSURGENCY

Salafism has been growing in the region since the mid-1990s, but it was only gradually that some followers became committed to violent jihad. The insurgency sees itself as a political and theological struggle, a fight for people's minds to delegitimise the government and eventually overthrow it by violent means.

#### A. THE CAUCASUS EMIRATE (IMARAT KAVKAZ)

The Caucasus Emirate (Imarat Kavkaz) was proclaimed in 2007, as the final step in transforming the Chechen separatist movement into a region-wide, radical Islamist-based project, part of the "global jihad". It unified disparate groups of insurgents under a command structure led by Doku Umarov, a Chechen field commander who has fought against Russia since 1995 and operates with the title of emir. Republican militant units and their sub-units (district and sector level) were retained but made subservient to a unified cause, leadership and tactics, while benefiting from some common funding and information sharing.<sup>70</sup> Umarov is said to appoint each *vilayat* (regional) leader, who swears loyalty to him. However, individual groups still operate independently on a day-to-day basis, not taking direct orders from Umarov for each operation, though large ones may be coordinated and responsibility claimed by the emirate.

The Emirate's leadership has managed to retain its unity, although it suffered a split (*fitna*) in 2010-2011, when four Chechen commanders declared they sought an independent, Islamic state of Chechnya, rather than a transnational body. This did not lessen the violence, however, and it is unclear if it had any lasting impact on relations between the Chechen *vilayat* and others, or on Umarov's legitimacy within the organisation. On 24 July 2011, after an emirate *shura* (council), several renegades reaffirmed loyalty to Umarov, and the *fitna* was considered over.<sup>71</sup> Imarat Kav-

<sup>67</sup> Crisis Group interview, August 2012.

<sup>68</sup> Before Berdiyev's re-election, Vyachelav Volodin, the head of Medvedev's presidential office, met with all the muftis. A few days earlier, Ilya Barinov, head of the department for interaction with religious organisations, visited Grozny, highly praised the Chechen authorities, criticised the committee and said the Chechen government's interaction with clergy was instructive for other regions of the federation. "Опыт работы чеченского муфтията будут внедрять в других регионах России" ["The experience of the Chechen mufti will be introduced in other regions of Russia"], Spiritual Board of Muslims of the Chechen Republic, dumm.ru, 11 April 2012.

<sup>69</sup> "Сотрудников правоохранительных органов, участвовавших в спецоперации в Урус-Мартане, представят к наградам" ["The police officers who took part in the special operation in Urus-Martana, will receive awards"], chechnya.gov.ru, 25 May 2012. The conference was reportedly organised by the Kuwait International Centre "Al-Wasatiyyah", which recently has been actively cooperating with the Russian authorities in promoting moderate Islam. On 4 November 2010, President Medvedev awarded its president, Kuwait's first deputy minister for Islamic issues, Adel al-Falyah, an Order of Friendship. Crisis Group interview, expert on Russia's counter-terrorism strategy, Moscow, May 2012. "Адель Фалых. Из Кувейта с любовью" ["Adel al-Falyah, From Kuwait with love"], www.ansar.ru, 4 May 2012.

<sup>70</sup> These include Vilayat Nokhchi-cho (operates in Chechnya); Vilayat Galgajche (Ingushetia and North Ossetia); Vilayat Dagestan; United Vilayat of Kabarda, Balkaria and Karachay (UVKBK); and Vilayat Nogay Steppe (Stavropol Krai).

<sup>71</sup> Aslanbek Vadalov, Hussein Gakayev, Tarkhan Gaziyeve and the foreign fighter Mukhannad were the four who split. On 2 August 2010, Doku Umarov apparently announced he was resigning as emir of the Caucasus Emirate and appointing Vadalov as his successor. Two days later, he said the video had been fabricated. "Some Chechen commanders reaffirm loyalty to Umarov", RFE/RL, 26 July 2011.

kaz is recognised as a terrorist organisation by Russia, the UN and the U.S., among others.<sup>72</sup>

## B. LEADERSHIP AND RECRUITMENT

How many insurgents operate within the emirate is unclear. Aleksandr Khloponin, the presidential envoy for the North Caucasus, estimated 1,000 in late 2011. At about the same time, the head of Kabardino-Balkaria's Investigative Committee, General Ustov, said there were 874 fighters and active supporters in his republic alone. In March 2010, the interior ministry's troop commander, General Nikolai Rogozhkin, said there were up to 500 militants in the region, a figure similar to the one he had cited two years earlier. In 2009, Ramzan Kadyrov said only a few dozen were left in Chechnya. More recently, Dagestani law enforcement has claimed 150 insurgents in that republic and many more active supporters.<sup>73</sup>

But all these estimates seem low in view of the number of militants declared killed or detained. Rogozhkin has said, for example, about 300 militants were killed and 500 detained in 2010. The National Anti-terrorist Committee (NAC) reported 375 were killed and 779 detained that year. The FSB (intelligence) chief, Aleksandr Bortnikov, said that in 2011 48 militants and 297 other "active members of bandit groups" were killed and 660 detained. The inte-

rior ministry (MVD) reported almost 200 insurgents killed and 235 injured for the first six months of 2012.<sup>74</sup>

Government counter-terrorist operations over the past two years have killed many leaders. There seems, however, no lack of replacements, though ever younger and more radical ones.<sup>75</sup> Few now have experience or sense of unity from the Chechen wars or personal link to Umarov. Recruitment is aided by an extensive information network. "Kavkaz Centre", which was created in 1999 in Grozny and carries relevant news, was ruled "extremist" by a Moscow court in 2011 and ordered to close, but now operates from a server in Sweden.<sup>76</sup> Each *vilayat* has its own website. Some material is downloaded to mobile phones or on to USB sticks to distribute to those who cannot access the internet sites. Recruiters work actively with youth in and around mosques, on university campuses, in gyms and at the workplace.

Said Buryatsky (Aleksandr Tikhomirov, a Russian/Buryat who converted to Islam), dead since 2010, continues to have a major effect on recruitment via recorded lectures popular with young people. "Buryatsky's target was an audience yet untapped by the Chechen rebels' media: the young, well-educated urban youth in the Muslim areas of the former Soviet Union". He had theological erudition, frequently quoted the Quran in Arabic and cited religious and historical sources, but spoke in a simple, emotional, credible way engaging to his audience.<sup>77</sup> The mother of an insurgent commented: "Even I, an old educated woman, was impressed with what he said. It is hard to resist his propaganda". A mufti said he needed hours to convince young Muslims Buryatsky's approach was wrong after

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<sup>72</sup> An 8 February decision of the Supreme Court of the Russian Federation recognised it as a terrorist organisation and prohibited its activities on Russian territory on the grounds that its members plan and perpetrate terrorist acts with the intention of violating the territorial integrity of the Russian Federation and fomenting ethnic and religious conflict. On 29 July 2011, a UN Security Council committee listed it as associated with al-Qaeda, [www.un.org/sc/committees/1267/NSQE13111E.shtml](http://www.un.org/sc/committees/1267/NSQE13111E.shtml). The U.S. Department of State in May 2011 described it a specially designated terrorist group under Executive Order 13224.

<sup>73</sup> "Хлопонин признал, что число участников подполья не меняется много лет: на Кавказе тысяча боевиков" ["Khloponin acknowledged that the number of militants has not changed in many years: There are about 1,000 militants in the Caucasus"], *Gazeta.ru*, 30 September 2011. The Ustov estimate is in "Какое может быть на нас давление? Мы сами можем давление оказывать!" ["How can there be pressure on us? We are able to exert pressure!"], *Gazeta Yuga* (online), 24 November 2011. "МВД РФ: на Северном Кавказе действуют около 500 боевиков" ["The Russian interior ministry: Around 500 militants are operating in the North Caucasus"], *Caucasian Knot*, 26 May 2010. "Николай Рогожкин: на Северном Кавказе осталось до 500 боевиков" ["Nicolai Rogozhkin: up to 500 militants remain in the North Caucasus"], *ibid*, 26 March 2008. "Quarterly bulletin on the North Caucasus conflict, cited estimates", *Memorial*, April 2011.

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<sup>74</sup> Rogozhkin's figures are in "МВД: Доку Умаров находится в России" ["MIA: Doku Umarov is in Russia"], *mir24.tv*, 16 February 2011. "Олимпийское спокойствие" ["Olympian calm"], *Rossiyskaya Gazeta* (online), 9 March 2011, for the NAC figures; "Бортников: ФСБ уничтожила 50 главарей террористов в 2011 году" ["Bortnikov: FSB has eliminated 50 terrorist leaders in 2011"], *Rosbalt*, *rosbalt.ru*, 15 February 2012. "На каждого погибшего силовика на Кавказе приходится два убитых боевика" ["For every killed security serviceman in the Caucasus there are two killed insurgents"], *RIA Novosti*, 5 July 2012.

<sup>75</sup> Khloponin said that the average age of militants is eighteen. "Khloponin acknowledged", *Gazeta.ru*, *op. cit*.

<sup>76</sup> It is blocked in the North Caucasus and on some internet providers elsewhere in Russia but accessible by proxy servers. "Кавказ-центр' под запретом, но не закрыт" ["Kavkaz-Centre banned, but not closed"], *Radio Liberty*, 15 September 2011.

<sup>77</sup> Paul Quinn-Judge, "Russia's Terror Goes Viral", *Foreign Policy* (online), 29 March 2010. Buryatsky's popularity has spread to Central Asia; he is frequently cited by purported jihadi fighters, particularly in Kazakhstan, as their inspiration. *Crisis Group Asia Report N°205, Tajikistan: The Changing Insurgent Threats*, 24 May 2011, p. 10.

they watched one of his video appeals. Buryatsky was also one who started to persuade women to take part in jihad.<sup>78</sup>

The role of foreign fighters or influences is often emphasised; in the mid-1990s a Saudi jihadi, Ibn al-Khattab, brought significant financial resources and support to Chechnya. Several foreigners have been killed in the past few years, but as the global jihad's focus has turned to other parts of the world, the North Caucasus insurgency has not attracted many new outsiders.<sup>79</sup>

### C. TACTICS AND OPERATIONS

The insurgency has been forced to change tactics over the past few years, apparently due to reduced capacities and a realisation that some of its more violent methods are counter-productive. It now mainly uses assassinations, improvised explosive devices (IEDs), bombing of infrastructure and mass transportation. Security services and local officials are the main targets. Most recently on 19 August 2012 in Ingushetia's Malgobek district, a suicide bomber killed seven police officers and wounded eleven other police and four civilians at the funeral of a police officer who had been killed the previous day.<sup>80</sup> Six policemen were killed and one was wounded when a convoy was shelled in Sunzha district on 5 September 2012.<sup>81</sup>

Individuals involved in semi-official religious structures and the judiciary are also often attacked. On 28 June, the imam of a central Dagestani village (Karamakhi, Bynaksk district) was shot dead along with a parishioner, and the mosque was burned to the ground. When Sheikh Said Afandi was killed on 28 August, he was the 36th clerical fatality in Dagestan since 1998.<sup>82</sup> Not only are Sufis and official clergy targeted, but on 18 August a Shia mosque mainly attended by a small Azerbaijani community in Khasavyurt was attacked, killing one and injuring seven.<sup>83</sup>

The most deadly and psychologically troubling method remains suicide bombs, with three significant attacks on Moscow in 2010-2011. An Ingush man detonated the device that killed 36 and injured 191 at Domodedovo airport in 2011, the 26th terrorist act in Moscow since 1996. A year earlier, two Dagestani women blew themselves up in the "Lubyanka" and "Park Kultury" metro stations, killing 40 and injuring 88.<sup>84</sup> The resumption of suicide attacks created palpable fear throughout Russia, especially in Moscow, and increased racial profiling of potential terrorists.

Insurgents have also been targeting trains, notably on 27 November 2009, when the high-speed Nevsky Express (Moscow-Saint Petersburg) was derailed by an explosion, killing 28, including several senior Russian officials, the head of Rosrezerv (the federal reserve) and two from the Russian Central Bank.<sup>85</sup> In February 2011, after two of the

<sup>78</sup> Crisis Group analyst interviews in previous capacity, North Caucasus, March 2011. The leaders of the Dagestan Vilayat, Vagabov and Daudov, sent their wives on suicide bombings and encouraged women to aid the insurgency. Mariam Sharipova who blew herself up on the Moscow subway on 29 April 2011 was Vagabov's wife. Women in the North Caucasus increasingly join the insurgency and seek to die "in jihad". Anna Nemtsova, "Russia's female menaces", *The Daily Beast* (online), 6 September 2012.

<sup>79</sup> See fn. 55 of Crisis Group Report, *The North Caucasus: The Challenges of Integration (I)*, op. cit. Those recently killed include Algerian-born "Dr Mohammed", August 2009 in Dagestan; Kazakh citizen Sabitbi Amanov, in Dagestan, April 2011; and Khaled Yusuf Muhammad el-Emirate, better known as Mukhannad, and usually described as commander of Arab volunteers in Chechnya, April 2011. Mukhannad recruited Buryatsky to the armed struggle. In May 2011, a Kurdish field commander carrying a Turkish passport, Abdulla Kurd, was killed in Chechnya. In July 2012, William Plotnikov, a Russian-born Canadian national and convert, was killed in Dagestan. Stewart Bell, "The Canadian who converted to Jihad: Boxer turned militant killed in Dagestan", *The National Post*, 20 August 2012.

<sup>80</sup> "В результате взрыва в Ингушетии погибло восемь человек" ["Eight people killed as result of explosion in Ingushetia"], *Caucasian Knot*, 19 August 2012.

<sup>81</sup> "МВД Ингушетии: при обстреле колонны погибли шесть полицейских" ["MVD of Ingushetia: six policemen killed in shelling convoy"], *Caucasian Knot*, 5 September 2012.

<sup>82</sup> "Докку Умаров приказал не взрывать гражданское население" ["Doku Umarov orders not to bomb the civilian population"], *Kavkaz Online*, 3 February 2012. "Глава Дагестана: 'Экстремисты превращают ислам в глазах всего мира в идеологию агрессии и нетерпимости'" [The Head of Dagestan: In front of the eyes of the world, the extremists are turning Islam into an ideology of aggression and intolerance], *RIA Dagestan*, 23 March 2012. "НАК: Имама Карамакхи убили за осуждение экстремизма" ["NAC: The Imam of Karamakhi was killed for his denunciation of extremism"], *ibid*, 29 June 2012.

<sup>83</sup> An IED of about 40 kg of TNT was found and defused in the mosque after the attack. "Заявление общины шиитов Хасавюрта по поводу вооруженного нападения на прихожан в мечети" ["Shia community of Khasavyurt statement about an armed attack on worshipers in a mosque"], *RIA Dagestan*, 21 August 2012. Dagestani insurgents posted a video appeal critical of Shias; a Facebook group, "Shame to Shia beliefs", was founded by radical Dagestani Salafis.

<sup>84</sup> "In the past fifteen years, 1,561 people have been killed and injured", *Caucasian Knot*, op. cit. In February 2010, Umarov announced that the war would "come back home" to Russians; it would not "just be on TV, somewhere far away in the Caucasus". "Умаров пообещал 'год крови и слез'" ["Umarov promised 'the year of blood and tears'"], *Gazeta.ru*, 7 February 2011.

<sup>85</sup> "Крушение поезда 'Невский экспресс' (2009)" ["The 'Nevsky express' train wreck (2009)"], *Lenta.ru*, 22 May 2012. The same train was attacked in 2007.

year's six attacks, the railroad service declared passenger trains may no longer travel in Dagestan between 6pm and 6am.<sup>86</sup> Two months later five IEDs were found on tracks connecting Dagestan towns and were defused. In July 2011, the FSB reportedly broke up an alleged plot to bomb the "Sapsan" high-speed train on the Moscow-Saint Petersburg route. That month the transport ministry allocated 300 million roubles (\$10 million) to ensure the safety of railways in the North Caucasus.<sup>87</sup>

The sabotage of transport, power and communications infrastructure appears to be aimed primarily at disrupting economic activity and tourism. Doku Umarov announced in 2009 that the insurgency was launching a sabotage campaign against "infrastructure in the depths of Russia". On 21 July 2010, it attacked the Baksan Hydroelectric Dam in Kabardino-Balkaria. Two months later a bomb was planted at the Irganay hydroelectric station, and in January 2011, a transmitter station and power transformer in Dagestan (Levashinsky region) were bombed.<sup>88</sup>

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<sup>86</sup> The North Caucasus experienced nineteen railroad bombings in 2010. The most recent Dagestan bombings were on 24 and 31 May 2012; sappers defused a bomb near the railway in the Babayurt district on 6 September. "В Дагестане обезврежена бомба мощностью около 10 кг тротила" ["The bomb of about 10 kg of TNT refused in Dagestan"], Caucasian Knot, 6 September 2012; "В Дагестане под товарным поездом сработало взрывное устройство" ["Freight train blown up in Dagestan"], *ibid*, 31 May 2012. On 31 January 2011, a bomb exploded on the Timergo-Shamkhal line but caused no injuries. "В Дагестане подорван железнодорожный состав" ["The train was derailed in Dagestan"], NEWSru.com, 31 January 2011. On 4 February 2011, a bomb exploded under an Astrakhan-Makhachkala passenger train. "В Дагестане взрывное устройство сработало под локомотивом грузового состава" ["A device exploded under the locomotive of a train in Dagestan"], *ibid*, 4 February 2011. "Пассажирские поезда больше не будут проходить Дагестан и Чечню по ночам – слишком опасно" ["Passenger trains won't be crossing Dagestan and Chechnya at night, it's too dangerous"], *ibid*, 10 February 2011.

<sup>87</sup> "Удар в силовой блок" ["A blow to the power block"], Gazeta.ru, 21 July 2010. "Минтранс: на обеспечение безопасности железных дорог СКФО будет направлено 300 млн рублей" ["Ministry of Transportation: 300 million rubles will be allocated for railway safety"], Caucasian Knot, 13 July 2011.

<sup>88</sup> Approximately four insurgents attacked the Baksan station, killing two police guards with automatic rifle fire and grenades. They placed IEDs on the three hydroelectric generators. Two were nearly completely destroyed, but the third charge failed to detonate. Investigators said the Baksan *jamaat* was responsible. Two suspects in the attack were killed a week later. "Удар в силовой блок" ["A blow to the power block"], Gazeta.ru, 21 July 2010. "Террористы пытали энергетиков" ["Terrorists tortured the electrical engineers"], Gazeta.ru, 21 July 2010. "Террорист районного значения" [Terrorists of regional importance], *ibid*, 22 July 2010. "В Дагестане взорваны станция мобильной связи и трансформаторная станция" ["A GSM

Mass hostage operations at one time were the insurgency's signature, giving it a sense it was making political gains. The 1995 Budyonnovsk crisis, in which Shamil Basayev held 1,200-1,800 hostages in a hospital in Stavropol Krai, led Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin to agree to stop military actions in Chechnya. Chernomyrdin reportedly claimed it was "the first time in Russian history when saving lives has been placed above the interests of the state".<sup>89</sup> The January 1996 crisis, when terrorists held at least 2,000 civilians in a Kizlyar hospital, ended much more violently. The authorities agreed to safe passage for the terrorists back to Chechnya, together with volunteer hostages, but attacked them after they crossed the administrative border with Chechnya. The terrorists and their hostages hid in Pervomajskaya village, where they were besieged and assaulted by helicopters, rocket-launchers, APCs and tanks, but many escaped. Since then the authorities have been reluctant to engage in negotiations.<sup>90</sup>

In 2002, Basayev created his notorious battalion of *shahids* [martyrs], the "Riyadus-Salikhin" (Arabic: "Gardens of the pious").<sup>91</sup> Demanding withdrawal from Chechnya, it took 916 hostages in the Moscow Dubrovka Theatre. Ultimately, 130 hostages died, most when security forces used gas against the terrorists. The following year the battalion carried out further terrorism in Stavropol Krai, Moscow and on a rural train (Kislovodsk-Mineralnye Vody), killing 51. It also blew up the main Grozny government building, killing 71 and wounding 640.<sup>92</sup>

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tower and an electrical substation blown up in Dagestan"], Caucasian Knot, 30 January 2011.

<sup>89</sup> After an unsuccessful storming by special task forces, Chernomyrdin invited State Duma member Sergey Kovalev and his group to enter negotiations. They quickly reached an agreement with the terrorists that civilian hostages would be replaced by 150 volunteers, who would be used as human shields for their retreat. It was also agreed that military actions in Chechnya would be suspended and negotiations started under Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) auspices. "Россия-Чечня: цепь ошибок и преступлений, 1994-1996". ["Russia-Chechnya: a chain of errors and crimes, 1994-1996"], Memorial, 2010.

<sup>90</sup> Robert W. Schaefer, *The Insurgency in Chechnya and the North Caucasus: From Gazavat to Jihad* (Santa Barbara, 2011), pp. 133, 137.

<sup>91</sup> "Shahid" (martyr), is used for Muslims who have given their life fulfilling a religious commandment or have died fighting to defend their country or Islam or to protect their family.

<sup>92</sup> "Норд-Ост: погибло не 129, а 174 человека?" ["Nord-Ost: 174, not 129 people killed?"], Regnum, 24 October 2005. According to the NGO "Victims of Nord-Ost", 174 were killed, five before gas was used. "Погибших заложников все больше" ["The number of dead hostages increases"], Gazeta.ru, 9 November 2002. "Трое обвиняемых в совершении взрыва дома правительства Чечни приговорены к пожизненному заключению" ["Three defendants, charged with the bombing

The battalion's most horrendous act was at the Beslan (North Ossetia) middle school in September 2004. Over 1,100 hostages were seized during a beginning-of-school-year celebration and held for three days without food and water, while demands were made for withdrawal of troops from Chechnya and independence. On the third day, the authorities stormed the school with heavy weapons, rescuing most, but 331 died, mainly children. One terrorist survived and received a life sentence. Such operations have now stopped, probably largely due to Basayev's death in 2006, but also because Beslan ended in such tragedy, with no evident insurgent gain and tremendous criticism even among North Caucasus radicals, that the leadership probably deems the tactic counterproductive.<sup>93</sup>

Nevertheless, in general, the shift of the insurgency's epicentre from rural to urban areas has made attacks (particularly terrorist bombs) against soft civilian targets easier and more cost-effective. Terrorism against civilians attracts media attention more than strikes against the military, suggesting the government cannot protect the people, thus decreasing its legitimacy, a major insurgency goal. But in February 2012, after mass protests against Russian parliamentary election violations, Umarov declared it would no longer target civilians, as they also protest against the government. Many of today's civilian victims in the North Caucasus are bystanders in attacks against officials and security services. Thirteen civilians were killed and over 100 injured in a double suicide attack at a police checkpoint in Makhachkala on 3 May 2012. Often a second, larger bomb is detonated to cause maximum casualties among first responders.<sup>94</sup>

## **D. EFFECTS ON LOCAL COMMUNITIES**

### **1. Extortion for fundraising**

In recent years, insurgency financing has become more difficult; access to foreign money essentially dried up after 2002, with the death of al-Khattab and the Afghan war becoming global jihad's main focus. Russian officials now generally recognise most funds are obtained locally, including Khloponin, the special envoy, who says no more than 10 per cent is from foreign sources. The government calculates that in Dagestan alone in 2010 businessmen and bureaucrats gave 100 million roubles (\$3.5 million). In some cases, this reportedly includes payment to insurgents to murder or harass rivals of businessmen.<sup>95</sup> Extortion is often used. In Dagestan, businessmen and politicians say they receive by mail, in their cars or at home memory sticks with video demands for a certain sum by a certain date. Assassinations of those who refuse to pay "jihad money" are becoming more frequent.<sup>96</sup>

### **2. Enforcing Islamist lifestyle**

Insurgents try to forcefully impose an Islamist lifestyle. Radicals have targeted shops and cafes that sell alcohol or provide other "forbidden" goods or services. Many have been burned in Ingushetia, Kabardino-Balkaria and Dagestan in recent years, usually after owners have received written "warnings". In Dagestan, insurgents also hit civilians who happened to be at the sites. They have also attacked community leaders who prohibit the Islamic headscarf in schools or local administration. The director of a

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of the Government house in Chechnya receive life sentences"], NEWSru.com, 3 June 2004.

<sup>93</sup> "Вечная память" ["In eternal memory"], Golos Beslana ["The Voice of Beslan"], www.golosbeslana.ru. "69 заседание Верховного суда Северной Осетии по делу Кулаева 26 мая 2006 г" ["The 69th North Ossetia Supreme Court hearing on the case of Kulaev, 26 May 2006"], *Pravda Beslana*, 26 May 2006. The prosecutor general and several commissions and independent journalists have investigated. After national remedies were exhausted, the Voice of Beslan submitted applications from almost 500 victims in April 2011 to the European Court for Human Rights, asserting violation of the right to life and lack of judicial protection and fair investigation. The court is to begin its consideration in October 2012. Crisis Group interview, Ella Kesayeva, Golos Beslana chair. Moscow, September 2012. Elena Milashina, "Огнемёт признать героем" ["Heroise a flamethrower"], *Novaya gazeta*, 12 September 2012. The Chechen separatist leader Aslan Maskhadov called the attack inexcusable "blasphemy". "Аслан Масхадов высказался по поводу событий в Беслане" ["Aslan Maskhadov spoke on the events in Beslan"], *Caucasian Knot*, 17 September 2004.

<sup>94</sup> "Doku Umarov orders not to bomb the civilian population", op. cit. "Двойной теракт в Махачкале совершили брат и сестра Алиевы" ["The double terrorist attack in Makhachkala

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was committed by brother and sister Aliyev"], RIA Novosti, 30 May 2012. A double bombing happened, for example, on the evening of 22 August 2011, when a supermarket explosion injured several people in Makhachkala. Half an hour later, a much larger device was detonated by mobile phone, timed to strike the largest number of police and spectators at the scene of the initial explosion. Six police and fourteen civilians were injured. On 21 September 2011, a small car bomb injured no one. Fifteen minutes later, after police and firefighters had gathered, a second bomb wounded 60, including 32 members of the security forces. "Последствия теракта в Махачкале" ["The aftermath of terrorist attack in Makhachkala"], RIA Novosti, 22 September 2011.

<sup>95</sup> "Хлопонин: На Северном Кавказе осталась тысяча террористов" ["Khloponin: About a thousand terrorists remain in the North Caucasus"], *Kommersant* (online), 30 November 2011. "Зарубежные спонсоры лишили финансирования боевиков на Северном Кавказе" ["Foreign sponsors deprived of financing militants in the North Caucasus"], *RBC Daily*, 15 April 2011.

<sup>96</sup> "Налог на джихад" ["Jihad tax"], *Novaya gazeta* (online), 24 February 2011. On 7 March 2012, medical school director Magomedrasul Gugurchunov was killed in Izerbash. Militants had threatened to kill him if he did not pay. Crisis Group interview, extortion victim, Makhachkala, March 2012.

rural middle school (Patimat Magomedova) was murdered after she attempted to ban the wearing of the hijab by older female students in September 2010. A male principal was similarly killed in July 2011 in another village. Fortune-tellers and traditional healers are likewise systematically targeted in Dagestan for activities “banned in the Quran”, with five killed in 2010-2011. Explosives were planted in summer 2010 to prevent use of gender-neutral beaches, and a teacher was seriously injured.<sup>97</sup> Insurgents have also killed hunters to keep them from their forest bases.

The insurgents attack ideological opponents and competitors. In May 2011 in North Ossetia, a famous poet (Shamil Dzhighkayev) was kidnapped from his house and his nearly beheaded body found outside Vladikavkaz. He had been receiving death threats since 2008 for “anti-Islamic” poetry associated with a Chechen-Ossetian dispute near Beslan. A prominent Kabardino-Balkaria scholar, Professor Aslan Tsipinov, was killed in December 2010. His work on Adyghe national culture was seen by insurgents as popularising paganism. A senior scholar from Nalchik said she stopped writing articles on Islam, because “now it’s dangerous”. A government official, Garun Kurbanov, was shot in Makhachkala, most experts agree, because he was an outspoken atheist and supporter of the secular state.<sup>98</sup> Those who promote secularism feel insecure and indignant that the government does not do more to protect them and promote the values of Russian law.

The motivation for young men to go “into the forest”, the euphemism for joining the insurgency, are multiple. To succeed, an insurgency should appeal to a vulnerable, dissatisfied population. The root causes for the North Caucasus insurgencies are linked with the challenges of integrating the region with the rest of Russia and include police brutality, corrupt and ineffective institutions and unresolved ethnic and sectarian conflicts. An MVD colonel from Dagestan told Crisis Group that youth join due to corruption and hatred of local authorities: “Here people have an especially strong sense of justice. Kids get frustrated, start aiding insurgents and soon find themselves in the hills”. The chair of the Ingushetia Security Council claimed that

many of the republic’s insurgents come from a well-off social environment and have higher education and parents who are teachers or doctors. At the same time, it is virtually impossible to draw a social portrait of the very heterogeneous insurgency. Human rights experts emphasise lack of the rule of law as the key factor that drives young people into the forest.<sup>99</sup>

Detailed analysis and description of the life trajectories and reasoning of people in the region who join jihad will be part of subsequent Crisis Group reports. In a nutshell, however, most who do so consider the current system illegitimate, inefficient, unfair and unreformable and that a state built on Islamic principles would be more just.

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<sup>97</sup> “В Ингушетии взорван магазин, торгующий алкоголем” [“A shop selling alcohol was blown up in Ingushetia”], *Caucasian Knot*, 11 October 2008. Oleg Orlov and Ekaterina Sokirianskaia, *op. cit.*, p. 21. “На пляже Махачкалы в результате взрыва пострадала учительница” [“Teacher injured after explosion on beach in Makhachkala”], *RIA Dagestan*, 30 July 2010.

<sup>98</sup> “Поэту не простили стих” [“The poet not forgiven for his poem”], *Radio Liberty*, 27 May 2011. “В Кабардино-Балкарии убит этнограф Аслан Ципинов” [“The ethnographer Aslan Tsipinov was murdered in Kabardino-Balkaria”], *Caucasian Knot*, 29 December 2010. Crisis Group interview, senior researcher, Nalchik, December 2011. “За что убили Гаруна Курбанова?” [“Why was Garun Kurbanov killed?”], *Voice of America*, 28 July 2011.

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<sup>99</sup> Crisis Group interviews, MVD colonel, Makhachkala, Dagestan; Akhmet Kotiev, Security Council chair, Ingushetia, July 2012; also analyst interviews in previous capacity, North Caucasus human rights activists, Dagestan, Chechnya, Ingushetia, Kabardino-Balkaria, 2006-2011. In the Malgobek insurgent group, for example, only three out of at least twelve members lack higher education.

#### **IV. COUNTER-INSURGENCY: LAW ENFORCEMENT**

The Russian government's counter-insurgency effort, first developed to respond to the Chechen revolt, now covers the entire North Caucasus. Anti-terrorist legislation that gives local commanders significant powers to limit constitutional rights and freedoms in counter-terrorist operation (CTO) zones has been extended since 2006. Killings, disappearances and torture to extract confessions are still too common. The heavy-handed, enemy-centric approach prevents some terrorist attacks, but the concomitant human rights abuses undermine the authorities' perceived legitimacy, reduce communities' willingness to cooperate and contribute to the spillover of the conflict from Chechnya to other republics. The security services still lose some 200 members yearly, and their personnel do not receive adequate governmental support to deal with injuries and trauma.<sup>100</sup>

But the security services in the region have also scored successes in reducing the insurgency's intensity. FSB chief Aleksandr Bortnikov announced 365 terrorist acts were committed in 2011, down from 779 in 2010. The MVD said there were 622 terrorism-related crimes, but strictly terrorist acts dropped by 6.5 per cent. According to former President Medvedev, 94 "terrorist crimes" were prevented in 2011. The FSB claims 49 fighters were persuaded to lay down their weapons after negotiations; the NAC says that another 90 are engaged in a similar process.<sup>101</sup>

##### **A. THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK**

The 6 March 2006 Law on Countering Terrorism (no. 35-F3) is the central act. It defines the main principles and the legal and organisational basis, including for using armed force. The state policy's principles, aims, methods, tasks and coordination mechanism are outlined in the "Concept of Countering Terrorism in the Russian Federation" adopted by then-President Medvedev on 5 October 2009. Article 205 of the Criminal Code defines a terrorist act as "committing explosion, arson or other actions intimidating the population and creating the danger of death of a person,

inflicting significant damage of property or other heavy consequences, aimed at influencing decision-making by authorities or international organisations as well as threats to carry out such acts". Terrorism is punishable by eight to fifteen years in prison and is usually combined with other crimes (eg, hostage taking, murder) to give much longer sentences.

Facing a mounting terrorist threat, especially after 2004-2005, the 2006 law broadened definitions.<sup>102</sup> At the same time, Russia ratified and amended laws to comply with the Council of Europe Convention on the Prevention of Terrorism.<sup>103</sup> Terrorism includes not only the "practice of influencing decision making ... by threatening civilians and or by other unlawful violent methods", but also the "ideology of violence". It includes advocating the idea, calling for terrorist action or justifying or defending such actions, as well as "any kind of other complicity in preparing and realisation of a criminal act". "Public calls to terrorist activity or public justification of terrorism" are punishable by up to five years in prison.<sup>104</sup> Media law amendments make "dissemination of materials which contain public calls to terrorist activity or publicly justify terrorism and other extremist materials" illegal. The law also bans "dissemination of media information about the specific tools, techniques and tactics of this [CTO]". The broad definition encourages arbitrary restrictions on freedom of expression and editorial self-censorship.<sup>105</sup>

Civil liberties can be significantly restricted where CTOs are conducted; counter-terrorism agencies have broad authority, and lines of responsibility and accountability are blurred for CTOs. There is little or no civilian or judicial oversight, as commanders can establish a CTO without requesting authorisation from any civilian or legal authority. The law does not clearly specify the conditions for a CTO, simply that it is "conducted to suppress a terrorist attack if there are no other means available", which can be in a heavily-populated area. No timeframe is specified. In recent years CTOs have been conducted over large

<sup>100</sup> Among them around 50 federal forces servicemen. Crisis Group interview, Alexander Raskin, journalist and North Caucasus expert, Moscow, October 2012.

<sup>101</sup> "НАК: число преступлений террористической направленности в России сократилось вдвое" ["NAC: the number of terrorist crimes in Russia cut in half"], *Vesti.ru*, 15 February 2012. The MVD said there were 29 terrorist acts in 2011. The differences illustrate the lack of coordinated analysis between the security agencies. "ФСБ и МВД по-разному отчитались о терроризме в России" ["MIA and FSB gave different accounts of terrorism in Russia"], *Caucasian Knot*, 16 February 2012.

<sup>102</sup> The Criminal Code, Article 205 (Terrorism); Federal Law no. 130-F3, "On Combating Terrorism", 25 July 1998.

<sup>103</sup> CETS no. 196, "Notification of the Ratification of the Council of Europe Convention on the Prevention of Terrorism by the Russian Federation", 26 May 2006; Federal Law no. 153-F3, "On Amendments to the individual legislative acts of the Russian Federation in connection with the adoption of the Federal Law 'On the ratification of the Council of Europe Convention on the prevention of terrorism'", 27 July 2006; and the Federal Law "On Combating Terrorism".

<sup>104</sup> Federal Law "On Combating Terrorism" of 6 March 2006, Article 3 (1); amendment of the Criminal Code, Article 205.2.

<sup>105</sup> Journalists and human rights activists were detained during a CTO in the village of Gimry, Dagestan. Crisis Group interviews, Moscow, September 2012. The Law "On Mass Media", Article 12.

areas, virtually sealed off from the outside world for protracted periods.<sup>106</sup>

No additional court decisions are required during CTOs to carry out arrests.<sup>107</sup> Article 22 of the 2006 law authorises lethal force during CTOs but gives little detail on when this is justified, increasing the likelihood of arbitrariness. Security services may but are not obligated to resettle persons from CTO areas. Civilians – especially family members – have been caught in the crossfire, especially in residential flats and private homes.<sup>108</sup> Restrictions on rights and liberties during CTOs are similar to those imposed under a state of emergency. However, a state of emergency, unlike a CTO, is subject to numerous parliamentary and international restraints and controls.<sup>109</sup>

Amendments to the media law limit journalists' ability to work in CTO areas, as commanding officers may set procedures for gathering information or close the region to observers. Publicising terrorists' demands or releasing information on hostage numbers can also be classified as terrorism. Changes to the communications law give security services the right to control means of communication, including obliging cooperation of mobile telecommunications officers. The FSB has the right to use force against

terrorists abroad.<sup>110</sup> Amendments to the Criminal Procedural Code in 2008 banned jury trials for accused terrorists and established three-judge teams to hear cases. Human rights experts say that given the judiciary's lack of independence and falsifications in terrorism-related cases, this denies the accused their best hope for a fair trial. Terrorist suspects can be held for 30 days without formal charges. Giving families the remains of terrorists has been banned since 2002, as well as provision of information on secret burial places.<sup>111</sup>

On 16 June 2012, President Putin signed a decree regulating the procedure for establishing levels of terrorist threat: increased (blue), high (yellow) and critical (red). The level must be immediately published in the media and is to be revoked only after the terrorist threat has been removed, but so far the decree is not being widely implemented in the North Caucasus.<sup>112</sup>

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<sup>106</sup> Federal Law "On Combating Terrorism", 6 March 2006, Article 12. The 1998 Law on "Combating Terrorism", *op. cit.*, implied substantial restrictions of civil liberties but more narrowly defined anti-terrorist operation scope as "particular areas of land or water, vehicle, building, structure, installation, or premises and the adjoining territory or waters within which the aforementioned operation is carried out". The CTO in the Dagestan village Gymry lasted almost eight months, 15 December 2007–31 July 2008. Journalists trying to enter were deported.

<sup>107</sup> They may, among other things, check documents, determine identities, restrict vehicle and pedestrian movement, gain unhindered access to private homes and land, restrict or ban the sale of certain goods, access telephone conversations, letters and other means of communication and cut off communications of individuals or entities (Article 11 of the Law "On Combating Terrorism").

<sup>108</sup> "Дагестан: в Махачкале силовики убили адвоката и его родственника" ["Dagestan: Law enforcement officers killed lawyer and his relative in Makhachkala"], Memorial, 23 January 2012. "Дагестан: Адресные проверки в Избербаше закончились взрывами домов" ["Dagestan: Targeted checking ended with houses blast"], *ibid.*, 2 February 2011. "Спецоперация в Экажево 2-3 марта. Детали, свидетельства, фото" ["Special operation in Ekazhevo on 2-3 March. Details, evidences, photos"], *ibid.*, 18 March 2010. Federal Law "On Combating Terrorism" of 6 March 2006, Articles 11, 22.

<sup>109</sup> The federal constitution allows certain restrictions on rights and liberties in a state of emergency, but a presidential decree of a state of emergency must be followed by notification of the Duma and the Federation Council, and there is a presumption of notification to the UN and the Council of Europe within three days.

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<sup>110</sup> The media law amendments were passed after Russia ratified the Council of Europe Convention on the Prevention of Terrorism. Federal Law, 27 July 2006, *op. cit.* On restrictions to publication of hostage numbers, see "Report on Russian media coverage of the Beslan tragedy: Access to information and journalists' working Conditions", OSCE, 16 September 2004. The communications law is Federal Law no. 126-F3, 7 July 2003, Article 64 (1). On FSB powers, see amendments to the April 1995 law, no. 40-F3, "On the federal security services".

<sup>111</sup> Criminal Procedural Code, Article 30, "Composition of the Court"; Article 325, "Elements of the preliminary hearing". Crisis Group interview, Tanya Lokshina, deputy head, Russia office, Human Rights Watch, Moscow, May 2012. Criminal Procedure Code, 2004 amendment. All other suspects must be charged within ten days. Article 100 Criminal Procedural Code. The 2002 amendments to the federal law "On burial and burial activity" provoked controversy, especially after the attack on Nalchik in 2005 and the killing of the Chechen separatist leader Aslan Maskhadov, whose body was not returned to his family. Some relatives of people killed as alleged insurgents in Dagestan reported that they could only get the bodies by paying bribes and providing written statements that they had no claims against the authorities. The practice of trading corpses was allegedly extensively used by security officials during the Chechen wars. "Тела убитых в спецоперации в Дагестане выдали родным после расписки об отсутствии претензий к силовикам" ["The bodies of those killed in special operation in Dagestan given to relatives after no-claims receipts given to law enforcement"], Caucasian Knot, 16 June 2012 Crisis Group interviews, August, October 2012, Makhachkala, Moscow.

<sup>112</sup> "Blue" signifies information on an impending terrorist attack, and forces and resources are on high alert. "Yellow" means the information about an impending attack is confirmed, but time and place are unknown. "Red" indicates the place and time are known or the incident has occurred. "Подписан закон об установлении в РФ уровней террористической угрозы" ["The law on establishing the different levels of terrorist threat in Russia is signed"], RIA Novosti, 3 May 2011. "Путин устано-



## B. COMMAND STRUCTURE AND SECURITY FORCES

The structure and operating procedure of Russian security forces in the North Caucasus have changed significantly since the second Chechen war. Responsibility has largely shifted from the defence ministry to the FSB and the interior ministry (MVD). Some military experts say the efforts of these two main actors are often disconnected. Coordination between branches of the security establishment, federal and local forces and republic civilian authorities, while improved, is an acute problem that Moscow has been aware of since at least 2004.<sup>113</sup>

To coordinate anti-insurgency activity and prepare policy proposals for the president, Putin formed the National Anti-terrorist Committee (NAC) in February 2006. Its chair is the FSB director.<sup>114</sup> Coordination, organisation and planning for use of force and command of operations is carried out by the NAC, its Federal Operational Headquarters (OH), subsidiary operational headquarters (led by republic-level FSB directors) and anti-terrorist commissions (chaired by chief executives in the regions). Until 2009, the only exception was Chechnya, where the OH was chaired by the deputy interior minister of the federation, Arkady Yedeleev, who also personally commanded operations against insurgents in Kabardino-Balkaria, Dagestan and Chechnya. The presidential administration retains decision-making authority on overall counter-insurgency policy.<sup>115</sup>

Command of the OH in Chechnya was transferred from the MVD to the federal security services department for the Chechen Republic only after the counter-terrorist re-

gime was officially lifted in the republic in April 2009. Aleksandr Sulimov, head of the Chechen FSB and close ally of the republic president, was made OH head.<sup>116</sup> This was significant because the OH in Chechnya oversees the United Group of Troops in the North Caucasus (OGV), which brings together a large number of military, security and civilian agencies.<sup>117</sup> The OH also supervises all MVD units sent to Chechnya from other regions. In June 2010 Sulimov was replaced by Aleksandr Kubasov.<sup>118</sup>

Over the last six years, counter-insurgency has transformed from a military operation to one requiring primarily law enforcement and counter-terrorism efforts. The military has taken a back seat and is generally confined to its barracks, although in October 2012 media claimed that the army was again to be actively used in the conflict, information the NAC denied quickly. In 2010, the North Caucasus Military District was folded into the newly created Southern Military District (SMD). Overall, some 200,000 security service personnel are deployed in southern Russia. About half of all MVD troops were posted in the North Caucasus in 2011.<sup>119</sup>

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<sup>116</sup> “От МВД РФ руководство оперативным штабом в Чеченской Республике перешло к ФСБ” [“The leadership over the operation headquarters in Chechen Republic has been passed to the FSB”], *chechnya.gov.ru*, 8 October 2009. Crisis Group interview, Andrey Soldatov, chief editor, *Agentura.ru*, Moscow, May 2012.

<sup>117</sup> Formed in late 1999 by presidential decree, the OH had been the main centre since 2001 for coordinating efforts of often rival federal and local security agencies. The commander of the United Group of Troops (since 2008 Major General Nikolay Sivak), is appointed by the president; the first two deputies are from the armed forces and the MVD, the others from other federal executive agencies included in Presidential Decree no. 1255c, 23 September 1999. In addition to troops, the command includes elements of such services as the civil defence, emergencies and disaster response ministry, the FSB, the Federal Protection Service and the Federal Agency for Social Construction.

<sup>118</sup> “Александра Кубасова отправили в Чечню” [“Aleksandr Kubasov was sent to Chechnya”], *Ulpressa.ru* 29 July 2010. Crisis Group interview, Andrey Soldatov, chief editor, *Agentura.ru*, Moscow, May 2012; “Чечня отпраздновала отмену режима КТО” [“Chechnya has celebrated the lifting of the CTO regime”], *Rossiyskaya Gazeta* (online), 16 April 2012.

<sup>119</sup> The Southern Military district also includes the Black Sea Fleet, Caspian Flotilla, 4th command of military airforces (VVS) and anti-aircraft defence (PVO) and all Russian forces and bases in South Ossetia, Abkhazia and Gumri, Armenia. “Минобороны объявило о создании Южного военного округа” [“The defence ministry announced the creation of the Southern military district”], *RosBisnesKonsalting* (RBK), 4 October 2010. Anatoly Tsiganok, “Безопасность на Большом Кавказе” [“Security in the Greater Caucasus”], *Polit.ru*, 11 January 2011. “Подразделения российской армии подключены к операциям на Северном Кавказе” [“Russian military units involved to special operations in the North Caucasus”], *Interfax*, 8 October

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вил цветовые уровни террористической опасности” [“Putin set color levels for terrorist threat”], *Lenta.ru*, 16 June 2012.

<sup>113</sup> How to prevent terrorist attacks: Expert opinions, joint project, *Agentura* and *Novaya Gazeta*, *Agentura.ru*, 12 December 2005. After the 2004 Beslan crisis, Putin ordered a reform of the security agencies responsible for anti-terrorism and issued a presidential decree (no. 1167, 13 September 2004), *Rossiyskaya Gazeta* (online), 16 September 2004. The FSB director indicated need for a coordination agency. “Патрушев выступил за новые ‘правовые режимы защиты от терроризма’” [“Patrushev spoke up for a new ‘legal regime for protection against terrorism’”], *Grani.ru*, 29 October 2004.

<sup>114</sup> Regulations of the NAC; Presidential Decree no. 116, “On Measures to prevent terrorism”, 15 February 2006.

<sup>115</sup> See “The Concept for Countering Terrorism of the Russian Federation”, op. cit., for an overview of the counter-terrorism structure. Until 2009, the OH in Chechnya was called “regional operational headquarters” (ROS). Presidential Decree no. 116, op. cit. Aleksandra Larintseva, “Генерала Еделева выводят из округа” [“General Yedeleev is expelled from the district”], *Kommersant* (online), 4 April 2011. Crisis Group interviews, security specialists, Moscow, March and June 2012.

The recently created 49th Russian Army is headquartered in Stavropol and apparently consists of two infantry Alpine motorised rifle brigades (33rd and 34th) stationed in Adygea (Maikop) and Stavropol Krai (Budyonnovsk), two airborne brigades based in Stavropol and Novorossiysk and a motorised mountain-rifle brigade stationed in Karachay-Cherkessia. Stavropol Krai also is said to house the 247th Caucasian Cossack Regiment of the 7th Guards Air Assault (Mountain) Division and the 205th motorised rifle brigade (Budyonnovsk). Military sources say the airborne brigades could be used anywhere in the North Caucasus to support CTOs.<sup>120</sup> A military presence remains in Chechnya – motorised rifle guard brigades in Borzoi, Shali and Khankala. The 136th motor-rifle brigade is in Buynaksk, Dagestan.

Detached battalions and companies are “scattered” in virtually all North Caucasus republics, as are special task forces and intelligence groups. These include brigades of the Main Intelligence Directorate of the General Staff for special tasks (around 4,500 troops). The total number of MVD special forces (*spetznaz*) in the North Caucasus amounts to some 10,000. The biggest groupings of forces are in Chechnya, Stavropol Krai and North Ossetia.<sup>121</sup> Redeployments depend on tensions. On 28 March 2011, it was announced that 6,000 MVD troops would be sent to Kabardino-Balkaria and Dagestan. A year later, the ministry carried out a further redeployment from Chechnya to Dagestan.<sup>122</sup>

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2012. The denial followed two days later. “Член НАК опровергает информацию об участии армии в операциях на Северном Кавказе” [“A NAC member denies military participation in special operations in the North Caucasus”], Agentura.ru, 10 October 2012.

<sup>120</sup> “В Адигею введена 33-я отдельная мотострелковая бригада” [“33rd Separate Motorised Rifle Brigade introduced in Adygea”], Yuga.ru, 27 October 2011. Mairbek Vatchagayev, “Closure of Dagestani military base reflects Moscow’s growing weakness in the North Caucasus”, Eurasia Daily Monitor, vol. 8, issue 213, 17 November 2011. In November 2011, this base moved to Adygea. Vladimir Mukhin, “Военно-олимпийская группировка” [“Military-Olympic group”], *Nezavisimaya Gazeta* (online), 7 February 2011.

<sup>121</sup> Andrey Kozlov, “Насколько сильна российская армия на Северном Кавказе?” [“How strong is the Russian army in the North Caucasus?”], Argumenty i Fakty Severny Kavkaz (online), 24 February 2011. Anatoly Tsiganok, op. cit.

<sup>122</sup> The secretary of the Dagestan Security Council, Baachilov, said the republic has some 17,000 police, 1,000 less than Chechnya, though its territory and population are three times larger. Overall there are some 60,000 security forces in Chechnya, he noted, but most counter-terrorist operations are in Dagestan. He denied any significant build-up. “Магомед Баахчилов: никакого наращивания сил в Дагестане нет и не намечается” [“Magomed Baachilov: There has not been any increase of forces in Dagestan, and none is planned”], Caucasian Knot, 20 March

## C. EFFECTS ON LAW-ENFORCEMENT

Security services are reducing terrorist attacks, including against their own personnel. Servicemen’s deaths dropped to 190 in 2011, compared to 225 in 2010, and the number of wounded to 462 from 467. Dagestan, where 111 were killed and 281 injured in 2011 is by far the most dangerous republic.<sup>123</sup>

The violence has strong psycho-social consequences. Local interior ministry personnel are the insurgents’ main targets and also have often lost relatives, but police from other regions, who serve on a rotational basis, have likewise lost colleagues. All live constantly under stress, many feeling they are being hunted by insurgents. A few years ago experts said that up to 70 per cent of all Russian police had spent at least six months of their career in Chechnya.<sup>124</sup> This has a strong impact on the entire force, making psychological rehabilitation of security personnel who serve in armed conflict in the North Caucasus a national problem.

A researcher who conducted an extensive survey of veterans from Chechnya concluded that “the experience of participating in violence affects a police officer for the rest of his life. First of all, the impact of this experience transforms his standards of professionalism”. Police returning to their homes have transferred practices they used in the North Caucasus to their daily work in Russian cities, causing a countrywide increase in police brutality. For some the search for revenge becomes a driving force in their professional activity.<sup>125</sup>

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2012. The general staff head of the Russian MVD, Lt. Colonel Sergei Bunin, spoke to the first redeployment. “В Дагестан и Кабардино-Балкарию едут 6 тыс. бойцов ВВ МВД” [“Six thousand MVD troops are headed to Dagestan and Kabardino-Balkaria”], RIA Dagestan, 28 March 2011. The exact figures of the second redeployment have not been announced. Officials spoke of 3,000; independent observers say more than 20,000. “Magomed Baachilov”, op. cit.

<sup>123</sup> 124 were killed and 200 injured in Dagestan in 2010. In Kabardino-Balkaria 31 were killed, 32 injured in 2011, 23 killed, 35 injured in 2010. In Chechnya, 21 were killed, 97 injured in 2011, 44 killed, 93 injured in 2010. In Ingushetia nineteen were killed, 32 injured (31 killed, 133 injured in 2010); in Karachay-Cherkessia six were killed, nine injured (one killed, one injured in 2010); in the Stavropol region two were killed, six injured (no 2010 casualties); and in North Ossetia five were injured (four in 2010). “1,378 people killed and injured”, Caucasian Knot, op. cit.

<sup>124</sup> “Милиция между Россией и Чечней. Ветераны конфликта в российском обществе” [“The police between Russia and Chechnya. The veterans of the conflict in Russian society”], Polit.ru, 9 October 2007.

<sup>125</sup> Crisis Group interview, Asmik Novikova, head of 2006-2007 research project “Ветераны Чечни в современной России”

The government and particularly the MVD are under-resourced to meet these servicemen's needs. Police from other Russian regions are usually entitled to a ten-day "rehabilitation" holiday in the MVD's regional sanatorium. Many police do not even make use of the sanatoriums, however, and there are not enough expert psychologists to deal with post-traumatic stress syndrome (PTSD) cases and their deep impact on working skills, social life and family relationships. The MVD psychological service, though partially reorganised in 2006, is still unable to meet all needs, due to lack of equipment, staff and specific professional competence. As it is also responsible for re-certification of personnel, police are often reluctant to open up about their psychological injuries and traumas, seeing the service as a "controlling" rather than counselling agency.<sup>126</sup> A federal program for rehabilitation of such law enforcement personnel is needed, including sufficient funds to build new facilities in the region.

Those who have served in the North Caucasus face other job-related hurdles that require attention. The wounded allegedly often have difficulties getting the increased disability pensions to which they are entitled. Due to bureaucracy or corruption, dependents of killed servicemen have had to go through exhausting court procedures before receiving pensions.<sup>127</sup> A senior officer in Dagestan told Crisis Group that only some of his colleagues managed to get compensation for participating in armed conflict (*boyevie*) after going through the courts.<sup>128</sup>

Corruption and abuses of official credentials are a major challenge that police reform has yet to address. The MVD organised the re-certification of all serving personnel in 2011 to increase professionalism and efficiency, but in the North Caucasus, it was alleged to Crisis Group that this was used to get rid of many professional cadres who refused to be part of corruption schemes or had personal issues with their commanders, while those implicated in

corruption and serious crimes retained their jobs. The situation in the MVD was said to cause acute resentment among police cadres, some of whom in recent years reportedly joined or assisted the insurgency.<sup>129</sup> To increase police credibility and effectiveness, vetting should be carefully carried out and rigorous, compulsory professional training offered to new recruits.

A scholar and serving senior MVD officer from Dagestan said that the level of professionalism in the ministry had dramatically decreased in recent years: "How can we combat terrorism and extremism if there is no order inside the agency? Police are set against the population; there is no trust. The MVD in the Caucasus requires serious reform; otherwise, in five years, Salafis will take power, at least in Dagestan, without a single gunshot". The authorities will be able to control the situation until the Sochi Olympics, but afterwards it is likely to explode, the officer predicted.<sup>130</sup>

## D. TACTICS AND OPERATIONS

Security forces engaged in counter-insurgency face many challenges. The insurgency's decentralised nature means tactics depend on local conditions (eg, rural or urban) and the methods of local insurgent field commanders. Mountain operations require special skills; insurgents use new, more difficult to detect explosives; the internet and other new communication technologies simplify insurgent co-ordination and recruitment. The counter-insurgency strategy is primarily enemy-centric, heavily reliant on killing insurgents, especially leaders, with little attention to identifying their motivation and social composition, or to preventing extremism or de-radicalising fighters.

The security forces have improved their capacity, even compared to five years ago, most importantly with better coordination, equipment, training and human intelligence. Overall the insurgency's capabilities are reduced. They can no longer, as they did in the early 2000s, shoot down helicopters and heavily damage aircraft during take-off and landing. But the Russian government recognises it also needs to modify its approach. In July 2011, President Medvedev said, "reporting with corpses is a way to nowhere. We must not only kill those who spread terror, but also try to educate them, to reintegrate them".<sup>131</sup>

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[“Veterans of Chechnya in modern Russia”], Moscow, May 2012. “The veterans lose their ability to perform multiple social roles. Many ended up in divorces, lost their jobs and could not regain their social skills. The development of social careers stopped, veterans no longer plan for the future”, *ibid.* The full study is at [www.publicverdict.org/topics/library/9953.html](http://www.publicverdict.org/topics/library/9953.html).

<sup>126</sup> *Ibid.*; “Вернулся другим” [“Returned as a different person”], Public Verdict, [www.publicverdict.org](http://www.publicverdict.org), 20 November 2007.

<sup>127</sup> “Экс-сотрудники полиции Хасавюрта не получают положенных выплат, заявила адвокат Магомедова” [“Ex-police officers from Khasavyurt are not getting their entitled payments, reported lawyer Magomedova”], *Caucasian Knot Dagestan*, 25 May 2012. “Вдове героя России с четырьмя детьми МВД отказало в пенсии” [“The MIA refused pension for a Russian Hero's widow with four children”], *Izvestiya* (online), 22 May 2012.

<sup>128</sup> Crisis Group interview, MVD colonel, Makhachkala, Dagestan, August 2012.

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<sup>129</sup> The chair of the independent police trade union asserted: “Humiliated and dumped into a society that hates them, they join the insurgents”. Crisis Group interview, Magomed Shamilov, Independent trade union of law enforcement and prosecuting agencies personnel, Makhachkala, Dagestan, August 2012.

<sup>130</sup> Crisis Group interview, Makhachkala, Dagestan, August 2012.

<sup>131</sup> “Медведев о КТО: Уж точно ‘отчет трупами’ – это путь в никуда” [“Medvedev on CTO: Certainly ‘the corpse count’ is a way to nowhere”], *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, 6 July 2011.

## 1. CTOs, special operations, and policing

As described above, CTOs are the main instrument applied to combat the insurgency. They are usually initiated independently by regional commanders after an attack or around a major special operation to cut off an area, operate freely and restrict movements and other constitutional rights. They may cover a small area (a building or neighbourhood for several hours) but can also apply to much larger areas over extended periods, seriously straining local economies and livelihoods. In 2011, a CTO that lasted nine months had such consequences in the main tourist area of Kabardino-Balkaria (the Elbrus region). Operations in the Baksansky, Chegemsky and Chereksky regions of Kabardino-Balkaria and parts of Nalchik were also lengthy. As a justification, the Kabardino-Balkaria interior ministry pointed out that during the nine-month CTO, 69 insurgents were killed and ten bases, 30 weapons caches and three mini-laboratories for IED production were discovered.<sup>132</sup>

Often Russian counter-terrorist operatives use disproportionate force to kill, rather than capture insurgents. Big operations against bases have involved helicopter gunships, as in Dagestan on 9 March 2012 (Karabudakhkent region) and 21-23 June 2011 (Kizlyar region), when thirteen servicemen were killed.<sup>133</sup> More recently, security forces, before storming houses, have contacted mediators to allow presumed insurgents to surrender or innocent bystanders to flee. In Dagestan, relatives often volunteer as facilitators. On 14 October 2011, two militants in a Makhachkala house surrendered after negotiating through relatives. In March 2012, the chair of a local Salafi human rights organisation, "Pravozashchita", convinced a women with two children to leave a property surrounded by special forces in that city.<sup>134</sup>

Successful negotiations have also occurred in Ingushetia. On 29 January 2011, the republic's head, Yunus-Bek Yevkurov, personally intervened in a special operation and, with the mother, persuaded the presumed insurgent, twenty-year old Yunus Mutsolgov, to surrender from inside his home.

In other regions mediation has been denied or failed. Insurgents' mothers formed an initiative group in Kabardino-Balkaria in August 2011, appealing to their children to return to peaceful life and asking that they be allowed to try to convince their sons to surrender during CTOs. In November the group tried to approach a Nalchik house in which three insurgents were holed up, were denied access by security forces, and the insurgents were killed. Svetlana Afshogova, the mother of one, said she spoke to her son by cell-phone until his last moments and is convinced he would have surrendered if given the opportunity. In March 2012, the wife of Alim Zankishiyev, emir of the Kabarda Balkaria and Karachay (KBK) Vilayat, was brought to the Nalchik house where he was blockaded but failed to persuade him to surrender.<sup>135</sup> Two militants and three women were killed in a CTO in the Makhachkala suburb Alburikent on 27 July 2012. Negotiations with the blockaded women (two of them pregnant) continued throughout the night, with family-members involved; however, the women refused to leave the house; one then handed her four small children over to a human rights activist, after which everyone was killed.<sup>136</sup>

Relatives of alleged combatants and bystanders have also fallen victim to security services' indiscriminate use of force. In Dagestan (Dagestanskije Ogni), on 24 July 2011, a twenty-year-old woman was killed with her insurgent husband. Security services claimed she was a "potential suicide bomber", though witnesses testified she was trying

<sup>132</sup> The CTO in the Elbrus area was introduced after insurgents killed three tourists from Moscow and injured two at a ski resort in the Baksansky region of the republic on 19 February 2011. "Девять месяцев КТО: Приэльбрусье на грани выживания" ["Nine months of CTO: The Elbrus region on the edge of survival"], Memorial, 27 October 2011. "Нападение в КБР: одну из убитых приняли за дочь Патрушева" ["The attack in KBR: One of the murdered was mistaken for Patrushev's daughter"], Grani.ru, 21 February 2011.

<sup>133</sup> Operatives have orders to shoot to kill in any life-threatening situation. Crisis Group interview, security forces officer, North Caucasus April 2012. "В Дарестане идет бой с боевиками, которые сбили вертолет" ["In Dagestan there is a fight with the militants who shot down a helicopter"], Ekho Moskvy in Sankt-Petersburg, 9 March 2012. "В спецоперации в Дарестане задействуют танк" ["A special operation in Dagestan involves the use of a tank"], *Izvestiya* (online), 22 June 2011.

<sup>134</sup> "В Махачкале силовики сообщают о сдаче двух боевиков" ["In Makhachkala the security forces report the capitulation of two militants"], Caucasian Knot, 15 October 2011. A second woman, presumably the wife of one of the militants, refused to leave and was killed with her husband. "Калаш vs.

авиация" ["Kalashnikov vs. aviation"], Chernovik (online), 16 March 2012.

<sup>135</sup> Crisis Group interview, Svetlana Afshogova, Moscow, March 2012. "Обращение матерей к боевикам" ["The mother's appeal to the militants"], [youtu.be/ik5I2RZzceI](http://youtu.be/ik5I2RZzceI); "Матери Кабардино-Балкарии в защиту прав и свобод граждан' заручились поддержкой чиновников и правозащитников в Москве" ["The mothers of Kabardino-Balkaria in defence of the rights and freedoms of civilians' enlisted the support of officials and human rights activists in Moscow"], Caucasian Knot, 13 February 2012. "В Нальчике уничтожен главарь бандподполья Алим Занкишиев" ["The underground leader Alim Zankishiyev killed in Nalchik"], Pervy Kanal, [www.1tv.ru](http://www.1tv.ru), 27 March 2012.

<sup>136</sup> "Боевики, заблокированные в одном из домов в Махачкале, нейтрализованы" ["Militants bloked in one of the Makhachkala house, have been killed"], Regnum, 27 July 2012. Video of the negotiations can be accessed on YouTube. "Переговоры. по ул.Дачная в пос. Альбурикемент 27.07.2012г" ["Negotiations on Dachnaya str. in the village of Alburikent, 27 July 2012"], 1 August 2012.

to leave the house before the operation and was injured, begging for help until the morning, when she was killed.<sup>137</sup> Usually the National Anti-terrorist Committee (NAC) defends actions, but some regional authorities have acknowledged mistakes. On 2 April 2012, a car was fired on in Nazran, killing all five inside, including a 57-year-old female factory worker. This caused an outcry, and though the NAC said all had resisted the security operatives, Yevkurov, the Ingush republic head, acknowledged that three had nothing to do with insurgency. He met with the relatives to express condolences and promised an investigation; the chair of the Ingush Security Council attended the funeral and offered 100,000-ruble (\$3,000) compensation to each family.<sup>138</sup>

CTOs are allegedly sometimes used for punitive purposes after attacks on security forces. For example, in October 2011 in Khutrakh village of the mountainous Tsuntinsky region in Dagestan, after a series of insurgent attacks in which at least ten servicemen and one civilian were killed and thirteen servicemen and two civilians wounded, many civilians were detained and taken to an improvised camp where they were allegedly subjected to beatings, torture, simulated executions and other degrading treatment. Houses in the village were reportedly looted. This operation was reminiscent of the notorious mop-up operations of the early 2000s in Chechnya.<sup>139</sup>

Punitive raids aim to intimidate the population and force it to stop giving the insurgents support, but villagers often feel squeezed by both sides. Insurgents need some local help to survive in the mountains. Local communities provide recruits, supplies and shelter, sometimes voluntarily, other times out of fear. An elderly resident of a high mountain village in Chechnya said that when men with guns and huge beards knock on her door at night asking for food,

she could only tell them to “go and take what you need”. They would take it anyway and if you report, they can kill you. We need police to protect us from such visits, but they prefer to stay in their protected bases at night or not even to have units high in the mountains. They come later and terrorise the local residents”. During the second Chechnya war, residents fled dozens of high mountain villages to the plains for security.<sup>140</sup>

Sometimes a special operation is allegedly used to cover deaths by torture, and it is announced that the deceased was resisting arrest. This appears to have occurred on 16 March 2011, when it was announced that Aslan Yemkuzhev was killed in a CTO, though his body bore unmistakable marks of torture and of being handcuffed.<sup>141</sup>

The mountainous Caucasus terrain is a challenge for security personnel who often do not know the area and lack sufficient training. On 13-17 February 2012, seventeen Chechen interior ministry troops were killed and 24 wounded during an operation in Chechnya and Dagestan, according to official sources. The insurgents apparently lost six. A source in the Chechen military command said that in any other region the responsible officer would face serious punishment and possibly be dismissed for such a failure, but federal agencies have little leverage over the local security people in Chechnya, and no action was taken against the commander.<sup>142</sup>

When special operations target insurgents travelling by vehicle, security personnel use document checks to identify insurgents. Active policing has also averted terrorist

<sup>137</sup> “В городе Дагестанские Огни убита потенциальная смертница” [“A potential female suicide bomber was murdered in the town of Dagestanskies Ognii”], *Izvestiya* (online), 24 July 2011.

<sup>138</sup> “Юнус-Бек Евкуров: ‘Трое убитых во время спецоперации в Назрани – невиновны!’” [“Yunus-Bek Yevkurov: ‘Three of the killed during the special operation are innocent!’”] *Malsagoff.livejournal.com*, 9 April 2012. “Глава республики Ю. Евкуров встретился с родственниками убитых 3 апреля с.г. в ходе спецоперации” [“The head of the republic Yevkurov met with relatives of the killed in a special operation on 3 March”], *www.ingushetia.ru*, 9 April 2012.

<sup>139</sup> “Цунтинский район Дагестана: силовики воспроизводят опыт зачисток по ‘чеченскому’ сценарию” [“The Tsuntin district of Dagestan: The special forces to reproduce their experience of mop-up operations from the ‘Chechen scenario’”], *Memorial*, 14 October 2011. No one was arrested in the operation, but a number of the civilians were reportedly badly beaten and maimed. Crisis Group interview, Oleg Orlov, head of Memorial project “Hot spots”, Moscow, November 2011.

<sup>140</sup> Crisis Group analyst interview in a previous capacity, Chechnya, August 2011. “Crying Sun: The Impact of War in the Mountains of Chechnya”, short film, Memorial/WITNESS co-production, 2007, [video.google.com/videoplay?docid=7461310615958353648#](http://video.google.com/videoplay?docid=7461310615958353648#).

<sup>141</sup> As reported to human rights activists and journalists. “Заявление (Открытое письмо) матери убитого Емкужева Аслана” [“Statement (open letter) of the mother of the murdered Aslan Yemkuzhev”], *NEWS Kabardino-Balkarskoy respubliky*, *www.kbr-news.ru*, 15 April 2011. “НАК: убитый в Кабардино-Балкарии боевик обучался в Ливане” [“NAC: the militant that was killed in Kabardino-Balkaria had been trained in Lebanon”], *Caucasian Knot*, 16 March 2011.

<sup>142</sup> A news agency reported 21 military servicemen dead and 36 injured, quoting its own sources in the Chechen security services. “Число спецназовцев, убитых в Чечне, выросло до 21” [“The number of special forces killed in Chechnya, has increased to 21”], *Lifenews.ru*, 17 February 2012. “На границе Чечни и Дагестана найдены тела Тимералиева и пяти других боевиков, сообщают силовики” [“The bodies of Timiraliyev and five other militants have been found on the border of Chechnya and Dagestan, reported the security forces”], *Caucasian Knot*, 21 February 2012. Magarbi Timiraliyev, 47, was one of the oldest and most experienced insurgent commanders; he had been fighting in the Chechnya-Dagestan areas since 2002.

acts. On 30 August 2011, three suicide bombers sought to attack the Eid celebration in Grozny. The erratic behaviour of a man in a police uniform drew the attention of officers. When they approached and asked for identification, he detonated his explosives. He was the younger brother of another suicide bomber, who two months earlier had tried to attack a Grozny concert hall in which Ramzan Kadyrov was attending a performance. The brother was similarly kept from his target by good policing.<sup>143</sup>

There are allegations that insurgents and alleged insurgents are at times the victims of non-judicial killings. Human rights groups have recorded numerous witness claims that non-resisting or unarmed suspects were shot.<sup>144</sup>

## 2. High-value targets

Since 2009, security forces have become very successful at locating and killing insurgent leaders, which is considered an effective way to defeat networks. According to Rashid Nurgaliyev, Russia's former MVD minister, sixteen were killed in the first 4.5 months of 2012.<sup>145</sup> Since then at least another seven leaders have been killed.<sup>146</sup>

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<sup>143</sup> "Источник в Минздраве Чечни: официальное число жертв теракта в Грозном занижено" ["Source in the health ministry of Chechnya: The official number of victims of the terrorist attack in Grozny has been understated"], *Caucasian Knot*, 22 September 2011.

<sup>144</sup> Crisis Group interviews, Makhachkala, Dagestan, August 2012. Akhmednabi Akhmednabiyev, "Лес рубят – невинных казнят" ["Cutting forest – Executing innocents"], *Kavkazskaya politika*, 8 July 2012. "Родственники убитых в ходе спецоперации в Ингушетии: 'Наши дети ни в чем не виноваты!'" ["Relatives of the killed during special operation in Ingushetia: 'Our children are not guilty!'", *Memorial*, 7 August 2012; "Мемориал" требует комплексной проверки деятельности Кизилюртовского ОВД Республики Дагестан" ["Memorial demands a comprehensive investigation of the activities of Kizilyurt OVD of the Republic of Dagestan"], *ibid*, 7 February 2011; "Ингушетия: Новые методы "контртеррора". Лицензия на убийство?" ["Ingushetia: new "counterterror" methods, License to kill?"], *ibid*, 18 August 2008; E. Sokirianskaia, O. Orlov, *op. cit*.

<sup>145</sup> "На Северном Кавказе с начала года было уничтожено 139 боевиков" ["Since the beginning of the year 139 militants were killed in the North Caucasus"], *Rosbalt*, 21 May 2012. This includes vilayat leaders: in January, Dzhamalel Mutaliyev (Ingushetia); February, Ibragimkhalil Daudov (Dagestan); and March, Alim Zankishiyev (KBK vilayat). "НАК: Убит главарь ингушских боевиков Адам, друг Басаева" ["NAC: The leader of Ingush militants Adam, Basayev's friend, was killed"], *NEWSru.com*, 27 January 2011.

<sup>146</sup> "На Северном Кавказе с начала года было уничтожено 139 боевиков" ["Since the start of the year, 139 militants have been killed in North Caucasus"], *Rosbalt*, 21 May 2012. The seven killed after mid-May were reported in "В Дагестане уничтожен известный бандглаварь Аслан Мамедов" ["The

Much of the senior leadership in Dagestan, Kabardino-Balkaria and Karachay-Cherkessia was killed in 2010-2012, but the insurgency head, Doku Umarov, has so far escaped. A large operation in March 2011 in Ingushetia killed sixteen to nineteen fighters, but not him.<sup>147</sup>

The most senior leader taken alive was Ali Taziye (Emir Magas), head of the Ingush Front of the Caucasus Emirate, on 9 June 2010. Since his capture, there has been a significant decline in the number and audacity of insurgent attacks and a corresponding increase in the assassinations of high-level insurgent leaders. Magas allegedly gave the investigative authorities important information leading to these developments over the last two years. There has been little to no news about him since his arrest, but he has been charged with numerous terrorism-related crimes, and court proceedings are anticipated eventually.<sup>148</sup>

Russian security forces have been implicated in links to assassinations of prominent insurgents outside the federation's borders. On 16 September 2011 in Istanbul, three Chechens were killed after Friday prayers. A small calibre pistol was reportedly used, similar to one in three other killings of Chechens in Istanbul in 2008 and 2009. The primary target was apparently Berg Musayev, a close ally of Doku Umarov. Alleged Russian agents reportedly left

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famous insurgent leader Aslan Mamedov killed in Dagestan"] *www.radiovesti.ru*, 20 May 2012; "Силовики в Карачаево-Черкесии уничтожили опасного боевика" ["Security forces in Karachay-Cherkessia killed a dangerous fighter"], *Ria.ru*, 13 June 2012; "НАК: за прошедшие сутки в Дагестане и Кабардино-Балкарии нейтрализовано 8 бандитов" ["NAC: In the last 24 hours 8 bandits have been neutralised in Dagestan and Kabardino-Balkaria"], *www.mvd.ru*, 14 July 2012; "В Кизлярском районе Дагестана уничтожен местный бандглаварь и еще один боевик" ["In Kizlyarsky district of Dagestan, one insurgent leader and one other fighter killed"], *Yuga.ru* (online), 14. September 2012; "Основная фаза спецоперации по уничтожению бандподполья в Нальчике завершена" ["The main phase of the special operation to liquidate the armed underground in Nalchik is completed"], *www.mvd.ru*, 20 September 2012.

<sup>147</sup> Magomedali Vagabov, a head of the Dagestan Vilayat, was killed in August 2010. Three leaders from Kabardino-Balkaria and Karachay-Cherkessia were killed in 2011: Bislan Gochiyayev (7 December); Alhmad Malkarov (13 December); and Asker Dzhabpuyev (29 April). Militants killed in the March 2011 operation included Umarov's deputy, Supyan Abdulayev, and Amir Khamzat (Aslan Byutukayev), leader of the Chechen group that trained the suicide bombers for the Domodedovo Airport attack. "Airstrike in Ingushetia: 16 militants killed", *Agentura.ru*, 29 March 2011.

<sup>148</sup> "Главарь боевиков Тазиев сотрудничает со следствием" ["Insurgent leader Taziye collaborates with investigators"], *Kommersant*, 9 December 2010; "Магаса оставили в СИЗО" ["Magas remains in pre-trial detention centre"], *Kommersant* (online), 19 June 2012.



the country before Turkish authorities could apprehend them.<sup>149</sup> In 2004, a former acting president of separatist Chechnya, Zelimkhan Yandarbiyev, was assassinated in Qatar.

### 3. Detention, torture and enforced disappearances

According to the chairman of the Supreme Court, Vyacheslav Lebedev, 32 people were sentenced for terrorism-related crimes in 2011, and 370 alleged insurgents were officially detained that year. Less than 1 per cent of all trials in Russia result in acquittals; most legal processes are lengthy, and those found to have spilled blood in any manner are generally given twelve-year sentences. Previously jury trials gave some of the accused hope that they would not be convicted on evidence provided under torture, but jury trials for terrorism-related crimes were ended in 2008. The largest trial of alleged insurgents and accomplices in recent times is underway in Kabardino-Balkaria, where since March 2009, 58 people, most of whom were arrested in 2005, have been on trial for participation in the 2005 attack in Nalchik.<sup>150</sup>

Too often, it is alleged, torture is still used in formal and informal detention centres, especially against relatives of suspected combatants, neighbours or Salafis. Human rights groups have documented thousands of cases of information and confessions extracted under torture. Some victims died in custody; others disappeared until their bodies were found with clear traces of torture.<sup>151</sup> The brother of Astemir Mamishyev, a notorious insurgent killed in a special operation in May, was arrested, tortured and accused of storing ammunition illegally, though later acquitted by a Nalchik court.<sup>152</sup> A young Chechen, Zelimkhan Chitigov,

was allegedly tortured to force confession to crimes in Ingushetia; he refused, received injuries that put him in a wheel chair, then was released; the alleged torture has been referred to court, and two police await verdicts in their trial. Inal Berov's abduction was recorded by a security camera in Nalchik in March; he claims he was tortured for a night, threatened with his parents' rape and arson of his home and pressured to become an agent. His spine was damaged, and he was released.<sup>153</sup>

Security services also allegedly commit abductions and hold suspects incommunicado. Witnesses describe these in a similar fashion: agents come in cars without plates and present no documents. After several days (or longer), the abducted person may be "discovered" in a police station, but officially the arrest will be registered later and under different circumstances. The time gap is said to enable law enforcement agencies to extract, often under torture, information or confessions while access to lawyers is denied. Some suspects are taken to other areas or republics to complicate the search.<sup>154</sup> Others are never found. For example, human rights defenders say, in 2011 eleven of twenty abducted in Ingushetia disappeared without a trace, as did eleven of 29 abducted in Dagestan and three of fourteen in Chechnya.<sup>155</sup> According to official data,

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of the Nalchik City Court KBR on 14 February 2011 in respect of Mamishyev K.S.], Aktoskop; Olga Allenova, "Черные ястребы, чьи вы?" ["Black hawks' whose are you?"], *Kommersant Ogonek*, 14 February 2011.

<sup>153</sup> Shura Burtin, "Сто часов в аду" ["Hundred hours in hell"], *Russkii reporter*, no. 37, 22 September 2011. "Похищенный житель Ингушетии Читигов находится в больнице" ["Abducted resident of Ingushetia Chitigov in hospital"], *Caucasian Knot*, 6 May 2010. "Оглашение приговора по делу о пытках в МВД Ингушетии отложено на неопределенный срок" ["The verdict in the case of torture in the Ingush Interior Ministry has been postponed indefinitely"], *Caucasian Knot*, 1 October 2012. Crisis Group interview, Svetlana Gannushkina, Memorial board member, Moscow, April 2012. "Полицейский беспредел Нальчик" ["Police officer brutality in Nalchik"], [youtu.be/Swo5I0TV4tM](http://youtu.be/Swo5I0TV4tM); "Инал Беров подробно рассказали как его пытали полицейские Видео" ["Inal Berov described in detail how he was tortured by the police"], [07kbr.ru/2012/04/19/inal-berov-podrobno-rasskazali-podrobno-rasskazal-kak-ego-pytali-policejskie-video/](http://07kbr.ru/2012/04/19/inal-berov-podrobno-rasskazali-podrobno-rasskazal-kak-ego-pytali-policejskie-video/).

<sup>154</sup> Crisis Group analyst interviews in previous capacity, victims and relatives of victims of abductions, Chechnya, Ingushetia, Dagestan, Kabardino-Balkaria, 2003-2011.

<sup>155</sup> "Legal remedies for human rights violation in the North-Caucasus Region", PACE, 4 April 2010. These statistics may not fully reflect the situation, since human rights monitoring does not cover the whole North Caucasus. Relatives of abducted persons in Chechnya have been less likely to turn to human rights NGOs in the past few years due to the climate of fear. "Статистика похищений и убийств в Чечне и Ингушетии" [Statistics of abductions and killings in Chechnya and Ingushetia], Memorial, (no date).

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<sup>149</sup> Elena Solntseva, "Чеченская война продолжается в Стамбуле?" ["Will the Chechen war continue in Istanbul?"], Ekho Kavkaza.com, 22 September 2011. According to Turkish media, the weapon was the same type of automatic rifle used to kill Gazhi Edilsultanov (2008) and Ali Osayev and Islam Canibekov (2009). "Çeçenleri öldüren Rus silahı: Groza", *Radikal* (online) 29 September 2011. "Russian hit squad accused of murdering Chechen dissidents in Istanbul", *The Independent* (online), 8 October 2011. Russian security services claim that two of the killed Chechens had links to the Domodedovo Airport attack. "Russia links Chechens shot in Turkey to Moscow bombing", *Hurriyet Daily News* (online), 26 October 2011.

<sup>150</sup> Irina Gordiyenko, "Процесс 58-ми" ["The process of 58"], *Kavkazskaya politika*, 30 June 2012.

<sup>151</sup> "Russian Federation: The circle of injustice: Security operations and human rights violations in Ingushetia", Amnesty International, 21 June 2012. Oleg Orlov and Ekaterina Sokirianskaia, op. cit. "The System of Impunity in the North Caucasus (2009-2010) – How Does it Function?", Memorial, 2010. Alexandr Zhukov, op. cit.

<sup>152</sup> "Приговор Нальчикского городского суда КБР от 14 февраля 2011 года в отношении Мамишева К.С." ["Verdict

between 2007 and 2009, 427 applications were filed on disappearances of Chechnya residents and 142 criminal proceedings investigated. Yevkurov, Ingushetia's head, admitted that security services were behind some of the 2011 abductions.<sup>156</sup>

Among nearly 200 North Caucasus decisions by the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR), 143 have been related to abductions by state agents. Incommunicado detention, torture to produce desired testimony, illegal detention facilities and falsification of evidence undermine perceptions of justice.<sup>157</sup> In 2006 and again in 2010, PACE warned that "systematic human rights violations and the climate of complete impunity were bound to foster the rise of extremist movements and their propagation". Part of the logic of terrorist attacks is to provoke government reprisals and abusive reactions. Even moderate Islamist leaders admitted that illegal violence drives some members of a vulnerable population into Salafi networks.<sup>158</sup> For all these reasons, it is in the government's interest to restore public trust in law enforcement by making greater efforts to end the impunity of those committing human rights violations.

#### **4. Deterrence: retributive punishment for families of insurgents**

Collective punishment of family members of insurgents is not unique to the North Caucasus conflict. Nearly every Russian counter-insurgency campaign in the twentieth century employed the tactic to some degree. Collective punishment of families in Chechnya, where many relatives have had their homes and property burned by government security forces, is widely documented.<sup>159</sup> Most recently, on

22 April 2012 local residents claim, a house was torched in the Gudermes region.

In general, Ramzan Kadyrov has not denied use of collective punishment, stating instead: "I am once again completely convinced that only harsh and uncompromising means can pull out this evil [insurgency] by its root". Families of insurgents, he added, would be held responsible, "because they must have known what their relatives were preparing".<sup>160</sup>

In other parts of the region, leaders have used the spectre of Chechnya's violence to convince families to help the government. A law proposed in Kabardino-Balkaria in April 2011 would have held relatives accountable for insurgent children. There are relatively few cases of retribution against families in the republic, but on 5 February 2011, Molotov cocktails were thrown against the home of the parents of Astermir Mamishyev, a local insurgent. A group calling itself the "Black Hawks" then released internet videos presenting itself as "Anti-Wahhabis" who would hunt down insurgents' families.<sup>161</sup> For several weeks, commentators discussed this third force, senior Russian politicians praised it, and its leader was interviewed. The "Hawks" were widely thought to be a security agency creation, especially since many identified 36-year-old Vadim Sultanov, a lieutenant colonel of the republic's police, as its leader. He was killed on 17 December 2011, several days after a suspicious murder of the widow of an insurgent leader, Akhmat Malkarov, and two elderly relatives.<sup>162</sup> Insurgents were suspected, and the group was never heard of again.

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<sup>156</sup> None of the investigations appear to have been concluded and transferred to court. "Fifth periodic report of the Russian Federation on the observance of the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment", submitted 28 December 2010. "Евкuroв: К похищениям людей в Ингушетии причастны силовые структуры" ["Yevkurov: The kidnappings in Ingushetia involved the security agencies"], Yuga.ru, 19 February 2012.

<sup>157</sup> In a national survey, 67 per cent answered that they were "fearful" or "somewhat fearful" of the law enforcement bodies; 64 per cent said they completely or somewhat agreed that the Russian law enforcement system is corrupt. Levada Centre, Russian Public Opinion 2009, p. 93.

<sup>158</sup> For ECHR North Caucasus cases, see [www.srji.org/en/legal/cases](http://www.srji.org/en/legal/cases). "Legal remedies for human rights violations in the North-Caucasus Region", PACE, 4 April 2010, point A.2. Crisis Group telephone interview, May 2012.

<sup>159</sup> PACE has also condemned how in Chechnya "reprisals are taken against the families of persons suspected of belonging to the insurgency (setting fire to dwellings; close relatives of suspects are abducted or receive dire threats)", PACE report, rapporteur: Dick Marty, 4 June 2010, point A.4.1. Human Rights

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Watch published a report calling for the Russian government to stop the practice, "Russia: Stop collective punishment in Chechnya", 2 July 2009.

<sup>160</sup> "В Чечне сожжены дома родственников убитого в спецоперации Бантаева, сообщают местные жители" ["The house of relatives of Bantayev, killed in the special operation, was burned in Chechnya, according to local residents"], Caucasian Knot, 5 May 2012. "Полицейские поторопили боевиков с терактом" ["The police hastened the militant's terror attack"], *Kommersant* (online), 1 September 2011.

<sup>161</sup> Olga Allenova, op. cit. "Черные ястребы. Кровь за кровь" ["Black Hawks. Blood for blood"], [youtu.be/GGiesmN\\_XJ4](http://youtu.be/GGiesmN_XJ4).

<sup>162</sup> Aleksandr Torshin, Duma vice speaker, said such groups are natural and justified, and local security services should use, not fight the decent people from "the Hawks". Orhan Dzhemal, "Охота на 'Черного ястреба'" ["The hunt for the 'Black Hawks'"], Slon.ru, 22 December 2011. Police invited the 28-year-old widow to identify her husband's body. She left home with two elderly relatives but never reached the morgue. Their bodies were discovered on the road. "СМИ: Подполковник полиции был лидером 'Черных ястребов'" ["Media: Police Lieutenant Colonel was the leader of the 'Black Hawks'"], Rosbalt, 21 December 2011.



A similar group appeared in Dagestan in 2009, presenting itself as “revengers for relatives of killed policemen” and claiming to have abducted five people, three of whom were subsequently killed. It also issued death threats to sixteen public figures – journalists and human rights defenders – for helping Wahhabis. In July 2012, an internet video from “Robin Hoods of Kizilyurt and Kizilyurt district” showed masked and uniformed armed people calling themselves “police voluntary assistants”, urging militants to surrender and repent and promising to kill them and their relatives (except women and children) if they refused.<sup>163</sup>

## 5. Intelligence and mine clearing

After Beslan, intelligence efforts improved significantly. Several Moscow-subordinated FSB units tasked with gathering information about the insurgent groups were created. Territorial FSB agencies and units of the Main Intelligence Directorate of the General Staff of the Armed Forces and the interior ministry have their own intelligence units, and a special reconnaissance department was created to coordinate. The current generation of insurgents uses modern technology – internet, mobile phones, social networks and chats – to spread messages and coordinate activities. The security services have reinforced their capacity to monitor these. A young man from Dagestan, for example, was convicted of aiding insurgents with medicine after he was tracked via his instant messaging computer program (ICQ).<sup>164</sup>

The military has begun limited use of unmanned aerial reconnaissance vehicles (drones) in the North Caucasus. In March 2009, MVD Commander Nikolai Rogozhkin announced tests with them in the region. The most spectacular success was in March 2011, when a UAV spotted an insurgent camp in the Sunzha district of Ingushetia and hit it with a precision-guided missile, killing sixteen insurgents.<sup>165</sup> Drone use is likely to increase, especially in the mountainous regions of Chechnya and Ingushetia.

Additional burdens are put on sappers since IEDs have become a popular weapon of the insurgency. Dealing with various types of IEDs, preventing their planting and identifying them has become central to the anti-terrorism effort. From January to April 2012, 93 IEDs were cleared in the North Caucasus, the Russian interior minister said. In 2011, more than ten laboratories producing explosives were destroyed and over 500 explosives discovered and deactivated. New types are discovered frequently.<sup>166</sup>

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<sup>163</sup> “Open letter regarding the threats against human rights defenders and journalists in Dagestan”, Memorial, 8 September 2009. “Robin Hoods of Kizilyurt and Kizilyurt district”, 7 July 2012, [youtu.be/aTyIoH1QBpI](http://youtu.be/aTyIoH1QBpI). A few days earlier explosive devices had been planted in the homes of some militants’ relatives.

<sup>164</sup> In July 2012, the Duma passed laws establishing a central register of extremist websites, ostensibly to protect children, but perhaps also to control burgeoning social networks and undesirable sites using DPI (deep packet inspection). Andrey Soldatov, “Chinese systems and Western technology: the Kremlin moves to control the internet”, *Open Democracy*, 12 July 2012. Oleg Orlov and Ekaterina Sokirianskaia, op. cit.

<sup>165</sup> Officially the FSB and MVD purchase only domestically-produced drones. On 26 January 2010, the MVD purchased

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several “Okolotok” drones for use in the North Caucasus and on the border. “Весь имарат одним ударом. В Ингушетии подводят итоги спецоперации” [“The entire Emirate in one stroke. In Ingushetia they are summing up the results of the special operation”], *Kommersant* (online), 30 March 2011.

<sup>166</sup> “Пойманы террористки-смертницы, которые готовили взрывы в Центральной России” [“Suicide bombers who prepared the bombings in Central Russia, are caught”], *Pervy Kanal*, [www.1tv.ru](http://www.1tv.ru), 5 April 2012. A. Pzhezdovsky, adviser to the NAC chair, said at a recent press conference that the insurgents are using new types of IEDs that are attached by magnets to cars. Their small size makes them hardly visible and difficult to deactivate. Vadim Sobin, “Терроризм, мины и пропаганда” [“Terrorism, mines and propaganda”], *Chekest.ru*, 13 April 2012.

## **V. COUNTER-INSURGENCY: SOFT MEASURES AND THEIR CHALLENGERS**

Counter-insurgency measures can aim not only to kill or capture insurgents, but also to return them to peaceful lives via amnesties or other mechanisms. Usually these soft measures require a comprehensive state strategy to reach the hearts and minds of the insurgents and their support base, by conflict resolution, improved economic development and rule of law, as well as major information dissemination efforts to promote non-violent resolution of disputes and persuade citizens of the ineffectiveness of terrorism. On 3 July 2012, FSB Director Bortnikov reiterated to the National Anti-terrorist Committee in Makhachkala that, along with security operations, preventive work to remove the causes and conditions conducive to the creation of a terrorist support base and recruitment of young people should be the priority. He also stressed the exceptional importance of dialogue between different strands of Islam.<sup>167</sup>

To defeat insurgents requires a population-centric strategy, aimed not only at combating fighters, but also at changing people's minds. Many of the tactics described above tend to distance locals, making them feel more like targets than beneficiaries of government efforts. A military specialist explained that governments must "prevent terrorist attacks, destroy terrorist networks but defeat insurgencies".<sup>168</sup>

The Russian government ran a series of amnesty programs in Chechnya in the 1990s (starting in December 1994), 2003 and 2006. The last two were personally administered by Presidents Kadyrov, father and son, who negotiated with groups of fighters and gave them personal security guarantees. In most cases, especially in 2003, amnesty was conditional on the former fighters joining Kadyrov's group and swearing loyalty to him and it has shown that insurgents can change sides if better conditions are offered. The 2006 North Caucasus amnesty lasted until 15 January 2007, during which between 430 and 470 insurgents and their associates turned themselves in.<sup>169</sup> How-

ever, since 1999 none of the formal amnesties included fighters who had attacked and killed security servicemen. All such returnees were instead "amnestied" under personal guarantees of certain officials or security service officers.

### **A. COMMISSIONS FOR THE REHABILITATION OF FIGHTERS**

In November 2010 Dagestan President Magomedov created a fourteen-person commission for the rehabilitation of fighters, chaired by Deputy Premier Kurbanov. Similar bodies were created at the local levels in almost all Dagestan districts.<sup>170</sup>

The commission is tasked with considering the applications of those who leave hiding and stop armed activity; providing legal and medical counselling; solving housing and employment problems; and, if necessary, relocating ex-insurgents and their family members. It also looks into human rights violations by security servicemen and assists persons convicted for insurgency-related crimes who repent. It does not have special legal mechanisms to back its efforts, and its decisions are advisory.<sup>171</sup> However, it can guarantee the legality and transparency of the surrender process, which is crucial for persons who do not trust law enforcement, investigative bodies and courts. Senior authorities' involvement and willingness to negotiate provide some additional guarantees. Magomedov appealed jointly with close relatives for insurgents to return to peaceful life. He also reiterated that no one would be prosecuted for his or her beliefs, but the government would do everything to stop terrorism and extremism.<sup>172</sup>

<sup>167</sup> "НАК провел выездное совещание в Махчкале" [NAC held a meeting in Makhachkala], *Rossiyskaya Gazeta*, 3 July 2012.

<sup>168</sup> Robert W. Schaefer, *The Insurgency in Chechnya and the North Caucasus*, op. cit., p. 40.

<sup>169</sup> "Как боевиков возвращают к мирной жизни" ["How fighters return to peaceful life"], *Kommersant* (online), 21 June 2012. Aleksei Malashenko, "Люди не рождаются фанатиками и террористами" ["People are not born fanatics or terrorists"], *Novye Izvestiya*, 1 October 2004. "В СКФО готовится амнистия для боевиков Ингушетии" ["The North Caucasus Federal District is preparing an amnesty for militants from Ingushetia"], *Caucasian Knot*, 5 July 2010.

<sup>170</sup> Other members of the commission include the heads of law enforcement agencies and the Investigative Committee, the justice minister, the nationalities and religions minister, the republic ombudswoman, the chairman of the Bar Association of Dagestan and the imam of the central mosque in Makhachkala. "Правопримирительная практика" ["Reconciliation practice"], *Kommersant* (online), 21 June 2012.

<sup>171</sup> "В Дербенте комиссия по адаптации боевиков к мирной жизни решила помочь двум жителям города" ["In Derbent the commission on the integration of fighters decided to help two residents of the city"], *Caucasian Knot*, 4 August 2011. It relies on the special provisions of Articles 208 (organisation of illegal armed forces or participation in them) and 222 (illegal purchase, transfer, sale, storage, transportation or carrying of weapons, ammunition, explosives and explosive devices) of the Criminal Code, which say that those who surrender voluntarily and cooperate with the investigative authorities can be freed from criminal responsibility or benefit from leniency.

<sup>172</sup> "Ризван Курбанов: С 'лесными' надо разговаривать, без этого успеха не добиться" [Interview of the chairman of the commission on adaptation of fighters] ["Rizvan Kurbanov: We need to talk to the 'men from the forest', without that success will not be

Many civil society leaders criticise the commission as primarily a public relations exercise. All meetings are televised, and fighters must repent, condemn the insurgency and pledge cooperation with the investigators publicly. Media coverage serves propaganda purposes, critics argue, while personal safety of the surrendering militants should be the priority. Moreover, the humiliation of televised repentance is likely to keep fighters away. The commission is also criticised for not including respected civil society and human rights figures. However, it has considered 44 applications (35 positively) and over 100 complaints of rights violations by law enforcement agencies. Initially those suspected of aiding militants or under surveillance for possible involvement with militants turned to the commission for security. As the institution gained trust, militants began to approach it, though not all their applications have been deemed deserving support or leniency. Commission members also mediated in security operations, leading some insurgents to accept Magomedov's and Kurbanov's guarantees and surrender.<sup>173</sup>

The Dagestan commission has served as a model for other republics; for example, Ingushetia in September 2011 set up a commission, led by its Security Council secretary, Ahmed Kotiyev, after representatives from the republic's prosecutor consulted and observed in Dagestan. Its composition and tasks are similar, but its activity is less public, and it uses informal methods of negotiating with militants, including kinship ties. Kotiyev says it is strategically important for such commissions also to focus more on reintegration of insurgents who have served sentences.<sup>174</sup>

achieved"]. Interview with the chairman of the commission for the rehabilitation of fighters, *Moskovskie Novosti* (online), 2 November 2011. "Президент РД: 'Я хочу, чтобы молодые люди, оказавшиеся в НВФ обманным путем, вернулись к мирной жизни'" ["President of the Republic of Dagestan: 'I want young people who were tricked into participating in the insurgency to return to peaceful life'"], RIA Dagestan (online), 5 August 2011.

<sup>173</sup> "Комиссия по адаптации в Дагестане удовлетворила три ходатайства" ["The commission for the rehabilitation of fighters granted three petitions"], RIA Dagestan (online), 19 April 2012. "Комиссия по адаптации бывших членов НВФ удовлетворила семь ходатайств" ["The Commission for the rehabilitation of former members of the insurgency satisfied seven cases"], Moy Dagestan, 26 September 2012.

<sup>174</sup> "В Ингушетии создана комиссия по адаптации боевиков" ["A commission for the rehabilitation of fighters was established in Ingushetia"], Caucasian Knot, 9 September 2011. Kotiyev described his strategy as to negotiate with, rehabilitate and integrate a militant, and only then, with consent, tell his story on TV. "If they want to keep a low profile, we don't mind. We just monitor that they do not slip back off the right track". The republic government pays yearly tickets for relatives to visit insurgents in prison, and the commission has provided employment, housing and protection to insurgents, including to those who have already served prison sentences. Crisis Group

Ingushetia's head, Yevkurov, who said fifteen militants had reintegrated in 2010-2011, summed up: "Fighting terrorism requires complex solutions, not only law enforcement methods".<sup>175</sup> Kabardino-Balkaria and Karachay-Cherkessia also created commissions, in January and March 2012, though their results are meagre so far.<sup>176</sup>

## B. WHICH WAY FORWARD?

Two main approaches or models of counter-insurgency are competing today in the North Caucasus. One, based on heavy-handed law enforcement and exclusive religious policy, is most thoroughly applied in Chechnya; the other, with greater elements of soft law enforcement and integrative religious policy, is most evident in Dagestan; practices of other republics fall in between.

In Chechnya, the republican head, Ramzan Kadyrov, is widely reported to personally supervise and control the anti-insurgency effort. At least twice a month he holds televised meetings with the commanders of the security services, especially the MVD, listening to reports and giving orders.<sup>177</sup> The media has covered his personal involvement in many of the larger special operations.<sup>178</sup> The anti-

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interview, Magas, Ingushetia, December 2011. The commission integrated a militant who spent eight months in Doku Umarov's guard, his name was not disclosed, and he was granted state protection. Kotiyev's presentation at special session of the Presidential Council for Human Rights and Civil Society, Moscow, 10 July 2012.

<sup>175</sup> "В Ингушетии проходит первый 'Кавказский форум' правозащитников" ["In Ingushetia the first 'Caucasus Forum' for human rights activists is being held"], Ingush Information Portal, 06region.ru, 18 February 2012.

<sup>176</sup> The Commission in Kabardino-Balkaria rehabilitated one female insurgent in September 2012. The Karachay-Cherkessia Commission reportedly was created on an "order from above" and has not started to work. Crisis Group interview, KChR official, March 2012. "Глава КБР создал комиссию по адаптации к мирной жизни экс-членов НВФ" ["The head of Kabardino-Balkaria has established a commission to adapt former members of the insurgency to civilian life"], RIA Novosti, 24 January 2012. "В КЧР создали Комиссию по реабилитации экс-членов НВФ" ["A commission for the rehabilitation of former members of illegal armed groups established in Karachay-Cherkessia"], official site, North Caucasus Federal District, skfo.ru, 31 March 2012.

<sup>177</sup> For example, in May 2012, "Р.Кадиров провел встречу с руководителями подразделений органов внутренних дел республики" ["Kadyrov met with the heads of departments of the interior ministry"], chechnya.gov.ru, 17 May 2012. "Ряд кадровых изменений произведен в структурах МВД и в районах республики" ["A number of staff changes made in the structures of the MIA and the regions of the republic"], Grozny inform, 25 May 2012.

<sup>178</sup> This is widely covered in the media. For example, "В Чеченской Республике уничтожены три члена НВФ" ["Three

insurgency model is enemy-centric, based on collective responsibility and the eradication of the ideology of Salafism. No commission for reintegrating fighters exists, though the republic's leadership from time to time calls on insurgents to put down their arms. Local authorities also organised a large effort wherein children from all the republic's schools wrote letters asking insurgents to return home: over 25,000 of these were thrown from helicopters over forest-covered mountain regions in May 2012.<sup>179</sup>

The Dagestan model was introduced by the republic's head, Magomedsalam Magomedov, who, upon taking office in March 2010 declared the initiation of a dialogue with opponents, including moderate fundamentalist leaders, and a more open religious policy, and created a working mechanism to return insurgents to peaceful life.<sup>180</sup> The attitude toward Salafi communities was significantly liberalised; moderate Salafis became better integrated into public life and were engaged in the processes described above, although allegations of grave human rights violations during counter-terrorism operations continue.

Judging by numbers of incidents and fatalities, the Chechen model looks more successful. It is also a traditional approach, consistent with what the Russian government has implemented since 1999. New methods, introduced toward the end of Medvedev's presidency, have opposition both in Moscow and among the regional authorities, as became clear in spring 2012, soon after the presidential election and most evidently in Dagestan.

During a commission session, Magomedov sharply criticised law enforcement agencies, which in turn expressed doubt that militants who surrendered were really repenting. Magomedov said it was enough that they stopped illegal activity and returned to peaceful life; active repentance could come later. Kurbanov directly accused law enforcement of sabotaging commission work.<sup>181</sup> As a result of the

dispute, the commission was denied access to preliminary detention centres for two months and did not convene again for five months, until 27 September. An 18 May 2012 special operation in Makhachkala was indicative, as the security services impeded the executive's efforts to ensure the safety of civilians and an insurgent in a blockaded house, despite Magomedov's security guarantees.<sup>182</sup>

An MVD commander told Crisis Group that many in the Dagestan MVD think the commission should not take on the cases of fighters who surrender during CTOs, only those who voluntarily return. He argued that the commission is an insufficient mechanism, and an amnesty is needed, along with significant improvement in the quality of law enforcement: "If prosecuting agencies, courts and police start working decently, fighters will really start returning. If there were a moratorium on torture, the majority would return".<sup>183</sup>

Republic-level commissions, the challenges of applying their kind of soft-power counter-terrorism measures at the federal level and the idea of a federal commission for rehabilitation of fighters were discussed at a special session of the Presidential Council for Human Rights and Civil Society on 10 July.<sup>184</sup> Law enforcement, commission mem-

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Savrulin"], *Chernovik* (online), 27 April 2012. Shamil Mutayev, the commission's head of administration, said "the Investigative Committee stipulates twelve conditions for considering the case, like voluntary surrender, repentance, no previous criminal record. When people learn these conditions, they no longer apply, and those who have applied withdraw the application". Presentation at the special session of the Presidential Council for Human Rights and Civil Society, Moscow, 10 July 2012. Kurbanov became a member of the State Duma in December 2011 but continued as commission chairman. His accusation was that the commission was not receiving materials and data, and written requests were ignored. Crisis Group observation, July 2012.

<sup>182</sup> The operation's commander initially claimed that the two men, three women and two babies in the house refused to leave. After the intervention of Moscow-based civil society leaders, all were allowed out the next morning, except one man who refused to surrender and was killed. The man who surrendered was allegedly beaten, causing a Salafi protest and clashes with police. "Махачкала: из заблокированного дома не выпускают женщин с детьми" ["Makhachkala: They are not letting out women and children from the blockaded house"], Memorial, 18 May 2012. "Дагестан: отказ полицейских выполнять нормы закона спровоцировал беспорядки в Махачкале" ["Dagestan: the refusal of the police to carry out the provisions of the law has provoked riots in Makhachkala"], *ibid*, 21 May 2012. Crisis Group observations, Moscow, May 2012.

<sup>183</sup> Crisis Group interview, MVD commander, Makhachkala, August 2012.

<sup>184</sup> In November 2011, the Dagestan parliament submitted a draft amnesty law to the Duma, "On announcing amnesty for people who committed crimes in the period of anti-terrorist operations on the territory of the Republic of Dagestan". "Парла-

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members of illegal armed groups killed in Chechnya"], *chechnya.gov.ru*, 24 May 2012; "Операцией руководил лично президент Чечни" [The operation personally led by the president of Chechnya], *Severny Kavkaz News*, 9 November 2009; "Кадыров: спецоперация в Грозном завершена, убиты четверо боевиков" ["Kadyrov: a special operation in Grozny has been completed, four militants killed"], *STOP Kavkazskoi Voine*, *www.voinenet.ru*, 18 August 2011; "Рамзан Кадыров руководил операцией по уничтожению боевиков" ["Ramzan Kadyrov led the operation to eliminate militants"], video, *vesti.ru*, 29 August 2010.

<sup>179</sup> "В чеченских горах с вертолетов сбросили тысячи детских писем" ["Thousands of children's letters dropped from helicopters in the Chechen mountains"], *Rosbalt*, 18 May 2012.

<sup>180</sup> А. Мамаев, "Назад в будущее?" ["Back to the future?"], *Chernovik* (online), 12 February 2010.

<sup>181</sup> "Комиссия по адаптации ... генерал-майора Саврулина" ["The commission for the rehabilitation ... of General-Major

bers and experts agreed using only heavy-handed measures to combat terrorism was ineffective. But divisions were evident between the republic authorities on the one hand and the law enforcement agencies and investigative authorities on the other. The former said commission work was made difficult by republic security forces' attitude and supported raising the problem to the federal level. The head of the Kabardino-Balkaria commission admitted the security services did not even join his body. Federal law enforcement representatives were critical of the proposal to create a federal commission, while the adviser to the NAC chair said that organisation considered such a commission premature. The Federal Investigative Committee did not conceal its unwillingness to cooperate.<sup>185</sup>

Integrated into a long-term process and coupled with vigorous economic reforms and better government services, soft-power methods may be able to create the foundations of sustainable peace. They seldom bring quick results, however, and with such a clash of views and interests, their future in the North Caucasus is uncertain.

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мент Дагестана одобрил идею об амнистии за преступления во время КТО" ["The Parliament of Dagestan approved the idea of amnesty for crimes during the CTO"], *Kommersant*, 17 November 2011.

<sup>185</sup> "10 июля в Москве состоялось специальное заседание совета по правам человека при президенте РФ" ["On 10 July, a special meeting of the Council on Human Rights under the President of the Russian Federation held in Moscow"], *Novaya Gazeta*, 11 July 2012. "We believe that we should negotiate during special operations. We would like to involve relatives and civil society in negotiations .... It is important to keep audio and video recordings of each raid to show we do not exceed our authority and do not want just to kill. And all these misunderstandings with the security forces need to be solved". Andrey Przhezdovsky, adviser to the NAC chair. Ruslan Yeshegaev, Kabardino-Balkaria Commission chair's presentation. "The Investigative Committee operates under the Criminal Procedural Code and in any case does not transgress its limitations. No commission should dare to recommend or impose on us any actions .... Therefore, I advise you to cool your temper a bit and behave more correctly". Andrey Istomin, Investigative Committee presentation.

## VI. CONCLUSION

An armed insurgency in the North Caucasus that makes extensive use of terrorism tactics presents a critical challenge to the Russian Federation and its citizens. The roots of the problem are in protracted, unresolved sectarian and ethnic conflicts in what has been historically the country's most loosely integrated region. The government lacks a consistent strategy for integrating North Caucasus Muslims and resolving the conflicts.

Though the insurgents fight under the banner of radical Salafism, the majority of the region's Salafis concentrate on practicing and spreading Islamic norms and do not violently oppose the Russian secular state. Moscow responded to the terrorist threat for over a decade with a heavy-handed security campaign that included repression of fundamentalist Muslims and contributed to the insurgency's spread across the region. In recent years, the counter-insurgency forces' coordination and operating procedures have improved significantly, and new approaches have been developed. Commissions to facilitate integration of ex-fighters into society have created new mechanisms for young people to put their lives back on track. However, counter-insurgency still remains heavily security focused, with systemic human rights violations. Strengthening the focus on soft-power measures and preparing the armed forces to operate in a more sophisticated fashion in populated areas could significantly improve results.

Law enforcement personnel still suffer many casualties, and the stress of operating in the area strongly affects them, including inciting some to take violent revenge in their professional life. That a large percentage of Russian police have served at least six months in Chechnya has a strong impact on the entire national force.<sup>186</sup> Psychological and medical rehabilitation programs for law enforcement personnel serving in North Caucasus operational areas are needed, including new rehabilitation facilities. All personnel who were injured and family members of those killed should receive compensation to which they are entitled without bureaucratic hurdles.

But reducing violence in the North Caucasus cannot be left solely to law enforcement. It requires a comprehensive strategy, involving all elements of the state, to improve the rule of law, economic development and local governance. Only a multi-pronged approach can address the root causes of the insurgency and the closely related ethnic conflicts that continue to fester in the region.

**Moscow/Istanbul/Brussels, 19 October 2012**

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<sup>186</sup> "Милиция между Россией и Чечней. Ветераны конфликта в российском обществе" ["The police between Russia and Chechnya. The veterans of the conflict in Russian society"], *Polit.ru*, 9 October 2007.

## APPENDIX A

### MAP OF THE NORTH CAUCASUS



## **APPENDIX B**

### **GLOSSARY OF ABBREVIATIONS**

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APC	Armored Personnel Carrier
CE	Caucasus Emirate (Imarat Kavkaz)
CTO	Counter-Terrorist Operation
ECHR	European Court of Human Rights
FSB	Federal Security Service (Federalnaya Sluzhba Bezopasnosti)
IED	Improvised Explosive Device
KBR	Republic of Kabardino-Balkaria
KChR	Republic of Karachay-Cherkessia
MVD	Ministry of Interior Affairs (Ministerstvo Vnutrennykh Del')
NAC	National Anti-terrorist Committee
NC	North Caucasus
OGV	Joint Group of Forces (Obyedinennaya gruppirovka voisk)
OH	Operational Headquarters
PTSD	Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder
PVO	Anti-Aircraft Defence (Protivo-Vozdushnaya Oborona)
ROS	Regional Operational Headquarters (Regionalny Operativny Shtab)
SMD	Southern Military District
Spetznaz	Special task force (Voiska Spetsialnogo Naznachenia )
UAV	Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (drone)
VVS	Air Force (Voenno-Vozdushnye Sily)

## APPENDIX C

### GLOSSARY OF TERMS

#### **Adat**

Indigenous customary law.

#### **Ataman**

Cossack leader, highest rank in a Cossack military unit.

#### **Du'a**

Collective prayers, appeal to Allah.

#### **Familias**

Sub-clan family division in Ingushetia, North Ossetia, Kabardino-Balkaria and Karachay-Cherkessia.

#### **Fard**

According to Sharia, the duties of Muslims can be of two types: *Fard kifaya* is sufficient for some Muslims in the *umma* to perform, while others can be exempt; *Fard ayn* is the individual responsibility of every Muslim (eg prayer), without exceptions.

#### **Fatwa**

Judicial opinion issued by learned Islamic scholar(s).

#### **Fiqh**

Muslim jurisprudence and a set of social norms of behaviour inseparably linked with theology.

#### **Fitna**

Discord, social disturbance, also split.

#### **Gazavat**

Armed struggle for Islam.

#### **Hajj**

Pilgrimage to Mecca, one of the five pillars of Islam.

#### **Head of Republic**

The highest office in the constituent republics of the Russian Federation. Until 2010 the head of the republic went by the title of president.

#### **Jamaat**

A group of Muslims united for joint religious rites, Islamic studies, mutual assistance. It can refer to believers attending the same mosque or be created both on a territorial principle or commitment to specific religious dogma.

Within the North Caucasus insurgency, the term is also used to indicate local units established to carry out sabotage and combat missions.

#### **Jihad**

Diligence on the way to God. Struggle to overcome one's own sins, social injustices, and to promote the spread and protection of Islam. Usually the term is associated with militant activities; however, the notion has a much broader meaning.

#### **Krai**

A category of territorial-administrative units in the Russian Federation.

#### **Kufr**

Disbelief in the existence and oneness of Allah.

#### **Kutans**

In Soviet times temporary settlements in the lowlands for shepherds coming down from the mountains, connected to the practice of distant pasture cattle-breeding. Many *kutans* have now turned into permanent settlements, but they often remain unregistered.

#### **Lezginka**

Traditional Caucasian dance.

#### **Madrassa**

Religious college or school.

#### **Majalis**

Representative or legislative council or gathering in countries with linguistic or cultural connections to Islam.

#### **Madhhab**

Muslim school of law and jurisprudence.

#### **Maktab**

Basic courses of Islam or Islamic elementary school.

#### **Maslyat**

Reconciliation.

#### **Mufti**

Senior cleric; in Russia, the head of the Spiritual Board of Muslims.

#### **Murid**

In Sufism: follower, student of a Sufi sheik (*murshid*).

#### **Murshid**

In Sufism: guide or teacher. The path of Sufism starts when a student takes an oath of allegiance (*bai'ath*) with a teacher, after which he becomes a *murid*.

#### **Naibstvo**

Province in the North Caucasus Islamic state "Imamat" in the nineteenth century.

#### **Nasheed**

Islamic song traditionally executed by a male vocal solo or in a choir not accompanied by musical instruments.

#### **Pan-Turkism**

Movement that emerged in the 1880s among the Turkic intellectuals of the countries with significant Turkic-speaking populations (mainly in the Russian and Ottoman Empires, China and Greece) with the aim of cultural and political unification of the Turkic peoples on the basis of linguistic, cultural and spiritual commonalities.

#### **Qadi**

Islamic judge and official.

#### **Rightly-Guided Caliphs**

The first four leaders of the Islamic community after the death of the Prophet Muhammad in 632 c.e. (Abū Bakr, 'Umar, 'Uthmān, and 'Alī). The era of their rule is considered "the golden age of Islam", especially revered by Salafis.

#### **Salafism (Salafi)**

Branch of Islam uniting Muslim religious leaders and their followers who call for focus on the life and faith of the early Muslim community and the righteous ancestors (*al-salaf al-salihun*, Arabic) and consider all later innovations in religious practice as heresy. Salafis reject the veneration of saints and the incorporation of local customs into Islamic practices and call



for a literal reading of the *Quran*, enforcing strict Islamic dress code for men and women. They recognise the authority of the founders of *madhhabs* (schools of Sharia) but say there should be only one school of law, based on the *Quran* and the *Sunnah*.

**Shahid**

Martyr; the term is used for Muslims who have given their life fulfilling a religious commandment or died fighting to defend their country or Islam, or to protect their family.

**Sharia**

Islamic law, a set of legal, moral, ethical, and religious prescriptions of Islam, covering a large part of Muslim life, based on the *Quran*, the *Sunnah*, and *fiqh*.

**Shura**

A consultative council or assembly.

**Stanitsa**

Cossack settlement.

**Sufism**

The mystical-ascetic branch of Islam that emerged within the Sunni community in the eighth-ninth centuries and finally formed in the tenth-twelfth centuries as an independent religious and philosophical doctrine. Sufism consists of separate brotherhoods (*tariqa*).

Followers of Sufism practice, various methods of meditation, usually consisting of repeated utterance of the prayer formula that contains the name of Allah.

**Tariqa**

Path to reach God; also Sufi brotherhood.

**Teip**

Clan, patrilineal kinship group (Chechnya, Ingushetia).

**Umma**

In Islam the term denotes the community of Muslims, regardless of countries, borders, nationality, etc.

**Vilayat**

Region or division. In the North Caucasus: the regional subdivisions of the insurgency.

**Vird**

Subdivision of a Sufi *tariqa*.

**Wahhabism**

A term used to refer to fundamentalist Muslims, followers of Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab al-Tamimi (1703-1792), especially in Saudi Arabia. In the North Caucasus applied pejoratively to Salafis. According to Salafi scholars, the term was coined as a pejorative name and is never used by Islamic movements and parties themselves.

## APPENDIX D

### ABOUT THE INTERNATIONAL CRISIS GROUP

The International Crisis Group (Crisis Group) is an independent, non-profit, non-governmental organisation, with some 130 staff members on five continents, working through field-based analysis and high-level advocacy to prevent and resolve deadly conflict.

Crisis Group's approach is grounded in field research. Teams of political analysts are located within or close by countries at risk of outbreak, escalation or recurrence of violent conflict. Based on information and assessments from the field, it produces analytical reports containing practical recommendations targeted at key international decision-takers. Crisis Group also publishes *CrisisWatch*, a twelve-page monthly bulletin, providing a succinct regular update on the state of play in all the most significant situations of conflict or potential conflict around the world.

Crisis Group's reports and briefing papers are distributed widely by email and made available simultaneously on the website, [www.crisisgroup.org](http://www.crisisgroup.org). Crisis Group works closely with governments and those who influence them, including the media, to highlight its crisis analyses and to generate support for its policy prescriptions.

The Crisis Group Board – which includes prominent figures from the fields of politics, diplomacy, business and the media – is directly involved in helping to bring the reports and recommendations to the attention of senior policy-makers around the world. Crisis Group is chaired by former U.S. Undersecretary of State and Ambassador Thomas Pickering. Its President and Chief Executive since July 2009 has been Louise Arbour, former UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and Chief Prosecutor for the International Criminal Tribunals for the former Yugoslavia and for Rwanda.

Crisis Group's international headquarters is in Brussels, and the organisation has offices or representation in 34 locations: Abuja, Bangkok, Beijing, Beirut, Bishkek, Bogotá, Bujumbura, Cairo, Dakar, Damascus, Dubai, Gaza, Guatemala City, Islamabad, Istanbul, Jakarta, Jerusalem, Johannesburg, Kabul, Kathmandu, London, Moscow, Nairobi, New York, Port-au-Prince, Pristina, Rabat, Sanaa, Sarajevo, Seoul, Tbilisi, Tripoli, Tunis and Washington DC. Crisis Group currently covers some 70 areas of actual or potential conflict across four continents. In Africa, this includes, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Kenya, Liberia, Madagascar, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Uganda and Zimbabwe; in Asia, Afghanistan, Burma/Myanmar, Indonesia, Kashmir, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Malaysia, Nepal, North Korea, Pakistan, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Taiwan Strait, Tajikistan, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan; in

Europe, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cyprus, Georgia, Kosovo, Macedonia, North Caucasus, Serbia and Turkey; in the Middle East and North Africa, Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Israel-Palestine, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Syria, Tunisia, Western Sahara and Yemen; and in Latin America and the Caribbean, Colombia, Guatemala, Haiti and Venezuela.

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**October 2012**

## APPENDIX E

### CRISIS GROUP REPORTS AND BRIEFINGS ON EUROPE SINCE 2009

#### *Balkans*

*Macedonia's Name: Breaking the Dead-lock*, Europe Briefing N°52, 12 January 2009 (also available in Albanian and Macedonian).

*Bosnia's Incomplete Transition: Between Dayton and Europe*, Europe Report N°198, 9 March 2009 (also available in Serbian).

*Serb Integration in Kosovo: Taking the Plunge*, Europe Report N°200, 12 May 2009.

*Bosnia: A Test of Political Maturity in Mostar*, Europe Briefing N°54, 27 July 2009.

*Kosovo: Štrpce, a Model Serb Enclave?*, Europe Briefing N°56, 15 October 2009 (also available in Albanian and Serbian).

*Bosnia's Dual Crisis*, Europe Briefing N°57, 12 November 2009.

*The Rule of Law in Independent Kosovo*, Europe Report N°204, 19 May 2010 (also available in Albanian and Serbian).

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