

Background Information on Chechnya

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1. Background information on Chechnya

Under Article 65 of the Constitution of the Russian Federation, the Republic of Chechnya is mentioned as one of the 89 subjects of the Federation. Chechnya officially calls itself the Chechen Republic of Ichkeria. It is situated in the east of the Northern Caucasus, with an area of around 15,100 square kilometres (borders with the Republic of Ingushetia have not been delimited; in the USSR, both republics were part of the Chechen-Ingush Autonomous Republic). According to the Russian State Committee on Statistics, as of January 1993, Chechnya had a population of around 1,100,000. There are no reliable data concerning the current population of Chechnya.

Chechens are the largest autochthonous nation of the Northern Caucasus. By the last Soviet census of 1989, there were 958,309 Chechens in the USSR, 899,000 of them in the SSR of Russia, including 734,500 in Checheno-Ingushetia and 58,000 in adjacent Dagestan where Chechens live in a compact community.¹ The largest Chechen diaspora outside Russia used to be those in Kazakhstan (49,500 people) and Jordan (around 5,000). One can expect the diaspora to have changed dramatically as a result of mass migrations. Chechnya has always had a very high population growth rate, a high birth rate and one of the lowest percentages of city dwellers in Russia.

The population breakdown by ethnicity under the 1989 Soviet census in the Checheno-Ingush Autonomous Republic is as follows:

Total:	1,270,429	100 %
Chechens	734,501	57.82 %
Ingushs	163,762	12.89 %
Russians	293,771	23.12 %
Armenians	14,824	1.17 %
Ukrainians	12,637	0.99 %
Kumyks	9,853	0.78 %
Nogais	6,884	0.54 %
Avars	6,276	0.49 %
Tatars	5,102	0.40 %
Jews	2,651	0.21 %

¹ In Dagestan, Akin Chechens (a sub-ethnic group) live in the Khasavjurt, Novolak, Kazbek, Babajurt and Kiziljurt regions. They constitute a third of the population of the city of Khasavjurt. In 1944, after the deportation of Chechens, the Chechen-populated Aukh region (established less than a year before, in 1943) was renamed to 'Novolak' region and part of its territory was cut off and included in the adjacent Kazbek region. The villages of Novolak were populated by Lak people from the Kuli and Lak regions (hence the new name, Novolak, literally 'the new Lak'); villages in the Kazbek region became populated by Avars. In 1957, when Akins, alongside other Chechens, were allowed to return from exile, they were not allowed into the same villages from which they had been deported. Akins installed themselves in adjacent regions of Dagestan and for several decades kept demanding the restoration of the Aukh region. In 1991, it was decided to organize the removal of Lak people to the Makhachkala region. They still have not moved; the Akin Chechens still persist with demands to restore the Aukh region.

Belorussians	2,577	0.20 %
Ossetians	1,821	0.14 %
Darghins	1,743	0.14 %
Azeri	1,108	0.09 %
Laks	1,102	0.09 %
Georgians	1,041	0.08 %

Chechens call themselves "Nakhcho". Their language belongs to the Nakh-Dagestan group within the North Caucasian language family. By religion, Chechens are Sunni Moslems. Traditionally, there were two Sufi trends in Chechnya, Nakshbandiya and Kadyriya. Over the last decade, a new Islamic trend, so-called "Wahhabism", has been gaining popularity. Chechen society is organised into "taips", large clans traced back to a mythical common ancestor. Taips are indeed important but their role, just as that of sub-ethnic distinctions, is often overstated in the press.²

Almost as soon as Chechnya was adjoined to Russia in the late 18th century, Chechens started to rebel against Russian central authorities. The history of Russian-Chechen relations is an almost uninterrupted chain of revolts and wars. The most famous of the last is the so-called Caucasian War, which lasted from 1817 until 1859. Until 1832, it was led by Gazi-Magomet, until 1834, by Gamzat-bek, and since then, by Shamil. Chechen resistance against Russian occupation was the greatest of all; it never quite stopped but subsided over time. With a few intermissions, it continued into the Soviet period until both Chechen and Ingush peoples were deported in 1944 to Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan (Soviet republics at the time, now new independent states in Central Asia).

After returning from exile in 1957, Chechens became the dominant ethnic group in the re-established Chechen-Ingush Autonomous Republic. They contributed to its economic progress. The ethnic balance in that republic was gradually changing in favour of Chechens. Local Slav population, mostly Russians, diminished both in proportion to other ethnic groups as well as in absolute numbers. The 'pushing out' of Russians from that area thus started long before independence was proclaimed. For instance, their number decreased by 42,000 between the 1979 and the 1989 censuses.

Amongst non-Russian republics of the Northern Caucasus, Checheno-Ingushetia had the largest population and was, alongside Northern Ossetia, a kind of 'industrial giant'. Its leading industries were fuel production (41% of the total industrial product of Chechnya), food industry (19%) and engineering (13%). Chechnya's oil refining plants processed oil mined both in the Northern Caucasus and in other parts of the USSR. By

² It is estimated that there are 150 to 170 taips in Chechnya. Social hierarchy starts with large patriarchal families called "nek'i". Several nek'i form a 'gar' (clan), gars are grouped into taips. Several taips constitute a 'tukhum', a taip union. The division is not very strict, some taips do not belong to any tukhum; a very large taip, such as Benoi or Tsentoroi, is in fact a tukhum: its members do not have to obey exogamy rules, etc. The taips are broken up into two large groups, highland (the larger group) and lowland. In a way, the Chechen revolution was a fight between highland and lowland taips. Almost all opposition leaders (Zavgayev, Avturkhanov) are lowland. Chechnya's new name, Ichkeria, is the historical appellation of highland Chechnya. It must be stressed that while taip differences do matter in politics, their role should not be overestimated. The Chechen society is not the traditional structure it had once been. Dudaev, for instance, made a point of being an all-Chechen leader and did not advertise his taip identity (he was from the Yalhoroi taip); Maskhadov is a lowland Chechen, which did not stop him from supporting Dudaev.

the early 1990s, over 90% of Russia's aviation oils were being produced in Chechnya; it also manufactured oil mining and refinement machinery. However, despite its high population density (above 60 people per sq. km.), Checheno-Ingushetia remained a chiefly rural area, with just around 40% urban dwellers. Most of its rural population was ethnic Chechens or Ingushs who were reluctant to take industrial jobs. The disproportion led to the emergence of a 'Russian' and 'Chechen' sector in the republic's economy, the former embracing oil mining, engineering and infrastructures, and the latter, agriculture, building, food and textile industries. Agriculture both suffered a shortage of qualified workers and could not provide the necessary number of jobs. Due to the faults of the Soviet economic system, no additional job openings were created. Rural dwellers were as a result largely pauperised, which further provoked ethnic differences. By expert estimates (official Soviet statistics did not reveal the true picture), the unemployment rate in Checheno-Ingushetia was as high as 20-30%. It was precisely those people who took part in the events to follow. This is no surprise: Checheno-Ingushetia's living standards were by many parameters as much 30% lower than the average over Russia.

2. Summary of major events in 1991-1994

June 1991: the All-Chechen National Congress (ACNC) was established, based on the Chechen National Congress founded in 1990. Aviation Major General Jokhar Dudaev is elected head of ACNC. ACNC votes to displace the Supreme Council. Liberal politicians leave the ACNC; it begins to build an infrastructure throughout Chechnya.

August 1991: Chairman of the Supreme Council of Checheno-Ingushetia Doku Zavgaev who had voiced support to the August coup d'état is no longer backed by Moscow. ACNC uses this opportunity and holds a huge meeting in Grozny at the time of the coup. Most of the crowd is young unemployed village people. By August 22, the crowd seized the TV centre. By the end of the month, a group of statesmen from Moscow arrive in Grozny: Presidium Member of the Russian Supreme Council Aslanbek Aslakhonov, Vice Chairman of the Council of Ministers of Russia Inga Grebeshova, Secretary of State Gennady Burbulis, Minister for Press and Information Mikhail Poltoranin and Acting Chairman of the Supreme Council Ruslan Khasbulatov. Under the pressure of both federal authorities and the ACNC National Guard, Zavgaev resigned. A Temporary Supreme Council (TSC) was established but in fact the ACNC came to power. Its National Guard takes over one building in Grozny after another.

October 1991: a quasi-legal basis is invented for the change of power: on October 1, Chechnya proclaimed its sovereignty and separation from the Ingush areas of Checheno-Ingushetia. On October 6, the Temporary Supreme Council was disbanded by a ruling of the ACNC; the next day, October 7, the TSC declared that it would resume its activity and elected a new Chairman, lawyer Badruddin Bakhmadov. On October 27, presidential and parliament elections attended by 72% of the electorate brought Dudaev to power in a landslide victory of 90,1%. The TSC declared the elections falsified and illegitimate, the diarchy continued to exist until November 8, 1991.

November 1991: almost at once after the August coup d'état, Moscow realised it was losing control but even the state of emergency decreed by Yeltsin on November 8 could not improve the situation. Resuming control over the city and the republic would have required rapid military action. Neither Russian authorities nor society were prepared to launch a military campaign. All that followed were negotiations to withdraw Russian soldiers who were trapped in military bases in Chechnya. Against the background of external threat, the opposition was obliged to support Dudaev. Its leaders voiced support to the President, both the TSC and the armed force it had begun to assemble disbanded in the first days of the crisis.

December 1, 1991: the three Ingush-populated regions of the Chechen-Ingush Republic held a referendum to establish an Ingush Republic as part of the Russian Federation; it was attended by 75% of voters, 90% of whom voted 'yes'.³

June 1992: the last remaining Russian army units withdrew from Chechnya, leaving most of their arms and ammunition behind. Between November 1991 and spring 1993, antagonism gradually built up between the Parliament and the Government, on one hand, and between individual government officials disputing over control of Chechnya's oil resources, on the other.

November 1992: Dudaev declared martial law in Chechnya on the pretext of the adjacent Ossetian-Ingush conflict (in Prigorodny district). Chechnya started creating its army and conscription system.

Spring 1993: a political crisis broke out. The opposition established a round table, comprised of Salambek Hajiev, Jibrail Gakkaev and Lechi Umkhaev from 'Daimokhk' ('Fatherland'), Abdulla Bugaev from 'Marsho' ('Liberty'), Shamsuddin Akhtemirov from 'Civil Conciliation', and others. Exploiting the growing economic difficulties and the antagonism between Parliament and Government, the round table calls a meeting that starts on April 15 and lasts until June 4, demanding the resignation of the President and new parliamentary elections.

April 1993: Dudaev disbanded Chechnya's Parliament, the Constitutional Court and the City Assembly of Grozny. He proclaimed direct presidential rule and curfew.

May-June 1993: a new Government was formed, headed by Jokhar Dudaev.

June 4, 1993: Supporters of Dudaev led by Shamil Basaev seized the building of the City Assembly of Grozny. This was the last of the official opposition in Grozny. The

³ A law establishing the Ingush Republic was passed by the Russian Supreme Council only six months later, on June 4, 1992. Another six months passed before the 7th Congress of People's Deputies of Russia included the new law into the Constitution. The issue of the frontier with Chechnya arose as soon as Checheno-Ingushetia fell apart and has not been settled up to date. Negotiations in late 1991 did not result in an agreement. The de-facto division runs along the frontier that had existed until 1934 when the two republics were merged. In November 1992, when Russian tanks were at the Chechen border, a protocol was signed that delimited a temporary frontier. One in a while, the situation brings forth mutual territorial claims: Chechens claim village Sernovodsk or even the entire Sunzha and Malgobek regions of Ingushetia; Ingushs claim the village Assinovskaya in Chechnya. However, these claims have never been made at official levels nor have they ever reached the acuteness of Ingush-North Ossetian ones.

centre of the opposition now moved to the Nadterechny and Urus-Martan regions of Chechnya, where opposition leaders enjoyed the support of their taips. The Nadterechny region had always been controlled by the leaders of 'Marsho' movement, co-chaired by Umar Avturkhanov, head of the regional administration, and Abdulla Bugaev. In Urus-Martan, the Chankhoi taip was traditionally influential (represented by former mayor of Grozny, Beslan Gantemirov, and former vice-Prime minister Yaragi Mamadaev). The history of Chechnya's military opposition started at this point.

December 1993: the newly established Temporary Council of the Chechen Republic united all opposition forces; it was headed by Umar Avturkhanov, Head of Administration of the Nadterechny region.

January 1994: the word 'Ichkeria' was added to the name of Chechnya.

Summer 1994: armed confrontation starts between Dudaev's supporters and his opponents: on June 13, the seat of the opposition, Ruslan Labazanov's military base, was captured by Dudaev's forces, several dozen people were killed.

August 2, 1994: Umar Avturkhanov proclaimed the deposition of Dudaev and asked the Russian President for support. On August 11, Dudaev announced martial law and mobilisation.

September 5, 1994: Labazanov's force was defeated near the town of Argun.

Autumn 1994: continued hostilities between Dudaev's forces and the opposition.

November 26, 1994: opposition forces supported by Russian troops stormed Grozny with tanks and were thrown back. Many tank crews were killed or taken prisoner. On November 28, Russian Defence Minister Grachov publicly denied the fact that his soldiers had taken part in the raid.

December 11, 1994: Russian troops from the Defence Ministry and from the Ministry of Interior, entered Chechnya in columns from three sides. The first Chechen war started at this point.

3. The first Chechen conflict, 1994-1996

The first war lasted two years. It destroyed almost all of Chechnya's industry and social structure. There are no exact or systematic data on the destruction. Expert estimates suggest around 50% of Chechnya's homes, utilities and transport buildings were destroyed. Neither are there any exact data on victims. It is clear that the numbers of civilian victims was indeed huge. They were killed by the hundreds during air raids on cities. The cities to have suffered most were Grozny, Argun, Shali and Urus-Martan.

Mass violations of human rights during the raid of Russian federal troops against the village Samashki became notorious world-wide. On May 14-20, 1996, the village was almost entirely destroyed. Many people left Chechnya, most of the local non-Chechens

moved out. Dudaev's administration was thus rid of all pro-Russian people. Dudaev's rating, relatively low until December 1994, leapt up with the beginning of military hostilities. For many, he became a symbol of national liberation. Consolidation around Dudaev (in fact, decisions were made by the 'council of commanders', not Dudaev alone) was now much stronger than it had been before the war. The tactics of federal troops contributed to this. Political struggle inside Chechnya was over; it was now seen as treason; politics became a function of the interaction of local military commanders. A system of drafting civilians and a rotation mechanism for combatants were produced, typically for guerrilla wars of this kind. Pressurised by the war, economic relations became entirely crime-based. Besides, the war revealed the low professional skills of Russian soldiers: the Russian army was not fit for dealing with conflicts of this kind. The outlook for a political solution that still existed until 1994 was brought down to a minimum. The message that the Chechen conflict could not be managed by military action alone was brought home by disgracefully lost battles.

On April 26, 1995, an OSCE mission was opened in Chechnya; it contributed to producing a clearer picture of the events in Chechnya as seen from the West and even from Russia. It continued to play an important role after the war, especially during the post-war elections. The mission was evacuated from Grozny on December 1, 1998 when it became no longer possible to provide for the security of its members.

Particularly severe carnage in January 1995 left Russian troops in at best nominal control over Grozny. On January 19, what remained of the Presidential Palace was seized by the Russian army after Chechens left. In fact, the situation was practically out of control. There was no front to speak of. Combatants soon learned guerrilla tactics; federal troops lost many soldiers and exercised reprisals on civilians, thus adding to the ranks of Chechen combatants. Soon there was a situation of "night control", typical of guerrilla wars: federal troops seemed to control cities and villages in daylight but were practically helpless by night. A split became visible between northern lowland and southern highland Chechnya. By seizing most of the lowlands, Russian forces cut into Chechen armed groups and forced them up into the highlands.

On July 14, 1995, a group led by Shamil Basaev took around 1,500 hostages in a raid in the Russian town of Budennovsk (Stavropol region) and forced Moscow to start negotiations. In June, talks in the framework of the OSCE started in Grozny. The delegations were headed by Arkady Volsky and Aslan Maskhadov; later Dudaev joined in. Though not leading to a political solution, the negotiations served to avoid large-scale hostilities for six months. Some conflicts were managed, some prisoners released, many lost people found. Still, in some parts of Chechnya hostilities never stopped.

October 6, 1995: in Grozny, an attempt was made on the life of the Commander of the Federal Troops in Chechnya, Lieutenant General Anatoliy Romanov. Negotiations ceased, wide-scale military action resumed. Giving up the idea of talks with Dudaev, federal authorities prepared to legitimise puppet elections.

October 1995: Doku Zavgaev was appointed Chairman of Government. Since his displacement from the post of Chairman of the Supreme Council of Checheno-Ingushetia, Zavgaev had worked at the Russian Ministry for Agriculture, later headed a

division of the Department for Territorial Tasks at the Administration of the Russian President. He continued to be popular in the Nadterechny region where the 'lowland taips' were based.

December 16-17, 1995: elections were held in the midst of armed hostilities and with the curfew in effect; independent observers reported numerous falsifications. Zavgayev, the only candidate, was proclaimed President.

The second stage of the war, **1995-1996**, after Budennovsk, was in many ways different from the first. The logic of the first stage more or less followed military goals: getting control over territories or cities, etc. At the second stage, there was no front to speak of, both armed forces were dislocated on the same area and claimed to be in control of it. Warfare became more chaotic, the war was transformed into a combination of hostilities in the city and guerrilla warfare in the highlands. It was at this point that Chechen resistance started to become decentralised, a tendency that would grow over the years.

January 9, 1996: an armed group led by Salman Raduev, Khunkar-Pasha Israpilov and Turpal Atgeriev raided the city of Kizlyar, Dagestan, attacked its military airport and seized 1,000 hostages. In the course of the negotiations, most of the hostages were released and the rebels got the opportunity to return to Chechnya. On the road, Russian helicopters shot missiles at the cars in which the rebels were travelling with remaining hostages, making them stop at the village Pervomayskoe. On January 15, Russian troops stormed the village; on January 18, Raduev's group managed to break through the siege and make its way to Chechnya in very strange circumstances that made many journalists suggest a possible 'understanding' behind the escape.

March 6, 1996: armed groups led by Gelaev entered Grozny and seized control over most of it, only to leave two days later on March 8 in what amounted to a 'demonstration of force'.

April 22, 1996: Jokhar Dudaev was killed near the village of Gekhi-Chu. By one of the versions, the bearings of his satellite phone were taken during his telephone conversation with parliament member Konstantin Borovoi; a self-targeting missile was then fired.

May 27, 1996: Negotiations between acting President of Chechnya Zelimkhan Yandarbiev and Russian President Boris Yeltsin began in Moscow. The parties signed a cease-fire agreement. All June, until the re-election of Yeltsin, there was relative peace in Chechnya.

June 9-11, 1996: Negotiations started in Nazran, Ingushetia, military issues were discussed in detail. Parties drafted a schedule by which federal troops had to be fully withdrawn by August 30.

June 18, 1996: Alexander Lebed, third runner-up for President at the first round of elections (his campaign included promises to resolve the Chechen crisis) was appointed Secretary of the Security Council of Russia. No later than July 7, the second round of presidential elections was due; a flow of discouraging information from the Caucasus

could have had a negative impact on its results. On June 20, Maskhadov gave the command to suspend military action until July 7.

July 3: Boris Yeltsin was elected President of Russia. On July 9, bombing of villages was resumed (villages Gekhi and Makhkety). By mid-July, warfare was fully ongoing. On July 14, Yeltsin signed a decree that recognised the establishment of new authorities in the Chechen republic. On July 1, the Commander of the Northern Caucasian Military District General Kvashnin announced that any negotiations with Maskhadov could only concern the latter's personal fate.

August 6: Chechen troops entered Grozny and seized control over it. Russian soldiers and a group of newsmen were trapped in the centre of the city. Federal troops used artillery against the city; the use of aviation was limited by heavy clouds.

August 11: Alexander Lebed flew to Chechnya and met with Maskhadov. The parties agreed to negotiate within the next seven days all matters necessary for cease-fire and withdrawal of troops.

August 19: General Konstantin Pulikovsky, Head of Russian Force in Chechnya, declared an ultimatum by which civilians were to leave the city in 48 hours' time, after which he reserved the right to destroy the city. On August 20, before the 48 hours were over, the city was attacked with aviation, artillery and mines.

August 22: Lebed and Maskhadov met in the village Novye Atagi and signed an agreement to withdraw Russian troops from Grozny.

August 30: In Khasavyurt, Dagestan, the parties signed a "Joint Statement" on the principles of conflict resolution, using the status of 'postponed decision': the signing of a final agreement between Russia and Chechnya was postponed until December 31, 2001. The war was over, by **December 31, 1996**, the last federal troops were withdrawn from Chechnya.

4. Developments between 1996 and 1999

The time after the first war was a time of profound social, economic, political and moral crisis of the Chechen society; it revealed both the external and the internal causes of the crisis. The euphoria of "victory and independence" that most Chechens believed the Khasavyurt agreements amounted to, gave Aslan Maskhadov an easy victory at elections in **January 1997**. The newly elected president, however, did not manage to consolidate society and unite the elite. Military commanders did not disband their groups. Every important commander had authority in one of the regions; politics was becoming a function of confrontations between military groups. Society was atomised, the same social mechanisms that had been so useful during guerrilla fighting (including both old Chechen traditions and the social structures built in the war) – decentralised power, autonomous decision making, readiness to fight to the end, 'the culture of war' – now prevented successful building of a state.

Meanwhile, most people in Chechnya were terribly poor and had no future. Over 90% were unemployed. The social infrastructure, education and healthcare were all destroyed. It is hard to estimate material damages. There was no monitoring; existent data can hardly be relied upon since there were no instruments available to make proper estimates. Some experts believe around 80% of Grozny's buildings have been destroyed in the war, as many as 100 % in the city centre. By official statistics, before the war Grozny housed around 30 % of Chechnya's population (the true percentage was probably bigger). The M29 road from Rostov to Baku (the 'Kavkaz' road) was damaged, and so were bridges across Terek and Sunzha. Of course, material damages can not exceed the total value of Chechnya's pre-war national resources, estimated at somewhere around \$ 20 billion. Based on this figure, material damages are put at \$5-6 billion, although the estimate made by General Lebed, \$15-16 billion, may be closer to the reality.

After the war, people survived either by growing their own food, by mining and refining oil under the most primitive conditions, or by crime. Crime became a serious social problem. Owing to the traditional social system, criminal revenues were shared with relatives and neighbours, thus spreading through the society. Without a strong state and with a militarised opposition, the republic was at a dead end. After a series of hostilities between armed groups in September 1998, prominent military leaders Basaev, Raduev and Israpilov publicly called Maskhadov a traitor and demanded his resignation. The President refused, discharged Basaev from his post of prime-minister and took his functions upon himself. The Shari'a court sentenced Raduev to four years in prison; Raduev challenged the court sentence; supported by Basaev, he proclaimed the establishment of a new Shari'a court. Maskhadov's inability to control military leaders led to total chaos on the political field. Neither political nor military methods could serve to overcome the crisis, which soon became the background for an outbreak of kidnapping.

Starting roughly in **1997**, taking hostages for ransom became the *modus vivendi* of large criminal communities. By official Russian statistics, 1,094 persons were kidnapped in Chechnya in 1997-1999. The true numbers remain unknown (around 3,500 people, according to some experts). Most of the kidnapped were ethnic Chechens whose relatives could afford to pay ransom. According to the Russian Ministry of Interior, there were as of October 2000 still 514 hostages remaining in Chechnya. There is no way one can verify this figure, or find out how many kidnapped people are still alive. Central authorities could do nothing to prevent this, both because they were too weak and because crime could not be dealt with by police measures alone. Maskhadov's administration did not succeed in becoming a public political ruler.

One of the consequences was the surge of Islamic extremism that the press usually wrongly refers to as 'Wahhabism'. From the extremists' point of view, the Islamic trends that are traditional in Chechnya disagree with 'true Islam'; they try to replace ethnic nationalism with 'Al Umma Al Islamia', the Nation of Islam, whereas the conflict between Russia and the Chechens is seen as an inter-religious conflict between Christianity and Islam. The religious vision evolves into a primitive kind of political ideology used as an instrument for explaining away the confrontation. Besides other things, religious extremists get access to financial support from those foundations

abroad, usually in the Middle East, which uphold that kind of ideology. Chechen combatants are divided according to their attitudes to extremist Islam. Military leaders Basaev and Arsanov and ideologists Udugov and Yandarbiev tend to favour the 'Wahhabites'. Maskhadov and, until recent times, Kadyrov have supported the traditional forms of Islam, so-called 'Tarikatism'.

From the religious point of view, genuine Wahhabism (owing its name to 18th century Arabian preacher Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab at-Tamimi) is the basis of the official Islamic religion in Saudi Arabia. It has nothing to do with the Northern Caucasus with its completely different religious tradition. Islamic theologians usually refer to the Northern Caucasian 'Wahhabites' as 'Salafites', meaning people who call for restoration of early Islamic ethics. 'Wahhabism' in the Northern Caucasus is in fact very heterogeneous. The term is used to refer to various religious groups that have one thing in common: they reject the 'old' traditional Islamic faith and try to restore a 'true' Islamic faith, which had supposedly existed in the 7th and 8th centuries. The religious trends are usually highly politicised, preaching Islam as a primitive radical political ideology of a confrontational anti-Jewish and anti-Christian kind. 'Wahhabism' is used as a derogatory term, the 'Wahhabites' never call themselves that.

On **February 3, 1999**, Maskhadov made a decree proclaiming Shari'a law in Chechnya. He was thus trying to get an upper hand over the Islamic extremists in the same ideology field, but his manoeuvres were understood as an acknowledgement of impotence and lost him what authority he had had outside the city of Grozny.

5. Missed opportunities: 1996 - 1999

It is perfectly clear that Chechen statehood (meaning the creation of an efficient state infrastructure, not the legal status involved) failed as a result of innumerable blunders on the part of both Moscow and Grozny. The Khasavyurt agreements should have been the first rather than the last step in resolving the crisis. Chechen society had produced an efficient structure for resistance but was totally unprepared for state building. Many of Chechnya's problems were socially based or had an important social component. The economy needed restoring in order to give people legal sources of income. Many people needed post-war social and psychological rehabilitation. In the politics field, a mechanism had to be elaborated to enable interaction between antagonistic territorial, military and religious clans. The confrontations within the society had to be structured and civilised.

The only way this could have been done was with Russia's help. Russia had to co-operate with Maskhadov's administration and show loyalty to the future choice of the Chechen nation (elections were due in 2001). A kind of quasi-independence, with Chechnya remaining closely tied to Russia in both economy and politics, was perhaps still an option at that time. Certain statements by Maskhadov indicated that he would have accepted this option. In that case, the status of Chechnya would have been a matter of technology if not terminology. Extremists would have certainly tried to interfere but economic progress and an opportunity to be part of the Russian market or even enjoy certain preferences on it could have diminished the extremists' popularity.

As it was, the people who were able to work for economic revival and state building remained unwanted and unused in the poor, criminal and dispersed society. A very negative factor was Moscow's unwillingness to negotiate with all the political powers in Chechnya. Moscow's policy was focused on home policy issues. Besides, the Chechen crisis was often handled by incompetent officials who made ad hoc decisions and ignored expert advice. The decision to resume hostilities in 1999 was thus made as part of an effort to bolster the popularity of the authorities. The need to resolve the Chechen crisis was rated second against the need to improve the popular image of authorities. Opinion polls show that public support for military action in Chechnya went down every month (69 % in April, 44 % in October). Authorities do not seem to have a long-term plan of action; rather, they counted on the immediate effect.

However, the measures suggested above need not have necessarily yielded a positive result. Experience world-wide shows that in most cases like this the outcome is negative. Efficient management of the crisis asked for a degree of consolidation in the administration, an expert basis, awareness amongst Russia's elite of the need to handle this crisis properly and a financial base that Russia simply did not have. The above suggestions thus remain purely theoretical, which does not of course mean that Moscow should have behaved the way it did. The policy of declaring the Chechens 'a criminal nation' could only sever Chechnya from Russia. Even low-cost symbolic steps like broadcasting TV programs about Chechen culture and history, were not made. Chechnya continued to fall into chaos; what followed was almost inevitable.

6. Renewed hostilities

The second Chechen war started in **August 1999**, after armed groups of Chechen radicals invaded Dagestan. Backed by local 'Wahhabites', they managed to seize control over a dozen villages in the Tsumadi region of highland Avaria. Avars are the largest ethnic group in Dagestan, about 30% of its population. Highland Avaria is populated by sub-ethnic Avar groups that many ethnographers believe are as closely related to Chechens by language and culture as they are to Avars proper. Dagestan's highlands are its poorest parts in which 'Wahhabite' influence is especially strong. The Russian army fought hard against the raiders and enjoyed the support of most of Dagestan's population; it was thus able to extend the fighting into Chechnya.

The situation was described as resistance to Chechen aggression but was in fact much more complex than that. On one hand, many of the raiders belonged to various Dagestani ethnic groups; most of them were radically-minded people who went to Chechnya during and after the first war, mostly for religious motives, and were trained there. It has been mentioned above that 'Wahhabism' is very heterogeneous. There is an 'intellectual' Wahhabism of people searching for a universal ideology in order to escape from a moral vacuum, a Wahhabism of 'rich' villages (such as Karamakhi and Chabanmakhi in the so-called Kadar zone) trying to defend themselves from the corruption of Dagestani authorities, a Wahhabism of young radicals, etc. Still, the soil that produced the greatest number of 'Wahhabite' extremists was the unemployment and high birth rates in highland Dagestan. A fairly large group of Dagestani 'military and political emigrants' was active in Chechnya, as criminalised and well-armed as the

Chechen radicals themselves. So-called 'Wahhabites' in Dagestan also backed the idea of fighting against Russia with the end of turning both Chechnya and Dagestan into one Islamic State. The raid was thus not pure intervention.

On the other hand, the raid was not an all-Chechen initiative. It was organised by a group of radically-minded military leaders led by Basaev. Although many of its details remain obscure, the raid certainly coincided with the logic of Chechnya's political evolution. The radical wing of its militarised political elite was aiming to expanding on its influence both inside Chechnya and in the entire Caucasus. For reasons mentioned above, influence could not be earned by peaceful society building; Maskhadov's rule was too weak to interfere. Enjoying the support of the Dagestani population most of whom were hostile to both Islamic radicals and Chechens, Moscow continued its military operations.

September 4, 1999: the federal aviation began to bomb Chechnya.

September 17, 1999: Prime Minister Putin publicly declared that the "Khasavyurt agreements" have been a mistake.

September 20, 1999: The First Deputy Head of General Staff Valery Manilov announced the start of a new "anti-terrorist operation". For about a month until the end of October, federal troops progressed into northern lowland Chechnya while simultaneously bombing lands south of the Terek river. Villages Gekhi-chu and Shatoi were heavily bombed from the air. Artillery fired at Baitarki, Zandak, Nozhai-Yurt, Alkhan-Yurt and Beno-Yurt villages. By the end of 1999, there were, according to UNHCR's estimates, 350,000 internally displaced persons, primarily in neighbouring Ingushetia (230,000), in other Northern Caucasus republics as well as in Moscow (20,000), and some 100,000 internally displaced within Chechnya itself.

October 20, 1999: The federal troops crossed over to the southern shore of the Terek river.

October 29, 1999: A spokesman for the Ministry of Defence announced the plans of the federal command to conclude the bulk of the operation by the end of November.

November 5, 1999: The federal troops approached the next natural boundary after the crossing of Terek: they took stand on the heights of the Tersky and Sunzhenky mountain ranges on the line from Pervomayskaya to Assinovskaya.

November 12, 1999: Russian troops entered Gudermes, Chechnya's second largest city; the city surrendered without resistance.

December 1, 1999: Defence Minister Igor Sergeev announced that 'the standing of the bandits is aggravating, this is the logical climax of the counter-terrorist operation'.

December 6, 1999: The federal troops set forth to take over Grozny. The military command challenged the Chechen forces with an ultimatum to surrender.

December 7, 1999: In a total of 25 air raids, bombs were dropped on the residential quarters of Grozny, destroying the ‘Krasny Molot’ factory, the railway junction and the brick plant.

December 15, 1999: The first deputy head of General Staff Valery Manilov announced that the federal command planned to conclude the counter-terrorist operation by the end of February 2000.

December 22, 1999: Russian paratroopers landed in the southern part of the Argun gorge, near the Georgian frontier.

January 18 – February 6, 2000: Federal troops assail Grozny, squeezing out and destroying large groups of Chechen rebels and finally getting formal control over the Republic’s capital.

In a military operation on **February 1-3, 2000**, many Chechen combatants were killed, including two military leaders, Israpilov and Ismailov.

March 6, 2000: The North Caucasus Department of the General Prosecutor’s Office declared Aslan Maskhadov wanted on a charge of committing an offence under article 279 of the Russian Criminal Code, ‘armed mutiny’.

March 12, 2000: under circumstances that are not quite clear, the FSB captured “warlord” Salman Raduev⁴ in Novogroznenskoe village.

March 13, 2000: A delegation of the Parliament Assembly of the Council of Europe visited the Northern Caucasus and urged Russian authorities to promptly declare a cease-fire in Chechnya and start negotiations with selected Chechen spokesmen.

June 12, 2000: Mufti Akhmed Kadyrov was appointed Head of Administration of the Chechen Republic by Moscow.

July 11, 2000: In Gudermes, the Head of General Staff Anatoly Kvashnin presented Bislan Gantamirov as the new first deputy Head of Administration of the Chechen Republic, in charge of all enforcement agencies of Chechnya.

December 15, 2000: The Head of General Staff Anatoly Kvashnin proclaimed a new stage of the “counter-terrorist operation”. According to him, large-scale warfare would now be replaced by measures to protect the people living in Chechnya and enable them to live normally.

7. The current situation

The 1999-2000 war is in fact different from the first one. This time, Chechen resistance was totally decentralised, there was in fact no central command. The combatants thus

⁴ Salman Raduev, son-in-law to Dudaev, remains the only major leader of the rebels to have been captured in the second war, to date. By the time of his arrest, though, he had little influence in Chechnya, many observers stated that his actions had become inadequate as a result of his being shot several times in the head.

had to change tactics to an exaggerated version of the strategy they had used at the second stage of the first war. It consisted in surrendering cities and villages, spreading combatants throughout the country to live as civilians and clandestinely attack army posts and individual soldiers. Chechen combatants tried to avoid open battles; the numbers of victims went down but never dropped below a certain figure. By official Russian data, 2,676 Russian soldiers were killed in Chechnya by September 2000. Chechens place this figure at around 16,000. It is impossible to calculate Chechen losses; counting the civilians, the victims number dozens of thousands.

Decentralisation has become the major feature of the Chechen resistance as well as of every aspect of life in Chechnya. Chechnya is no longer one body, whether social, economic, cultural or political. Communication, even between villages, has become a problem. The confrontation has fully evolved into a guerrilla war as predicted by most experts. The causes are clear enough: this style of fighting does not require many financial or human resources, it is much more 'rewarding' in the way it works to terrorise the enemy and the way it is covered by the media.

The sub-culture of 'Shehids' (martyrs of faith) already existing in Chechnya shall continue to produce new combatants for the guerrilla groups. The war itself is quite efficient in producing this sub-culture: Russian military, unable to revenge their fellow soldiers, abuse civilians, thus adding to the numbers of those willing to fight. The term 'civilians' as applied to Chechnya is fairly stretched. The social structure of the resistance is very flexible; besides 'professional' Mojaheds, of which there are perhaps several thousand, there are many people who fight once in a while or passively support the combatants, giving them food and shelter. To an extent, almost the entire populace is the reserve of resistance. This structure is very stable and can remain in place for years.

Although few people are prepared to act as kamikaze, the existing system of regeneration of combatants ensures that the guerrilla war goes on, growing younger as it does: many of today's combatants are 16-17-year-olds for whom war is the only lifestyle they have even known. They have little or no education; they no longer have their fathers' Soviet background, nor do they belong to the Russian cultural area. Their cultural references are a blend of archaic local traditions and a 'primitivised' Near Eastern Islamic tradition. The new generation's motive for war is no longer independence from imperial Russia, but a fight against 'infidels' modelled on Islamic radical movements of the Near East. In the absence of a 'common language', the new generation will be much more difficult for Russia to negotiate with than the one that is currently in power.

The military and police activities suggested by Russian generals as terrorism prevention measures are almost useless, not only on account of the generals' low professional abilities. As long as the basis of the guerrilla war, i.e. its social and ideological regeneration system, remains intact, no fortifications, curfews or even additional troops can serve any purpose. Even eliminating the military leaders will not arrest the reproduction of guerrilla resistance. The personalities of Basaev and Khattab are a result rather than a cause of the war. The elimination of leaders will make the resistance even

more decentralised, involve more people in it and put it totally out of hand. A solution to the problems lies in a very different sphere.

The Chechen conflict is a complex phenomenon involving every aspect of life: economy, ethnic culture, social life, ideology, law and politics. Problems of this kind can not be handled by military and police means alone. Rather than becoming the only method of conflict resolution, police measures have to be merely one of its components, not the most important one. By refusing to negotiate with the rebels, intensifying persecution and trying to pretend that the combatants are common criminals who are not supported by the nation, the Russian authorities contribute to the social basis of the war and ensure a negative prospect for its resolution.

8. Conclusion

The prospect for conflict resolution is very poor. Theoretically, there can still be a scenario with a non-zero probability of success. After the two wars, it will have to include starting negotiations without any preconditions, immediately putting an end to armed hostilities, withdrawing troops from Chechnya on the condition of mutual non-aggression. The military have to be kept out of political decision-making. Military measures must be no more than one of the components of a complex system of measures aimed at resolving the crisis. At present, the generals have too much influence on decision-making, producing illusions of 'simple solutions' such as reinforcing block-posts or increasing security measures, or lobbying certain Chechen activists according to 'convenience' for future contacts rather than the activists' political weight. This is counter-productive.

Negotiations on distribution of power must be accompanied by financial support to Chechnya's economic revival. The bottom line is, negotiations must address every political force in Chechnya, especially the radicals. Talking to "leaders" like Kadyrov and Gantamirov is purposeless since the combatants do not perceive them as leaders but as traitors; any agreements made with them are in fact not agreements with the opponent. Negotiating with real leaders can make it possible to divide Chechnya into several segments, each of them under the authority of a particular military leader. This would amount to acknowledging the current state of affairs. Subdividing Chechnya into cantons can become the starting point for building relationships among the cantons, and finally with Russia. At any rate, elaborating adequate political models for Chechnya will take a long stretch of balanced policy on the part of Russia. Given present-day Chechnya and present-day Russian political elite, public opinion, etc., such a scenario is highly improbable.

A more probable scenario is one where the current status stays unchanged for years. As of now, events follow the worst possible course: we now have an organised guerrilla war similar to ones in Central America and South Asia, some of which have gone on for decades.

However, the Chechen conflict is localised within the Chechen (or perhaps the common Chechen-Ingush, or Vainakh) ethnic group. The conflict is based on the several

centuries-long history of Russian-Chechen relations. Concerns about a possible Caucasian war are hardly justified: the war in Chechnya can only have direct impact on adjacent Ingushetia and highland Dagestan. This does not mean other republics in the Northern Caucasus have no problems of their own. They do. For instance, there is the problem of religious extremism, but it does not lead to a crisis like the one in Chechnya. It is not by chance that the armed conflict happened in Chechnya and not elsewhere; its causes lie in the particular features of this republic that other Northern Caucasian republics do not have. There are few chances that the Chechen conflict will expand; there are as few chances that it will soon be over.

Annex

Short biography of the main characters

ASLAKHANOV Aslanbek: Born in 1942, in Novye Ataghi village, in the Shali region of Chechnya. Belongs to Merzhoi taip. Graduated in 1965 from the Kharkov Pedagogical Institute (a correspondent course), in 1975, from the Kharkov Institute of Public Catering, in 1981, from the Academy of the USSR Ministry of Interior. Has a doctor's degree in law, the rank of Major-General in the militia, is advanced in wrestling and judo. Made his career in the militia force. Started as a lower-rank officer, was senior inspector, then head of militia department, deputy head of Criminal Investigations Department at the BAM in Siberia. In 1981-1989, Aslakhonov was Head Inspector for Special Assignments, then Deputy Head and later Head of the Department for the Prevention of Embezzlement of Socialist Property, Head Inspector of the Head Inspection at the Department of Logistics and Inspection of the Ministry of Interior. In 1988, after the kidnapping of an aircraft and its passengers at the airport in Mineralnye Vody, Aslakhonov volunteered to negotiate with the terrorists. He went on board the plane; his efforts were very efficient in helping to free the hostages. In 1990, he was elected to the federal Parliament as a representative of the Gudermes region. Aslakhonov became a member of the Nationalities' Council of the Supreme Council of Russia. He is seen to have been one of the people who brought Jokhar Dudaev to power in 1991. Aslakhonov flew from Moscow to Grozny in order to speak at public meetings in support of Chechnya's sovereignty. According to people who knew him well at the time, he was soon 'horrified by the way Dudaev carried on' and tried many times to reason with him. During both military campaigns in Chechnya, Aslakhonov criticised the actions of the federal authorities. It is believed that in November-December 1999, he actively tried to counteract the Kremlin's attempts to create a loyal political structure out of Chechen diaspora members. In late 1999, the Union of Chechnya's Nations, an organisation established by Aslakhonov, called for cease-fire and peace negotiations with Maskhadov. On August 20, 1999, Aslakhonov was elected Duma member, getting 30.31% of votes in Chechnya.

ARSANOV Vakha: Former driver. Joined the national revolution in autumn 1991, was elected to Parliament in October 1991. Was on the committee that tried to establish control over oil trade and investigated thefts in the oil industry. In 1994, when Russian troops entered Chechnya, he became a successful commander. Took part in the seizure of Grozny in August 1996. On December 2, 1996, started a campaign for Presidency. On December 14, Arsanov reached an agreement with Maskhadov and withdrew from the competition. After Maskhadov was elected, Arsanov became vice-president. There are many reports that Arsanov is involved in kidnapping. For instance, members of NTV television company have made an open statement to the effect that Arsanov had been involved in the kidnapping of an NTV reporting group led by Yelena Masyuk. Arsanov is known for his cruelty.

AVTURKHANOV Umar: Born in 1946 in Kazakhstan. Belongs to Nizhaloi taip (same as Zavgaev). Graduated from the Army Command School in Orjonikidze and the Kuban State University Department of Law. Until 1991, worked in Sukhumi, at the Ministry of Interior. Came to Chechnya in 1991, co-chaired the Temporary Committee for Management of the Nadterechny region. Opposed Dudaev. Since April 1992, Head of Administration of Nadterechny region. Took part in anti-Dudaev actions in May-June 1993. In December 1993, a meeting of opposition leaders in Nadterechny region elected him Chairman of the Temporary Council of the Chechen Republic. Since January 1995, first deputy head of the Territorial Department of federal executive authorities in Chechnya. In March-October 1995, Chairman of

the Committee for National Conciliation of Chechnya. In October 1995, resigned and moved to Moscow.

BASAEV Shamil: Born in 1965 in Dyshni Vedenovskoye village, Vedenskoye region. Belongs to Harachoi taip. Education: secondary school. Worked as a manual labourer. In 1986, Basaev became a student at the Moscow Institute of Land Engineers. In 1991, was one of the defenders of the Moscow White House. Since fall 1991, an active participant of the 'Chechen revolution'. In November 1991, in protest against the Russian President's decree of a state of emergency in Chechnya, Basaev committed his first act of terrorism: he hijacked a plane from the airport of Mineralnye Vody city to Turkey. In 1992, fought as a volunteer in Abkhazia, became famous for military exploits and was made "Hero of Abkhazia" by its President Ardzinba. In early 1993, returned to Grozny and established the Abkhazian Battalion of the Chechen Armed Force, later used to fight against opposition in 1993-1994. From the start of the first war and until February 1995, had command over the defence of Grozny. On June 14, 1995, a group led by Basaev raided the local hospital in Budennovsk, Russia; the terrorists returned to Chechnya after negotiations with Russian authorities. In November 1996, announced his intention to run for President; second runner-up for presidency at elections in January 1997 (23, 5% of votes). Since the raid on Dagestan in summer 1999 and the start of the second war, Basaev has been the leader of the radical wing of military commanders.

GANTAMIROV Beslan (also spelled **Gantemirov**): Born 1963 in the village of Gekhi. Belongs to Chinkoi taip. Until 1991, worked for the Ministry of Home Affairs. In 1991, he became a member of the Executive Committee of ACNC; was one of the leaders of the 'Chechen revolution'. In November 1991- June 1993, Mayor of Grozny. Since spring 1993, in opposition to Dudaev; headed an armed group in Urus-Martan. Since November 1994 until 1996, he had been Minister, Prime Minister and Mayor of Grozny in the pro-Russian government of Chechnya. In May 1996, he was arrested on a charge of fraud and misappropriating state funds. In year 2000, he was pardoned, released from prison in Rostov-on-Don and appointed the Deputy of Kadyrov, Chechnya's Head of Administration (pro-Russian). At odds with Kadyrov; traditionally popular in the Urus-Martan region.

GELAEV Ruslan: Born in village Komsomolskoye. Belongs to Myalkhi taip. In 1992-1993, took part in the armed hostilities in Abkhazia as a fighter of the armed force of the Confederation of Caucasian Nations; was commander of 'presidential' special tasks' regiment. In late 1993, led a group of veterans of the war in Abkhazia who opposed Dudaev. The conflict was settled by negotiations. During the war in Chechnya, commanded troops that fought in Western Chechnya; was commander of the raid on Grozny in March 1996. Since April 1997, deputy Prime Minister, since January 1998, Minister of Defence of the Chechen Republic. Gelaev is one of the military leaders of Chechnya. He is known as a radical commander and believed to be one of the leaders of the 'oil mafia' in Chechnya. He is popular in south-western Chechnya (Bamut).

KADYROV Ahmad-Khadji: Born in 1954 in Kazakhstan. Belongs to the Benoi taip. Graduated from Mir-Arab Medreseh (Islamic High School) in Bukhara, Uzbekistan. In 1988, he founded the first Islamic University in Chechnya in the village Kurchaloi. In 1991, after Chechnya proclaimed independence, he returned to Grozny from Jordan, where he was doing a post-graduate course at the Shari'a Department of the University of Jordan. In Grozny, he became the deputy of Chechnya's Mufti (Islamic authority), Aslanbekov. During the first war, in 1994-1996, he backed the fighting against Russian troops. In 1995, on Dudaev's initiative, Kadyrov was elected Mufti of Chechnya at a meeting of military leaders and five local Imams. In 1996, he took part in negotiations between Lebed and Maskhadov at Stary Atagi village. In 1998, he openly criticised Maskhadov, demanding that the latter publicly condemn 'Wahhabism'. After Maskhadov failed to support him against Basaev and the 'Wahhabites',

Kadyrov broke off relations with Maskhadov. In 1999, he came to Dagestan's capital Makhachkala and condemned the participation of Chechen Wahhabites in the raid against Dagestan. Maskhadov reacted by denouncing Kadyrov as a traitor and discharging him from his post of Mufti. In 1999, Maskhadov sentenced Kadyrov to death. Kadyrov helped organise the surrender of Gudermes to Russian troops. Was appointed in 2000 Head of the Civilian Administration in Chechnya by the Russian Government. His relationship with another Russian protege, Beslan Gantamirov, is very tense. He hardly ever leaves Gudermes for security reasons. Has often said that religious extremists are a greater danger to Chechnya than the Russians.

KHATTAB ("Amir Khattab"): Military leader, an Arab, supposedly from Jordan (by other sources, a Bedouin from Saudi Arabia). His biography is only known from what he himself says. In an interview to a Grozny newspaper, he said that he was from Arabia, his parents were living, and he had seven brothers and many relatives. He said he had dreamed to go to the States to become a physicist or mathematician but more than nine years ago he had gone to fight to Afghanistan, then to Tajikistan, and later to Chechnya. As a reason for his being in the Caucasus, Khattab named 'the intervention of Russian infidels and the ensuing Jihad (religious war)'. Has several wives, one of them born in the city of Shali in Chechnya. Another wife, Darghin by ethnicity, is from Kadar, Dagestan. Has the rank of Major in the Chechen Armed Force and several Chechen awards. Since 1988, he has been fighting against Russian troops in Afghanistan, then (supposedly) in Tajikistan on the side of the opposition. Came to Chechnya in 1994. Has a reputation of being an expert on mines and explosives. Khattab is very religious and has the reputation to be cruel to prisoners.

MASKHADOV Aslan: Born 1951 in Kazakhstan. Belongs to Aleroy taip. In Chechnya since 1957 (Zebir-Yurt village, Nadterechny region). Education: 1969-1972, the School of Artillery in Tbilisi, Georgia; 1978-1981, the Academy of Missile Forces and Artillery in Leningrad. In fall 1992, he retired from the army with the rank of Colonel and returned to Chechnya. Since late 1992, Deputy Head of Staff of the Chechen Armed Force. In summer 1993, he took part in raids of Dudaev's supporters against 'opposition regions' of Chechnya. Since March 1994, Head of Staff of the Chechen Armed Force. One of the leaders of resistance since the start of the first war. In January 1997, elected President of Chechnya. Author of a book called *Honor above Life*. Made numerous anti-terrorist and anti-Wahhabite statements.

UDUGOV Mavladi (surname: Temishev): Born in 1962 in Grozny. Graduated from the Checheno-Ingush State University. Worked as journalist for the Checheno-Ingush television. Member of 'Bart' ('Conciliation') society chaired by Yandarbiev. Member of First Congress of ACNC and later of its Presidium. Chairman of ACNC Committee on Information. One of the leaders of the 'Chechen revolution'. Since December 1991, headed the information department in Dudaev's administration. No.1 propaganda man of Dudaev's regime. One of the political leaders of Chechens in the first war. Was involved in many rounds of Russian-Chechen talks. At 1997 presidential elections, rated fourth. On February 20, 1997, was elected Amir (head) of the 'Islamic Order' Union. Advocated the establishment of an Islamic state based on the Koran and Shari'a. Continues to engage in propaganda in the second war. It is not known where Udugov is now (Turkey, Azerbaijan and Near Eastern states are sometimes mentioned as his possible whereabouts).

YANDARBIEV Zelimkhan: Born in 1952 in Kazakhstan. Graduated from the Department of Philology at the Checheno-Ingush State University. Worked at the Checheno-Ingush Publishing House. Wrote novels and poetry. In 1989, was one of the founders of 'Bart' ('Conciliation') society. Took active part in organising and holding the First Session of the All Chechen National Congress. Since November 1990, Vice-Chairman of the Executive Committee of ACNC, one of the ideological leaders of the 'Chechen revolution'. In 1992, repeatedly led the Chechen delegation at negotiations with Russia. In 1993, was consistent in his support for

Dudaev in the internal conflict. On April 17, 1993, Dudaev made a decree appointing Yandarbiev 'acting Vice-President of the Chechen Republic'. Since Dudaev's death in April 1996 and until Maskhadov was elected in February 1997, was acting President of Chechnya. Was not active in the armed hostilities. Was third runner-up for President in the 1997 election. Until hostilities were renewed in 1999, refused to co-operate with Maskhadov. At present, he is thought to be in Kabul, Afghanistan (by other sources, in Peshavar, Pakistan). Belongs to a radical wing of the Chechen resistance. He is known to have radical views. He has limited political influence, has never had his own armed group but remained a 'pure' ideologist.

ZAVGAEV Doku: Born in 1940 in village Beno-Jurt, Nadterechny region. Belongs to Nizhaloi taip. Graduated from the Highland Agricultural Institute and the Academy of Social Sciences at the Central Committee of the USSR Communist Party. Worked at the Ministry of Agriculture of Checheno-Ingushetia, starting as machine operator, ending as Minister. Since 1983, Second Secretary, since 1989, First Secretary of the Communist Party Committee of the Checheno-Ingush Republic, Chairman of its Supreme Council. Displaced from his office during the Chechen revolution in September 1991. In 1990-1993, People's Deputy of Russia. Since October 1995, Chairman of pro-Russian Government of Chechnya. In November 1995, appointed head of the Chechen Republic, in December 1995, 'elected' President. Remained in this office until November 1996. Since the seizure of Grozny by Chechen forces in 1996, stayed in Moscow. Until May 1998, member of Russia's Federation Council. Since March 1997, Russian ambassador to Tanzania.

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