

WORD

DOSH

DIGEST

THE METHODS OF STATE TERROR



Карачаево-Черкессия

Ставропольский край

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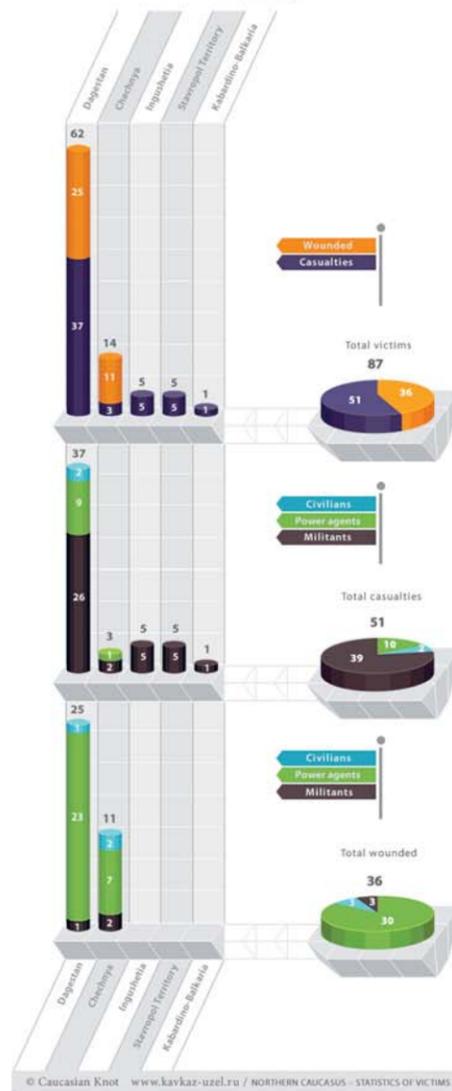
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fell victim to armed conflicts



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Twenty years ago the small Dagestani town of Khasavyurt, near the border with Chechnya, came to prominence thanks to the historic talks which took place there between Russia and Chechnya, putting an end to the Russian-Chechen War. To be more exact, those talks marked a three-year breathing spell.



LEYA GUREVICH IS INSTEAD OF IK?

The North Caucasian Armed Underground Has Changed Its Reference Point

Time does not stand still; it brings changes to the structure of the shadow, underground element of Caucasus society. There is no reason to hide the fact that it always had a not insignificant influence on the life of the region. Why is this happening, and what should one expect from new trends? A report by the International Crisis Group is dedicated to the answers to these questions. It is called "**Jihad For Export? The Underground of the Northern Caucasus and Syria**", and came out recently in two languages, English and Russian.

The report posits the curious thesis that the decrease in the level of violence in the Caucasus in recent years is connected with the movement of some of the radicals to Syria and Iraq. According to this explanation by the fighters of the underground and forest resistance, the Caucasus is no longer a part of Russia, but a remote province of the Islamic State (an organization banned in Russia) — Vilayat Kavkaz (translator's note: vilayat is an Arabic word meaning province; Kavkaz, Chechen and Russian word for Caucasus). Two to three years ago, the

fighters were calling their organization Imarat Kavkaz (translator's note: the Caucasus Emirate), but, it appears, something happened.

"Russia and IS (translator's note: the Islamic State, or ISIS)," the report reminds us, "are in a state of direct conflict with each other: the Russian security forces announced that in 2015, they prevented terrorist acts inspired by IS; more than once did IS threaten to strike Russia and took responsibility for the destruction of the airliner over the Sinai Peninsula on



October 31st, when 224 citizens returning to Russia from Egypt died, and for two terrorist acts in southern Dagestan."

The authors of the report advise the de-radicalizing of the Caucasus by taking into account the interests of the local population, whose legitimate indignation over the human rights situation, and the standard of living, invariably sustain and give moral support to radicals from the underground.

However, simultaneously, the report recounts, the "fad" among young people in the Caucasus for armed jihad was exported to the Middle Eastern and European diasporas of those very radical emigres from the Caucasus.

This happened, according to the report, in the wake of massive attacks by the Russian security forces on "Imarat" before the Sochi Olympics.

Consequently, radicalism was not overcome, but squeezed out of the country. Problems multiplied, went every which way, the situation became worse than before, and instead of one flash-point of the conflict, many little ones lit up, including outside of Russia.

Some of the jihadists headed to the warm climate of Turkey, a stone's throw from Syria. Some stayed in Turkey and did not look for more trouble. Istanbul got a community speaking the languages of the Caucasus. The authorities did not worry too

much about these migrants until, in 2015, terrorist acts inspired by IS occurred, the report notes.

The citizens recruited by the Islamic State and their accomplice — guides scurried undisturbed over the Turkish-Syrian border, providing new conscripts for the groups fighting the Syrian regime. Information was obtained to the effect that in order to eliminate representatives of the Chechen underground in Turkey, Russia equipped its own professionals and they killed eight of the resistance fighters. The Turkish security forces stood to the side and discretely held their tongues. They explained it away by saying that they were not able to trace the masterminds of the killings.

The report emphasizes that the innate courage of Chechens, their willingness to take risks, and their fearlessness, allow them to move up the ranks of the Syrian rebel army quickly, and often they hold command positions. But, sometimes they strive to head up small, independent groups, not subordinate to any structure.

Meanwhile, in Russia herself, it states in the document, pressure on law-abiding Salafis has increased, especially in Dagestan. In Chechnya, the policy towards Salafis has traditionally been harsher. The Ministry of Internal Affairs of Chechnya regularly conducts campaigns against them. According to reports, in 2015, many of them were detained, and at the end of the year several disappeared.

Jihad For Apartments

The report also acquaints us with the motives of the radicals who leave to fight for IS.

"IS offers its adherents of armed jihad in the Caucasus an alternative to the suicidal struggle at home, and makes leaving the country with the goal of fulfilling one's religious obligations even more convincing. Making itself out to be an egalitarian welfare state, IS distributes apartments and monetary payments to the families of militants, and offers the possibility of career advancement according to one's deeds, as well as public retribution for what are perceived by them as insults to Muslims around the world."

The recommendation section of the report relates that the flow of fresh forces into IS from the Northern Caucasus should be stopped, for which "intellectual resources from different fields and disciplines, including experts on the region, unprejudiced officers of the security services, educational workers, and moderate religious leaders ought to unite."

The compilers of the document believe that "law-abiding fundamen-

talist leaders can significantly influence young people. In addition, it is important to create controllable, but safe channels for a return to peaceful life, and programs aimed at preventing radicalization in the prisons. Perhaps the most powerful weapon against the recruiters is the personal stories of those who became disenchanted and returned from Syria and Iraq."

The author of the work gives recommendations to the government of the Russian Federation on reducing radicalization. Admit that the problem exists, provide rule of law and decentralization of power in the republics, improve the work of the investigative organs, organize peaceful recreation for the youth of the Caucasus; persuade the recruiters and jihadists from Syria and Iraq to cooperate. Guarantee them light sentences as a means of encouraging them to participate in counterpropaganda of radical jihad.

A separate paragraph follows for the recommendations to the Ministry of



"At the same time, the expert admits that at the present time in the leadership of the country, the political will to a real solution to the problems of the Caucasus is lacking. After all, "de-radicalization is delicate work, in many respects, individually-tailored. There are clear, concrete measures; we have devoted a whole section to them. They are more complicated than indiscriminate repression. It is intellectual work. It is easier to detain everyone, put them in jail, close mosques... It is harder to negotiate, integrate, convince. But the second approach offers a chance for a long-term peace. What we see now – is the problem deferred. And at the first opportunity, everything will explode anew."

Internal Affairs of Dagestan, not to discriminate against local Salafis. By the same token, they advise the national antiterrorism committee to transfer some of its responsibilities on the reintegration of former militants to the local national commissions.

Among other things, it is recommended that the Russian government create a group on de-radicalization, with the participation of independent experts, representatives of law enforcement authorities and power ministries, teachers, journalists, and religious leaders, including law-abiding Salafis. Together, all of them will have to create tools to reconcile the opposing parties, and also to lessen social tensions in the region.

The author of the report, the director of the Project on the Northern Caucasus, and senior analyst of the Crisis Group, Yekaterina Sokiryanskaya, in an interview with DOSH, voiced the supposition that some of the high-ranking Russian security officials know very well that the methods they are

Meanwhile, in Russia herself, it states in the document, pressure on law-abiding Salafis has increased, especially in Dagestan. In Chechnya, the policy towards Salafis has traditionally been harsher. The Ministry of Internal Affairs of Chechnya regularly conducts campaigns against them. According to reports, in 2015, many of them were detained, and at the end of the year several disappeared.

using for normalizing the situation in the Caucasus are ineffective.

In point of fact, it is impossible not to admit that the idea of opening the borders and letting radicalized citizens go to the Middle East before the Olympics really helped to reduce the level of violence. However, this only proved to be a temporary solution to the problem, since those who left did not forget their historic homeland, and can return, having enriched themselves with the experience of ultra-radical jihad.

This is backed up by the fact that IS has for the third time now taken responsibility for acts of terror committed in Russia, including Dagestan. After all, IS also took responsibility for the destruction of the Russian airliner over the Sinai, Sokiryanskaya reminds us.

Militants from Russia occupy fairly high-up positions in the hierarchy of the Islamic State and are continuing the unfinished war in their homeland there. This will assure that this huge

Yekaterina Sokiryanskaya



terrorist organization will pay further attention to Russia. The power ministries admit the danger: now they are trying to limit the exodus of militants abroad. But overall, the actions of the Russian authorities cannot be called de-radicalization. On the contrary, we see based on the situation in Dagestan and Chechnya that the tension among youth has not decreased. However, we hope that reasonable people high up in the security services will hear our recommendations, will read our report and as a result of this, that something will really change. We are merely analyzing the problem, and proposing courses of action.

At the same time, the expert admits that at the present time in the leadership of the country, the political will to a real solution to the problems of the Caucasus is lacking. After all, "de-radicalization is delicate work, in many respects, individually-tailored. There are clear, concrete measures; we have devoted a whole section to them. They are more complicated than indiscriminate repression. It is intellectual work. It is easier to detain everyone, put them in jail, close mosques... It is harder to negotiate, integrate, convince. But the second approach offers a chance for a long-term peace. What we see now – is the problem deferred. And at the first opportunity, everything will explode anew."

AMINA MAGOMEDOVA "NOBODY HEARS US"

Why some Muslims of Kabardino-Balkaria staged an armed rebellion in 2005, how the investigation and trial went, and why to this day there is an underground in one of the most tranquil republics of the Northern Caucasus, relates Mariam Akhmetova, chairperson of the non-profit organization Mothers of Kabardino-Balkaria in Defense of the Citizen's Rights and Freedoms.

Probably everyone in the Caucasus has heard of the events of October 13, 2005, from the succession of news broadcasts about what was happening, to the detention of the participants in the attack, and finally to the trial. According to the authorities, 35 law enforcement personnel died, and 15 innocent bystanders. But there are other statistics, from the security services: on October 13th and 14th, 95 young men were killed, presumably involved in the attack.

It was an unprecedented case, where 58 people sat in the dock (there were 59, but one died of cirrhosis of the liver), 14 were on the international wanted list, and 13 more were amnestied in 2006. The trial for this case lasted from 2006 to 2014 (a whole 7 years!!!). But not many people have thought about why all of this happened, for the sake of what did more than 100 young people, understanding, or not quite understanding that they might perish, go and storm several buildings in Nalchik.

"Allegedly:" that is the most important word, whether during the investigation, or during the trial. However, that did not prevent the court on December 23, 2014 from handing

down a guilty verdict to all of the defendants in the case, including those whose innocence was proven during the course of the trial. Five people got life sentences; three were released based on time they had already served, and the rest got sentences ranging from 9 to 23 years.

DOSH's correspondent met with the mother of one of the convicted men, Eduard Mironov, who received a life sentence. This was one of the most difficult interviews I have ever conducted. Mariam Akhmetova, mother of two sons, who lost both of them (one got a life sentence, and the second was killed in a special-forces raid in 2013). Her eyes are full of pain and grief; no hope can be seen in them, only humility at one's fate. She did not decline the interview, although I was sure she would, but by the middle of the conversation I realized that the woman needed it, it was essential that she unburden herself of the pain by resurrecting the past.

Mariam Akhmetova is one of the few people who tried to get to the truth and to potentially stop a possible repetition of 2005. In November, 2012, the mothers of those killed and those who were at that moment on trial for the

attack on Nalchik founded a non-profit organization called Mothers of Kabardino-Balkaria in Defense of the Citizen's Rights and Freedoms. Mariam Akhmetova headed it.

— There is a theory that the mutiny was an uprising of Muslims who were being harassed by the security forces. Isn't it true that the attack on Nalchik preceded a whole list of conflicts between the local authorities and the representatives of "non-traditional" Muslim groups, which, shortly before the events, turned into an open campaign of hate against Ismaili Muslims?

I can speak, based on the example of my son, Eduard Mironov. At the end of the 1990s he began to pray, and then to visit the mosque in Volny Aul, where at the time Musa Mukozhev was preaching (according to the security forces, the ideological leader of the Islamists in Kabardino-Balkaria. Musa was killed in May of 2009). Mukozhev invited the parents of the mosque-goers to listen to his sermons, so they wouldn't worry. I went several times to listen. There was nothing bad in these sermons.

Closer to 2000, the security forces started to harass the local Muslims. At first

there were raids on the mosque during prayer, when they detained believers, and brought them to the police station where they were subjected to torture. Later, they began to close mosques, and put the mosque-goers on "Wahhabi Lists." After a while, Eduard also found himself on the radar of the police. He was repeatedly detained, brought to the Directorate for Combating Organized Crime, beaten, and searches were conducted at home.

During that period, dozens of young people who couldn't take the abuse by the authorities went into the forest. Many of the ones who did not leave disappeared without a trace; they were abducted. Later, in the best case scenario, they would be discovered at the police station with marks of torture; in the worst, their bodies would be found.

As far as my son was concerned, it bothered the authorities that he was a guy with a Russian last name, and all of a sudden he is a Muslim. My son told me that the then Minister of Internal Affairs of the KBR Khachim Shogenov, talking with him, asked, "What's wrong with you? Aren't you a man? Why don't you go into the forest?"

— Did your son go?

— No. In Kabardino-Balkaria, it was hard for him to get a job because of the constant attention from the police, and in the summer of 2005, my son left for Kislovodsk. He returned from there on October 13, 2005. How it all happened, I don't know. My son does not deny his participation in the uprising, though there was no blood on him. On October 15th, I went to the morgue in Nalchik to look for Eduard's body. It was not there.

For a month, my son was on the wanted list; then he showed up at the house of his wife and their children. There he



was detained. I was not let inside. I heard the screams of Eduard's wife. We later learned that they threatened to burn the house with their children in it. Even after his detention, the Minister Shogenov would not let a fire truck approach the house. That's how it was.

— Were there hopes that the investigation and then the trial would be conducted above board?

— I had no hopes. I understood from the very beginning that these young guys were egged on into this attack not in order for them to be tried fairly.

I knew that Eduard would be convicted, but did not think that the sentence would be so harsh.

Eduard did not ask for leniency. Telling the court about the torture he was subjected to during the investigation, he said: "I am prepared to answer for all of my actions, but why does the MVD (translator's note: Ministry of Internal Affairs) not answer for theirs".

— Did he mean the torture? Was there any investigation of information about illegal methods of conducting the investigation?

— Since 2005, there have been no criminal cases opened over the use of torture. While the investigation was still going on, Eduard wrote a letter in which he told that he was being tortured. He wrote that he was tortured by electric shock, his legs were broken; he would be hung up by the neck... You speak of the investigation: after this kind of abuse, they did not call in the doctor.

We founded the organization Mothers of Kabardino-Balkaria in Defense of the Citizen's Rights and Freedoms in order to try to communicate to the authorities that it is impermissible to employ such methods, that the ranks of the armed underground will swell. We traveled to Moscow, met there with local officials and human rights activists. We talked about how it would be possible to bring the young people back from the forest; and about the use of torture in our jails. And about what humiliations our children are subjected to there. Everyone always listened to us attentively, but they couldn't influence the situation.

From the very beginning, we had a feeling of hopelessness. I did not know how many years my son would get, but knew that he would get a long sentence. This case has political overtones — nobody wanted to get into the reasons, the goals. There was just a directive to put people away. I did not see my son after the trial. He was sent by pris-

oner convoy to the high-security penal colony for prisoners with life sentences in the village of Lozvinsky, Ivdelsky urban district of the Sverdlov Oblast'.

— *How did your younger son Dmitry Mironov die?*

— After Eduard's detention, pressure was put on the entire family. Dmitry bore the brunt of it. He was so quiet and calm. The only thing he worried about was his family, his children. He was not interested in a thing that the security forces could have liked. He had served two years for theft and planted TNT. After his release, just a short time passed; he left the house for the mosque and we didn't see him again. After a few days, he was no more.

I remember I woke up one morning, approached the window, and there was a wild buzzing in my ears. I wanted to scream. I already knew: something had happened. By the time someone called me and said they saw on the internet that a building was cordoned off and among those inside was my son, it was already too late. Although this special operation went on for three to four hours more, I don't know who the special forces were shooting at there.

— *When the security services conduct a special operation, do they invite repre-*

sentatives of Mothers of Kabardino-Balkaria in Defense of the Citizen's Rights and Freedoms as intermediaries? Maybe there were cases when you were able to convince someone to give himself up?

— Over this period of time, I have formed the opinion that in the majority of cases, by the time the special operation starts, the people inside are already dead. They never call us. It used to be, as soon as we learned that a house with young guys inside was being cordoned off, we would rush there. We thought we might be able to help in some way; we might be able to convince them to give themselves up. After all, that is important for the investigation and for what they are accused of later. But that's the way it is.

— *You spoke about people being put on a registry, that there is something like a list of "Wabbibis." Do family members get put on them too, or are they only for those who go to "the wrong mosques"?*

— You are talking about adults, and I'll tell you, that they even try to put children on this registry. Can you imagine, children?! It's like in 1937, "children of enemies of the people." When my eldest granddaughter entered 1st grade, she was put on it. It was called a social registry. Now I am glad that my oldest grandchildren (the children of Eduard Mironov) are in Germany. They were forced to leave, because they were constantly being threatened. The boy will soon be 13. And, judging by the new rules and laws, he would have been put on that registry and that means they would begin to persecute him. And no one would prove whether he is guilty or not.

Right now, my grandsons are with me, the children of my youngest son, killed in the special operation. At different times, two majors would come to see us, a man and a woman. I said if this is legal, go and get information some-

where else. I will not register them with my own hand, because over the course of a certain amount of time, these children will be eliminated. That is it; I will no longer be able to defend them.

— *Do you think that the security forces and the authorities are not taking into account the lessons of 2005?*

— It is always important that both conflicting sides draw the right conclusions from something that happened. Has that been done? I think not. The investigation and trial in the case of "the 58" showed that. No one wanted to analyze the reasons and conduct a fair investigation and trial.

The underground continues to exist, with fewer people, or more people, but it exists. It is easier for the law enforcement authorities and bureaucrats to report on the liquidation of one more militant, than to do real preventive work to solve the problems driving young people into the forest, whether they are social, economic or political.

— *Does the organization which you head still continue its work?*



"We founded the organization Mothers of Kabardino-Balkaria in Defense of the Citizen's Rights and Freedoms in order to try to communicate to the authorities that it is impermissible to employ such methods, that the ranks of the armed underground will swell. We traveled to Moscow, met there with local officials and human rights activists. We talked about how it would be possible to bring the young people back from the forest; and about the use of torture in our jails."

— At the beginning, when the investigation was going on, and then the trial in court, we got together often. There were more than 20 of us. We did work, traveled to meetings, tried to draw attention to problems. We would discuss, rehash, hope...

Now there are six of us left. We meet every Wednesday. To talk about my sons is as critical for me as oxygen. My

relatives and friends are already tired of my constant conversations about Eduard and Dmitry; after all, any subject sooner or later leads there. In the organization, we are sisters in grief.

On Wednesdays we don't call each other on the phone, we don't discuss arrangements about the meeting; on that day, we just drop everything and meet.



EKATERINA SELEZNEVA THE METHODS OF STATE TERROR

The Human Rights Center "Memorial" published a report about the conclusions of the monitoring of the situation in the Northern Caucasus over the last two years, called "Counterterrorism in the Northern Caucasus: a Viewpoint of Human Rights Defenders. 2014 — to the first half of 2016."

The authors note that the situation in the region has remained complex and troubled for more than a quarter century, since the 1990s. They highlight

three groups of general factors for the whole Northern Caucasus and describe the problems of the individual republics. Among these problems are totalitarianism and the lawlessness of the authorities in Chechnya (most of the report is dedicated to that republic); "mopping-up operations" and the system of "preventive offender registry" in Dagestan; and clamping down on Salafis in Ingushetia.

Trends

In the first place, according to the analysis of the human rights defenders, there are factors negatively influencing the situation in the region which are specific to the Northern Caucasus — "a continuing armed standoff between the government and the fundamentalist underground, which uses terrorist methods in its struggle; the impunity of the representatives of the state in committing crimes during anti-terrorist operations; the split between the adherents of an Islam 'traditional' for the Northern Caucasus and the relatively new (for the region) fundamentalist Salafist movement in Islam."

Nationwide problems take on an exaggerated form in the region — "bureaucratic red tape, the high level of unemployment, the stratification of society into very rich and very poor, corruption, whose level is extremely high even compared to the rest of Russia; and the clan system."

And serious difficulties in the Caucasus are characteristic of the rest of Russia

— the ineffectiveness of the electoral and judicial systems, and the influence of the economic crisis which made itself felt in 2014 (it is especially significant for this subsidized region).

Statistics

Since 2009 in Ingushetia and 2010 in Dagestan as well (to a lesser extent in Kabardino-Balkaria), a "new course" was adopted, one of dialogue with different societal groups, of interaction with human rights defenders, of observing the law in counterterrorist operations, and of returning those militants who are willing to lay down their arms to peaceful lives, the authors of the report relate.

"In four republics, commissions were created, called the Commission on Assisting in the Adaptation to Peaceful Life of Those who have Decided to Cease Terrorist and Extremist Activity. It only began to actually function in Dagestan and Ingushetia. With the participation of the authorities a dialogue began between representatives of different movements within Islam," the report states.

But, in the opinion of the human rights defenders, changes in the authorities' policies have not taken place in the Chechen Republic.

"Here, in what has become in essence a totalitarian regime, the authorities, as before, use methods of state terror not only in the struggle with the armed

underground, but in order to repress any opposition or nonconformity," the report notes.

The activity of the militants decreased starting in 2010 — as noted in the report they rarely conduct large-scale operations, and usually avoid open confrontation, limiting themselves to shooting in an ambush or assassinating security forces personnel or government officials. "The most active in recent years has been the Dagestani underground; however, lately it has weakened significantly. In Dagestan, in 2014-16, according to the information sources of the security forces, there were from 12 to 14 groups of active militants (Makhachkala, Khasavyurt, Kizilyurt, Balakhana, Buinak, Gimra, Gubden, Gunib, Kadar, Hunzakh, Tsumada, Tsunta, Shamil, and Southern), but in none of them were there significant numbers of fighters. The largest group — Gimra, in which there are, according to the security forces' data, only 15 people, was decimated in the fall of 2015."

On December 4, 2014, the underground in Grozny carried out one of the more large-scale attacks in many years. Militants armed with machine guns and grenade launchers made it in automobiles to the downtown area, where they killed several policemen, then took cover in the Press House and a school next door to it. The shootout lasted several hours. "The militants did not intend to harm civilians. Most likely, they did not plan to leave town, but were trying to inflict the greatest possible casualties on the security forces before they died. It was officially announced that the security forces lost 14 dead, and 36 wounded; the militants lost 11 men," the report notes.

But, in 2015, the activity of the militants in Chechnya decreased sharply, like in the other republics. The authors write, "In 2015, according to the offi-

cial statistics of the FSB, terrorist activity in the Northern Caucasus region was cut by 2.5 times. According to information from the National Antiterrorist Committee, in 2015, law enforcement authorities prevented 30 crimes of terror, detained more than 770 suspected terrorists and their accomplices, and removed a significant number of arms and ammunition from illegal circulation. During counterterrorism operations, 156 militants were liquidated (for comparison, according to data published earlier, in 2014 - 243, in 2013 - 260, in 2012 - 391, in 2011 - 345 people), including 36 commanders of groups and detachments."

Imarat Kavkaz

On March 18, 2014, web sites of the Northern Caucasus fundamentalist underground announced the death of the "Emir of the Imarat" Doku Umarov. Actually, he had already died on September 7, 2013, as Memorial clarified. The last two "emirs" were born in Dagestan, according to information from human rights defenders, and before that, the leaders of the armed underground (at first secular, then adopting the platform of Islamic fundamentalism) were Chechen.

The authors of the report point out, "In the fall of 2015, Imarat Kavkaz absorbed yet another blow, this time yet another defeat of the Gimra group of militants... This brigade was the heart of the organization, and, unlike the majority of other brigades, refused to swear allegiance to the Islamic State. By the way, the authors of the report point out that at the beginning of 2016, word was received about a statement by Zelim Shebzukhov, the 'Emir' of the militants active in the Republic of Kabardino-Balkaria and the Karachay-Cherkess Republic. He condemned the militants' move to the IS (the Islamic State, an organization banned on the territory of



the Russian Federation), and called on the cells of the underground to return to Imarat Kavkaz."

The militants acting in the name of Imarat in the KBR and KCR make up one formation — The Vilayat of Kabardia, Balkaria and Karachay of the Imarat Kavkaz. In the opinion of experts, this sector of the underground remains well organized, so it may be that the potential of Imarat Kavkaz is not yet exhausted.

Vilayat IS

In June, 2015, the Islamic State, which a year earlier had declared itself the worldwide caliphate, announced the "formation of its provinces — vilayats" on the territory of the Northern Caucasus.

"The first representative of IS in the Northern Caucasus was the Dagestani Rustam Aselderov (Abu Muhammad Al Kadari), named 'Emir' by the newly-formed Vilayat Kavkaz (Caucasus Emirate) of the Islamic State. Can the oath of allegiance to IS by the leaders of local militants have real consequences for the Northern Caucasus? Unfortunately, this step may turn out to be not just a simple, empty 'rebranding,' but may quite likely bring changes in tactics, in the direction of crueler acts — toward total terror against anyone who is not prepared to submit to IS. One cannot fail to take into consideration that the refusal of Russian authorities to adopt a course of the use of 'soft power,' and its reliance on methods of state terror in dealing with the struggle with the armed underground facilitate the creation of a significant group of people dissatisfied



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with and offended by the authorities," according to Memorial.

The human rights defenders take note that from 2014 into 2015, the influence of natives of the Northern Caucasus in the fundamentalist military ranks fighting in the Middle East increased. "We are used to studying the forces and terrorist potential of the Northern Caucasus extremist underground in a linear fashion, as the function of one parameter — its standoff with the Russian law enforcement authorities. However, in recent years, another factor has appeared, and gained strength, in the form of a 'sideshow': the widespread participation of radically-minded youth of the Northern Caucasus in the jihadist movement abroad, and the establishment of ties between the Northern Caucasus underground and the jihadist 'International' in Syria and Iraq."

The Russian power ministries, notes the Human Rights Center, cannot agree on a single estimate of the number of Russian fighters in Syria and Iraq: they range from 1,800 to 5,000 people.

"The refusal to start any kind of dialogue with the representatives of the Salafi movement in Islam leads to them being forced out of the Russian Federation. The exodus of radicals had obvious advantages for the Russian authorities: the decrease in the potential base of support for the underground. If any jihadi became disen-

chanted and tried to return to his homeland, he would be immediately detained. One opinion has it that before Russia's entry into the war in Syria, there were mechanisms for the removal from the Caucasus of people who, in the opinion of the authorities, held radical views, but who at the same time did not directly participate in the activities of the militias. This refers to facilitation of departure — both through negotiators of different stripes (local authority figures, heads of government administrations), and through agents — for those who desired to join the jihad in the Middle East. The media reported that these people were supposedly assisted in obtaining foreign travel passports; 'green channels' were organized for them to assure unimpeded travel abroad," asserts Memorial.

The human rights defenders note that the authorities (both the security services and the local government administrations) consciously created unbearable living conditions for adherents of the Salafi movement in Islam, through threats, constant searches, unjustified detentions, and insults.

The authors of the report write, "In the case of complaints about these kinds of practices, in unofficial conversations, the representatives of the authorities would often reply in such a way: 'in any case, we won't let you live quietly here; leave and go wherever you wish, if you please, Syria.'"

Protection of Rights

Since 2012, independent activity by citizens has been suppressed in the Russian Federation. By 2014 - 2016, in the Northern Caucasus, the situation for human rights defenders and for the lawyers working with them has significantly worsened.

As in Russia as a whole, the Ministry of Justice has put human rights organiza-



tions working here on a "register of non-profit organizations performing the functions of a foreign agent." the Kabardino-Balkarian Community Human Rights Center (August 17, 2015), the Human Rights Center of the Chechen Republic (August 21, 2015), and the autonomous non-profit organization Human Rights Organization "MASHR" (December 8, 2015). In addition, there was a criminal case fabricated against one human rights organization accusing it of abetting terrorism, Memorial observes.

There have been repeated assaults on human rights activists, journalists, and lawyers by "persons unknown," offices of human rights organizations have been ransacked.



The authors of the report write, "In 2014 in Dagestan, the human rights defender Zarema Bagavutdinova, who worked for the non-profit organization Pravozashchita (translator's note: Protection of Rights), was sentenced to 5 years in prison on trumped-up charges. The cause was precisely her human rights activity. According to the indictment, Bagavutdinova tried to convince her friend Dolgatov to join the ranks of the illegal armed militia groups, promising to marry him after that. Dolgatov was killed during a counterterrorist operation at the end of September, 2013. In court, the indictment 'fell apart.' All of the court proceedings took place in closed session, without any legal basis whatsoever; information leaked out of the courtroom. The Dagestani organization Pravozashchita was forced to cease operations because of the constant pressure from the authorities." On February 4, 2015, the lawyer Murad Magomedov, who worked with the



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Human Rights Center "Memorial." was brutally murdered by persons unknown near the building of the Supreme Court of Dagestan in Makhachkala. In 2014 in Chechnya, the well-known community leader Ruslan Kutaev was sentenced to 4 years' imprisonment on trumped-up charges.

On December 13, 2014, in Grozny, after an unbelievable campaign of harassment organized by the authorities of the republic, persons unknown set fire to the offices of the Svodnaya Mobilnaya Gruppa — SMG (translator's note: Joint Mobile Group), of human rights defenders in the Chechen Republic. On June 3, 2015, the offices of SMG, now repaired, were ransacked. "Although it is in the center of the city, only 60 meters away from the building of the MVD of the republic, those doing the deed acted brazenly, completely certain of their impunity. People in masks took sledge hammers and smashed a hole in the wall (they were unable to breach the door), broke into the office, destroying it completely, ruining furniture, computers, office equipment and documents. Some documents were stolen. Also, the car belonging to the organization KPP (translator's note: Committee to Prevent Torture) was smashed. Then the attackers broke down the door to the neighboring apartment, where the human rights defenders lived. The

employees of KPP who were there at the time were just able to save themselves by jumping out of the window. Despite insistent phone calls to the police, the officers of the law enforcement authorities did not appear at the site for more than an hour. Those who did show up left soon afterwards, having done nothing to stop the pogrom. To top off the crime, the criminals used heavy sticks to smash the organization's car, parked in the courtyard," Memorial recalls. The Head of the Chechen Republic, Ramzan Kadyrov, accused the human rights defenders themselves of staging an intentional provocation.

"On July 31, 2014, Timur Kuashev disappeared in Kabardino-Balkaria. He was a community leader who worked with human rights organizations and also with publications like *Kavkazskiy Uzel* (translator's note: Caucasian Knot), *Dosh*, and *Kavkazskaya Politika* (translator's note: Caucasus Politics), which devote a lot of attention to human rights issues. The next day, his corpse was found on the side of a road in a suburb of Nalchik. There were no wounds on the body, but a bloodstain was found around the left eye. The forensic pathologist discovered signs of an injection in his underarm, and a blackening of the fingers which indicated poisoning. At the present time, the death of Timur Kuashev is being investigated as a crime, according to Part 1 of Statue 105 of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation (murder)," human rights defenders aver... On March 9, 2016 in Ingushetia, on the border with Chechnya, from 15-20 young people attacked a minivan carrying members of the Committee to Prevent Torture: Russian and foreign journalists. The attackers smashed the windows with clubs, dragged the passengers out of the van and beat them up, while yelling: "You are terrorists! You defend terrorists! There is nothing for you to do in Grozny!" after which

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they burned the minivan. All of the injured required medical attention, and four — hospitalization. On the same day in Karabulak, around 10 unidentified armed men in camouflage and masks entered the office of the KPP and ransacked it. On March 16th in Grozny, at the entrance to the Grozny City Hotel, unidentified persons attacked the head of the KPP, Igor Kalyapin. That evening, the director of the hotel demanded that Kalyapin leave, since the latter is critical of the Head of Chechnya, and at the entrance to the hotel, unknown young men in civilian clothes attacked him, beat him



up, and threw eggs at him, Memorial recalls.

In September, 2015, the Ministry of Justice of the Russian Federation, after a planned review of the activity of the Ingushetian human rights defenders of the autonomous non-profit organization "MASHR", issued a warning that its charter does not conform to legislation and drew up an administrative protocol to the effect that MASHR did not file an application to be included in the register of non-profits performing the functions of a foreign agent, although the organization receives foreign financing and, in the opinion of the Ministry of Justice, is engaged in "political activity."

"In October, MASHR appealed the results of the review. The court satisfied its request formally, but issued a special ruling in which it noted that the autonomous non-profit organization MASHR may meet the definition of a non-profit organization performing the functions of a foreign agent," and required the Ministry of Justice to correct the legal violation in the activity of MASHR. On November 6, 2015, from 7 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. officers of the Main Directorate of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Russian Federation in the North Caucasian Federal District conducted an inspection of the offices of MASHR and of the home of its director Magomed Mutsolgov, during which they took away all of its computers, documents, including founding documents, its account books, files of its employees, reports of human rights organizations, the magazine *Dosb*, congratulatory postcards, and business cards. In the authorization for conducting the inspection, it was stated that the search was being conducted on the basis of information received to the effect that MASHR is engaged in extremist activities of an anti-Russian character in the interests of and at the direction of non-profits from Georgia,



the U.S., and countries of Europe, and Mutsolgov "is taking actions which are directed at provoking sectarian conflict on the territory of the North Caucasian Federal District." On December 8, 2015, the Ministry of Justice of the Russian Federation entered MASHR in the "registry of non-profit organizations performing the functions of a foreign agent," human rights defenders relate. *Dosb* also wrote about this.

Chechnya: "Enemies of the People"

Memorial finds that the system of power in Chechnya exhibits all the main characteristics of a totalitarian state.

The authors of the report write, "Undoubtedly, this trend is linked to the name of the Head of Chechnya, Ramzan Kadyrov, who is trying on for size the role of an emir — the leader in Muslim countries, who combines both religious and secular authority. Anyone who tries not to follow one of his orders will come to grief. The moniker 'enemy of the people' and its derivatives, 'enemy of Islam,' 'enemy of society,' and 'enemy of the state,' sound easy and familiar in the mouth of Kadyrov. Those whom he puts in that category are: human rights defenders, independent journalists, national media reporting on life in the republic, Russian opposition figures (it has been a long time since there were any native Chechen opposition figures), and practically all people who think differently. The interference of Kadyrov in the spir-

itual life of the country is crude and all-encompassing."

Kadyrov pays constant attention to religious issues (mostly to rites), striving for absolute like-mindedness, not permitting divergence, and single-handedly determining the criteria of the norm.

"In Chechnya, for a long time now, political, public, economic and religious life — have been taken under complete control. Now it's already a question of the everyday private lives of residents of the Chechen Republic. Often, on TV, Kadyrov gives public instructions on form of dress, and wearing a beard and a moustache. As happens in totalitarian societies, after Kadyrov's speeches, usually a campaign begins, for example, for the struggle with the external expressions of religious dissidence — with beards of a certain type, or with women's veils. The campaign is accompanied by raids of the security services, 'representatives of the community and of the clergy,' as the report notes.

In the last months of 2015, in all the heavily populated areas of Chechnya, officers of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the republic conducted raids, not only on the streets and at the bazaars, but also stopped buses and automobiles. They detained and took away — to an unknown location — young men whose external appearance seemed "suspicious" to them — for example, too short a moustache.

"In most cases, along with the detentions, they conducted 'instructional talks,' and then released people. But the 'talks' could last for a day, two, or more. In addition, they did not inform relatives of the detained where they were and what was going on with them. According to our estimate, in the last three months of 2015, several hundred people were detained in this way.

It should be noted that the relatives refused to complain to anyone in order not to arouse the ire of the authorities," Memorial emphasizes.

On February 18, 2016, a notice appeared on the website of the Parliament of the Chechen Republic to the effect that every resident of Chechnya, aged 14 to 35, by a decision of Ramzan Kadyrov, must undergo a "spiritual-moral passportization" to receive a document in which the following will be entered: his passport number, the address where he is registered, where he lives, his religious faith, nationality, membership in a teip (translator's note: clan) and wurd (Islamic religious rite), and character references from school, work, the neighborhood police, and the local branch of the Chechen muftiate.

The authors of the report recall, "This idea got a lot of attention in the media, and the day after the next, the Head of Chechnya published a retraction. However, the residents of the republic noted that the authorities did not give up on the idea of 'a spiritual-moral passportization' of the youth, but are realizing it under the guise of a questionnaire, enlisting educators and local police inspectors to handle it."

In 2014, in downtown Grozny, a memorial complex dedicated to the memory of the deportations was "moved", but in essence destroyed, "possibly because this complex was opened in 1994 under Dzhokhar Dudayev, the first president of the self-proclaimed Chechen Republic of Ichkeria, whose memory Kadyrov is trying to completely eradicate," Memorial surmises.

Kutaev

On February 18, 2014, in the run-up to the latest anniversary of the deportation, a conference, called "The



Deportation of the Chechen People. What It Was and Can It Be Forgotten?" was held in the National Library of Grozny, without consulting the authorities. The well-known civil society leader Ruslan Kutaev organized and conducted it.

"Historians, ethnographers, and journalists took part in it. In one of his remarks, Kutaev was so bold as to speak negatively of the republic's authorities, who had in practice cancelled the Day of Memory and Grief. The head of the republic was extremely annoyed about the unauthorized holding of the conference. The next day, all of the participants were called in to the Chief of Staff of the Head of the Republic and of the Government of the Chechen Republic, Magomed Daudov. There, Kadyrov met with them. He took them to task, gave them an explanation on historical issues, but then let them go home. The only person who refused to come when called was Ruslan Kutaev," the report states.

On February 20th, Ruslan Kutaev was detained in the village of Gekhi, in the Urus-Martan District "on suspicion of possession of heroin."

The human rights defenders write, "In the first days after his detention, Kutaev was tortured, and highly-placed officials took part in the torture. He gave a jailhouse confession which formed the basis of an indictment on possession of narcotics. During the trial, the complete groundlessness of the hypothesis of the investigation was exposed. The falsification of the accusation came to light."

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Kutaev was convicted and sentenced to four years' deprivation of freedom, to be spent in a standard regime penal colony, and to limitations on his freedom for one year, forbidding him to attend public events and to engage in public activities. The appeals court reduced the sentence to three years and 10 months' deprivation of freedom. The human rights center Memorial recognized Ruslan Kutaev as a political prisoner.

"As the all-powerful master of Chechnya, Ramzan Kadyrov can publically rebuke judges for a sentence which he finds objectionable; he can publically demand that the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of the Chechen Republic retire, which he did on May 5, 2016," Memorial reminds the reader.

Kadyrov

On December 5, 2014, the day after an attack by militants on Grozny, Ramzan Kadyrov wrote on Instagram: "The time when people said that parents do not answer for the actions of their sons and daughters has come to an end. In Chechnya they will answer!" He promised: "if a militia fighter in Chechnya carries out the murder of a member of the police force or of another person, the family of that fighter will be immediately deported from Chechnya without the right to return, and their house will be razed, foundation and all."



In the next two weeks, in different neighborhoods of Chechnya, the homes and furnishings of 15 families of relatives of suspected militants were destroyed. Under the threat of harsh reprisals, these family members were forced to leave the republic.

The human rights defenders write, "In the Chechen Republic, abductions of people, unlawful detentions, and involuntary disappearances continue as widespread and systematic practices. People are afraid to file a report about kidnappings even with governmental agencies. As a result, a large number of crimes committed by officials of the security forces are not recorded by the law enforcement authorities, or by the media, or by human rights organizations."

As is mentioned in the report, one attribute of totalitarian regimes is mass street demonstrations by the public of their approval of the repressive actions of the regime. These take place in Chechnya. "At demonstrations in downtown Grozny, with thousands of people invited according to lists circulated by the authorities, speakers demand harsher repressive measures against relatives of militants, and the adoption of appropriate legislation, and they excoriate human rights activists, journalists, and Russian opposition figures (actually, in Chechnya, there are none of the latter left). And, of course, they fervently endorse 'the only tried and true policies' of Ramzan Kadyrov. As a rule, the organizers supply the participants in the demonstration with appropriate placards and posters, made with a stencil conforming to a sample."

On August 16, 2014, during a holiday celebration in the Shalinsky District of Chechnya, the head of the republic lost his cell phone. The security service agents questioned those present. This did not produce a result. Then, after asking for lists of the participants of

the celebration from the district leaders, the security personnel questioned more than 1,000 people, including minor children, during the night of August 16 - 17th.

According to the report, "Even the most minor criticism of representatives of the authorities of Chechnya is considered impermissible. In recent years, independent intellectuals have been expelled from the universities of Chechnya. Representatives of the creative intelligentsia take a serious risk if they say or do something that is not to the liking of the authorities."

Over the last eight years, members of Memorial and other human rights organizations have received many complaints from government employees who work in various budgetary agencies about having money systematically exacted from them. They say that this money withheld from their paychecks is passed to their immediate superiors and then higher up the ladder. As a rule, no one wants to file a written complaint for fear of losing one's job or of being subjected to other repressive measures.

On April 14, 2016, during the program "Direct Line to Vladimir Putin," a video appeal by Ramazan Djalaldinov was shown — he is a resident of the high mountain Avar village of Kenkhi. He told how local bureaucrats take for themselves the lion's share of the compensation for the destruction of homes during the war and flooding, withhold the salaries of teachers, and ignore requests by the village residents for help.

"After the airing of the video, Djalaldinov began to receive threats, and he was forced to move to Dagestan, and a motorcade of several dozen cars promptly set off for Kenkhi. It belonged to the Chief of Staff of the Head of Chechnya and of the Government of Chechnya, Islam Kadyrov, nephew of Ramzan Kadyrov. He held a meeting

lasting until three o'clock in the morning, during which the local residents publically denounced Djalaldinov in front of the cameras of Chechen television. On May 6, 2016, Ramzan Kadyrov came to the Sharoysky District and met with residents of Kenkhi. During the meeting the residents complained to him that Djalaldinov supposedly sold alcohol and arms in the village and that he was an accomplice to the militants, to which, Kadyrov answered: 'What is this, can't you stop one person?' On May 12th, during the night, armed security forces pulled up to Djalaldinov's house, where his wife and children were located. They broke down the door, took away his wife and children and burned the house down. They beat up his wife and eldest daughter, and then took the woman and her children to the border with Dagestan, leaving them there without identity papers." as the human rights defenders recall the chronology of events.

Kenkhi was surrounded by security forces, and its inhabitants were questioned one by one, with the demand to reveal Djalaldinov's whereabouts. On May 15th, unidentified persons tried to kidnap Ramazan Djalaldinov when he was leaving a mosque in the Tsumadinsky District of Dagestan, but the faithful of the mosque were able to prevent it.

On May 30th, Djalaldinov spoke on the air, on the "Grozny" TV channel: "I am very ashamed and I express my apologies for the groundless accusations to Ramzan Kadyrov and to the entire Chechen people as well, and I call on the provocateurs to stop blowing the situation out of proportion and sowing the seeds of strife between our two fraternal peoples. Many people will now write that I have been intimidated, forced to write this appeal. But that is not true — I made the decision myself." He thanked Kadyrov for the rebuilding of the Sharoysky District: "I



always knew that if Kadyrov found out about the problems of the residents of the Sharoysky District, he would definitely solve them. That is what happened. Today, our district is being complete rebuilt."

On January 12, 2016, at a meeting with journalists in Grozny, Kadyrov, speaking about the exogenous Russian opposition, said: "These people should be treated like enemies of the people, like traitors. There is nothing saintly about them. I believe that these people should be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law for their subversive activities."

The authors of the report take note, "The representatives of the opposition, human rights defenders, and the Russian ombudsman were upset by this statement, and a deputy of the city council of Krasnoyarsk, Konstantin Senchenko, put a harsh rebuke on his Facebook page, calling Kadyrov "a disgrace to Russia." However, after speaking to an unnamed "very well-known person," the deputy disavowed his comments and apologized to the Head of Chechnya." On January 22, 2016, there was a rally in support of the



Head of Chechnya in Grozny. According to the figures supplied by the Ministry of Internal Affairs, 800,000 people participated (57% of the population of Chechnya). Participants in the demonstration denounced the anti-government, anti-state activities of the exogenous opposition and called on everyone to line up behind Kadyrov as the defender of the integrity and interests of Russia.

On February 1, 2016, the leader of Chechnya published a video on his Instagram page in which the leader of the PARNAS Party (translator's note: Party of People's Freedom), Mikhail Kasyanov has a filter overlaid on his photo imitating a sniper's rifle sight. "Kasyanov came to Strasburg seeking money for the Russian opposition. Those who don't understand that will understand!" states the narrator of Kadyrov's video. Later, the clip was deleted from the administration's social media page.

The Murder of Boris Nemtsov

On February 27, 2015, in downtown Moscow, one of the recognized leaders of the Russian opposition, Boris Nemtsov, was murdered. The investigative group led by Major General Igor Krasnov ascertained the circle of suspects: all of them were either residents of Chechnya, or came from there.

The report relates, "Four of the seven suspects turned out to be either current or former members of the power ministries, deployed in the Chechen Republic. The former assistant com-



mander of the Sever (translator's note: Northern) Battalion, Zaur Dadaev, the one who according to the investigation fired on the politician, at the moment the crime was committed was active duty military. Beslan Shavanov, who had served with Dadaev, retired just before the murder of Nemtsov for, health reasons.' Citing its sources in law enforcement, the media reported two days before the murder he obtained a ticket from Grozny to Moscow, booked by the government of the Chechen Republic. Ruslan Mukhudinov was an officer of the Sever Battalion. Tamerlan Eskerkhanov was formerly with the Police Patrol and Checkpoint Service of the Department of Internal Affairs of the Shelkovskoy District of the Chechen Republic."

Also accused of complicity in the murder were Anzor and Shadid Gubashev, relatives of Dadaev, and Khamzat Bakhaev. Five of the suspects — Dadaev, Eskerkhanov, the Gubashev brothers, and Bakhaev, were detained outside Chechnya, and they were arraigned.

Memorial writes that "the attempts to detain the suspects inside Chechnya were a fiasco — Shavanov, according to the official account, blew himself up with a grenade during the attempt to arrest him in Grozny. Mukhudinov went into hiding; he was arraigned in absentia, and placed on the federal wanted list. What happened with Ruslan Geremeev — either a suspect, or

an important witness in the case of the murder of Boris Nemtsov — is an amazing story. An officer of the Sever Battalion, and the superior officer of the accused Mukhudinov (the latter was his chauffeur), Geremeev belongs to an influential clan. Among his relatives are the Deputy of the State Duma, billionaire Adam Delimkhanov, whom Kadyrov called 'his right hand,' Member of the Federation Council Suleiman Geremeev; and the Director of the Department of Internal Affairs of the Shelkovskoy District, Vakha Geremeev."

Soon after the detention of the first suspects, the investigation wanted to question Ruslan Geremeev, but he went into hiding.

In March, 2015, the investigative committee ordered its agents to find Geremeev. The Special Forces of the FSB made an unsuccessful attempt to detain him.

"Then, 'sources inside law enforcement' informed the media that Geremeev supposedly was in the village of Djalka, but law enforcement was not able to interrogate him. Eye witnesses who arrived that day in Djalka said that all the approaches to the village were being closely guarded by armed men. Djalka is the native village of Adam Delimkhanov and his brother, the commander of the Sever Battalion, Alimbek Delimkhanov. The Investigative Committee of the Russian

Federation sent to the Chechen Republic one request after another to question Ruslan Geremeev, but they were not carried out. Not having questioned Geremeev, the investigation 'named' Ruslan Mukhudinov, the former's driver, as the person who ordered the hit, and the organizer of the sensational political murder of Boris Nemtsov. To this day, nothing is known of Mukhudinov's fate," the report states.

In January, 2016, the head of the Investigative Committee of Russia, Alexander Bastyркиn announced that he considers the crime solved: five of the arrested were charged with committing murder for hire, and also illegally obtaining, carrying and transporting firearms.

According to Memorial, "To what extent the charges are well-founded will become clear during the upcoming trial. Nevertheless, judging from preliminary indications, one can draw the conclusion that the guilt of the five arrested men, in addition to their initial confession, is backed up by serious evidence. Kadyrov spoke very warmly of the accused, and Chechen TV showed the Shavanov family conducting a wake, an astonishing contrast to what happens in Chechnya to the families of people who are suspected of committing terrorist acts."

Dagestan: purges, persecution of Salafis and the preventive offender registry

In Dagestan, in 2013, purges, or mopping up operations began in localities, and continued into 2014. These were reminiscent of analogous special operations that were conducted during the Second Chechen War, with egregious violations of the law and the rights of local residents.

On October 20, 2014, the Human Rights Center "Memorial" sent an open

letter to the Head of the Republic of Dagestan, Ramazan Abdulatipov, drawing his attention to the massive and gross violations of human rights during the "mopping up operations" in localities of the Untsukul'sky District.

"To all intents and purposes we did not get an answer. Then again, in 2015 and the first half of 2016, no such large-scale 'purges' were conducted. It must be said that this brought attention from human rights defenders to these events, and also many publications in both national and local media," the human rights defenders note.

Memorial relates that the leadership of Dagestan deemed it necessary to supplement the "hard line" in relation to "problem" villages, with a system of agreements between the power structures on different levels and the village communities, in the framework of which the parties would take obligations upon themselves. The first such agreement was to have been signed on February 6, 2014 — a quadripartite agreement between the authorities of the republic, the administration of the Untsukul'sky District, the administration of the village of Gimra, and the community of that village.

The authors of the report point out, "In the February agreement, the obligations of the community were described, in part: to take all legal measures to return natives of the village who had participated in the militias to a peaceful life; together with law enforcement authorities, not to allow into the village any persons who had anything to do with the militants and their accomplices; to give law enforcement assistance during the carrying out of counterterrorist operations in the village. Additionally, Gimra residents took it upon themselves to create a people's patrol force; to conduct outreach work among the youth against the militias; and to refer young

people to law enforcement in order for them to participate in keeping the public order (it was a known fact that up to the present time, not a single Gimra resident has served in the MVD). On his part, the head of Dagestan took upon himself the obligation to solve difficult social problems which the authorities had not gotten around to for decades."

The government of Dagestan pledged to include building projects for Gimra — a hospital, outpatient clinics, a kindergarten, and work on levees — in the state investment programs of the Russian Federation and the Republic of Dagestan for 2014 - 2016.

"The government of the republic promised to allot monies in 2014 to completely renovate the House of Culture and the water main, and provide a school bus for the local school. The authorities promised to help organize small-scale enterprises for processing agricultural produce, stone from quarries, as well as recreational camps for children. Today, the hospital is still cooped up in an old poorly equipped building with a sagging roof, where the personnel heat water by boiling it. And above it, on the bluff-like a symbol, like a fortress, stands the beautiful, brick hospital building with modern conveniences, which was taken over in 2013 by the security services," the document notes.

Memorial writes that over the past three years in Dagestan, the practice of "preventive" pressure on members of the Salafite community has taken off. Law enforcement officers detain people coming out of Salafi mosques, sitting in cafes, or wherever Salafis gather, without any legal basis (and often with their families). Those detained are brought to the police station, where they are identified, forcibly photographed and fingerprinted, and sometimes DNA samples are taken.



"Information about detainees is entered into a database. As a rule, detentions of this kind are not conducted according to protocol and not logged in: the security forces call them 'invitations to have a talk,' where attendance is supposedly voluntary. Usually people are released in no later than about three hours, but the consequences of such a 'preventive measure' are for them, as a rule, long-lasting and highly unpleasant."

There are already many thousands of people on the preventive offender registry. The report notes, "Officers of the MVD sent to Dagestan from other parts of Russia express surprise at the huge number of residents of the republic put on the preventive registry. They say that there are no longer enough police officers or enough time in order to carry out all the procedures prescribed by the instructions. It appears that the campaign begun in November, 2015, to close or 'take back' the mosques of the Salafi community in the republic was conducted along those 'preventive' lines. In the five months that followed, 13 such 'actions' took place. The small-scale crackdown by the authorities on the Salafi communities is hampered by unique features of public life, in contemporary conditions of harsh authoritarian rule in Dagestan: the deep, lasting traditions of popular sovereignty and direct democracy, and also the

remaining media which is comparatively free."

The leader of the Salafi community in Khasavyurt, Magomednabi Magomedov, has spoken publically and consistently against violence, against young Muslims going into the "forest", or leaving for the Middle East. The community council of the Salafi "Tagim" mosque in Makhachkala put on its Facebook page a selection of statements by well-known contemporary Islamic scholars from a number of Muslim countries condemning the so-called Islamic State, the Taliban, Al Qaeda and other terrorist organizations.

"However, it appears that having the situation in the republic develop in the direction of conciliation does not suit certain influential forces for which the very idea of constructive dialogue between the authorities and society is unacceptable," the human rights defenders believe.

On April 8, 2016, Magomednabi Magomedov was detained, and the next day, by court order, arrested. He was arraigned on charges pursuant to Part 1, Statute 205.2 (public calls to carry out terrorist acts or publically condoning terrorism), and Part 1, Statute 282 of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation (inciting hatred or enmity as well as abasement of human dignity).

Memorial writes, "The very style of the practices of the security forces shows the demonstrative and provocative character of these actions. On April 10th, in the Pretrial Detention Center #1, representatives of the authorities, some of whom were detention center guards, severely beat the arrested Magomedov. After that, Magomedov was transferred to a temporary holding facility in the city of Kaspiisk, where a lawyer was only able to meet with him the evening of April 13th. At

his insistence, a health screening was done, and the doctor documented the signs of the beating on Magomedov's body. The question of a criminal case being opened is being considered. The attempts to close Salafi mosques, the effective ban on holding collective prayer services inside them, the random detentions of mosque-goers, and other senseless 'preventive' measures, in the opinion of many experts, are provoking the radicalization of Salafi youth, which recently has already exhibited, several times, solidarity and a capability to mobilize. The initiators of these provocative actions, most likely are higher-ups of the MVD in the Republic of Dagestan, and they probably have a certain amount of support in Moscow. However, in Dagestan there is another opinion — a number of facts point to the initiator of these provocations being in Grozny."

In 2014 - 2016, the human rights defenders note, abductions and forced disappearances of residents of Dagestan continued.

"In the opinion of local residents, in the majority of cases, representatives of the security services are involved. Temporary disappearance, followed by the reappearance of the missing person now in the capacity of a person accused of committing a crime, often having had time to 'confess' to it — has become a pattern. Disappearance without a trace is a much rarer occurrence: sometimes the security services announce that the body of a person who had previously disappeared was discovered by them at a place of confrontation with militants," the report notes.

Another trend in recent years in Dagestan is one of numerous retirements of high-level officials and leaders of city and district governments, often accompanied by the opening of a criminal case against them, some-

times for terrorism. The authors of the report write: "The authorities were forced to admit that the underground in Dagestan was firmly embedded in local corruption schemes. As Alexander Buksman, First Assistant General Prosecutor of the Russian Federation stated in April, 2014, some of the tens of billions of rubles received from money cashed in Dagestani banks were going to finance the underworld. What was the role of the Head of the Republic Ramazan Abdulatipov and his team in all of this? On the one hand, he definitely wins from the ongoing 'purges,' thanks to which people who have played an important political role in Dagestan for decades are leaving the stage. However, he himself, all things considered, is not even aware of what is going on, and does not feel at ease."

Ingushetia

According to the report, "It is impossible to assert that in Ingushetia there is no security service presence, but the law is observed by everyone, always. In 2014 - 2016, residents of the republic repeatedly turned to the Human Rights Center 'Memorial' with complaints about criminal cases fabricated against their relatives by the security forces. There were also complaints against the security forces for the use of torture during detentions, and for unlawful searches and detentions. The human rights organization MASHR and its director Magomed Mutsolgov have been subject to blatant harassment."

In the struggle with the armed underground, the head and government of Ingushetia put their main emphasis on a combination of the use of force and of "soft power."

The human rights defenders write, "The policy adopted by the leadership of Ingushetia has borne fruit. Abductions and involuntary disappear-

ances of people (for the commission of which there are grounds for suspecting the officers of the security services) have all but ended: in the republic from 2014 - 2016, there was not a single recorded case, whereas before there were dozens. An important element in the policy is the Commission on Assisting in the Adaptation to Peaceful Life of Those who have Decided to Cease Terrorist and Extremist Activities, founded in 2011 on the personal initiative of the Head of Ingushetia, Yunus-Bek Yevkurov. Since 2012, district adaptation commissions have been created."

Memorial believes that the events surrounding the mosque in the administrative district of Nasyr-Kort in the city of Nazran show the difference in the approach of the authorities of Ingushetia to issues of the interrelations between different social groups (including religious dissidents) and the policies on those issues implemented by the current authorities of Dagestan and Chechnya.

Since 2008, the imam of the mosque has been Khamzat Chumakov, a well-known Ingush community leader and a preacher of Islam who received his religious education in Egypt.

The authors of the report write, "It is difficult to unequivocally define the religious and political position of Chumakov, all the more that he himself emphatically resists it. His sermons are hugely popular; he often expresses himself emotionally and convincingly on political and public issues. He has sharply criticized the authorities; however, among his mosque-goers there are many public officials and officers of the security services. In conflicts with the muftiate, Chumakov often appeals to higher authorities, including President Vladimir Putin, thus demonstrating his political loyalty to Russia by and large."



On June 5, 2015, a confrontation occurred at the mosque.

The report relates, "Even before the beginning of Friday prayer, the security services roped off the perimeter of the mosque in Nasyr-Kort. Entry was through a metal detector. When Imam Chumakov was giving his sermon, a group of people headed by the mufti of the republic entered the mosque. When prayer was over, Mufti Khamkhoev walked towards Chumakov. Those standing near the imam tried to hinder him, and turmoil ensued, into which were drawn the mosque-goers, and those who came with the mufti. Then it became an altercation. The face-off continued in the courtyard of the mosque. The security men were drawn into the conflict, forced to fire shots into the air in order to head off a melee. The conflict was ended not without the help of the mosque-goers. After the encounter itself ended, a war of words began. On the same day, June 5th, Chumakov wrote a letter to the President of the Russian Federation, the Director of the FSB and the heads of the other power ministries, whose content immediately became known to the media. In particular, Chumakov accused 'the official clergy (of the Republic of Ingushetia) and other persons' of supposedly trying to 'destabilize the socio-political situation in the region, initiating a conflict during the sermon at Friday prayer,' not, however, explaining the motives for this behavior. On the

very same day, Mufti Khamkhoev penned an appeal to the residents of the republic, in which he accused Chumakov of taking over the Nasyr-Kort mosque. In the words of Khamkhoev, Chumakov was never elected by anyone to be the imam, not by the villagers, nor by the muftiate. According to him, on May 31st, the residents of the village, displeased with Chumakov's sermons, approached the mufti with a request to reinstate the imam who had been elected by them several years ago, Imam Ruslan Chakhkiev. It was for this purpose that he came to the mosque for Friday prayer. It upset him that Chumakov did not greet him, and when he wanted to address the mosque-goers, they lit into him like an enemy, and started to push him out."

On June 12th in the Nasyr-Kort mosque, Friday prayer was held, attended by the Head of Ingushetia, several imams and some religious leaders who were well-known in the republic. Addressing the mosque-goers, Yevkurov said that he thinks that both sides are responsible for the conflict, and added: "in this problem we will not look for a guilty party, we will not name names; today we must act so as to get through this. We must forgive each other, and part." Mufti Khamkhoev was not there; he was on a business trip in Qatar. Later, he supported the resolution of the conflict by peaceful means and approved the

words spoken by those present in the Nasyr-Kort mosque on June 12th.

The human rights defenders observe, "However, ultimately, the conflict was not settled. The Mufti of Ingushetia understood Yevkurov's position as supporting the Salafis, and on December 27, 2015, on the website of the Spiritual Center of Muslims (translator's note: the muftiate), he formulated his differences with the head of the republic. The problem of the Salafis, in the opinion of Khamkhoev, has taken on a serious character: in the past decade, 'around ten mosques' have opened, which are not part of the muftiate — the Spiritual Center of Muslims of the Republic of Ingushetia. According to Khamkhoev, in Ingushetia there are 'many instances where a certain group of people, accusing the village community of unbelief and of innovations, maintaining that prayers said by them will not be heard, and much more, build a new mosque and separate themselves from the larger congregation. Under no circumstances should people with such convictions receive the support of our citizens, not to mention the government.'"

In the opinion of the mufti, "recently, these mosques have become political tribunes". Yevkurov presented a divergent view of the problem. He was displeased that the mufti, instead of pacifying the situation, was facilitating the intensification of the conflict.

"In Ingushetia, the majority of the public takes a position in this argument somewhere between neutrality and wait-and-see, since most residents do not wish to see this religious conflict escalate. Mufti Khamkhoev found support for his position among the authorities of neighboring Chechnya. In Grozny, from November 28 - 30, 2015, there was a meeting of representatives of the muftiates of Chechnya

and Ingushetia, where the topic of counteracting the 'spread of the ideology of Wahhabism' was discussed. On February 2, 2016 the mufti of Ingushetia actively participated in a forum (majlis) organized by Kadyrov for the Sufi clergy of the Northern Caucasus. The main topic was the standoff with the Wahhabis and the Salafis, and Khamzat Chumakov was named several times as one of the 'enemies' to be contended with. As a result, the conflict in Ingushetia is growing," the report communicates.

The Council of Teips (translator's note: clans) of Ingushetia demanded Khamkhoev's resignation. Then the Council of Alims (translator's note: scholars of Islam) called for a congress of Muslims of the republic to begin on March 29, 2015, to discuss Khamkhoev's resignation. On March 24th, Yevkurov announced that the congress would be postponed.

"The decision to cancel the publically announced congress was made at a meeting of Yevkurov with the alims of Ingushetia, during which many said that holding the congress would lead to a schism in society... On March 1, 2016, around 2 p.m., a car bomb exploded next to the Nasyr-Kort mosque; three or four people were wounded. During the night of April 4, 2016, persons unknown threw a grenade into the courtyard of the home of an assistant to the Mufti of Ingushetia, Magomed Khashtyrov in the village of Troitskaya (in the Republic of Ingushetia), but no one was hurt," Memorial reports.

Kabardino-Balkaria

In Kabardino-Balkaria, the struggle with the armed underground continues in a "standard mode": people are detained, abducted and killed based on signs — real or imaginary — of belonging to the extremist underground, but quietly, in a "businesslike

manner," without hysterical campaigns in the media, the human rights defenders write.

The republic's Adaptation Commission, headed by the Secretary of the Security Council of the KBR, Ruslan Yeshugaov was founded on January 24, 2014, but it still exists only as a formality, for all intents and purposes not even having begun its work.

"In 2014, human rights defenders drew up a proposal for a new status for the Adaptation Commission, and expected it to be approved by the Head of the Republic, Yury Kokov. It was only in 2016 that the Adaptation Commission began work. Its 'resuscitation' is connected with the creation in the summer of 2015 of a Ministry for Coordination of the Activity of the Agencies of the Executive Branch of the KBR on the Prevention of Extremism and the Implementation of Youth Policy, which was headed by Zelim Kashirokov. On February 17, 2016, the Commission met and made a decision to give assistance to Inna Blenaova, accused of participating in a militia; and filed a motion requesting that the Nalchik City Court give her a suspended sentence. The court granted the Commission's motion," Memorial notes.

The handing down of sentences in the case of the armed attack on government buildings in Nalchik on October 13, 2005 was an important event for the Kabardino-Balkarian Republic.

The authors of the report write, "During the trial, the complete innocence of several of the accused was proven, for example, of Rasul Kudaev and Kazbek Budtuev... The sentences announced on December 23, 2014, proved to be unduly severe and unfair. All 57 of the accused in the 'Case of the 58' were found guilty. Of them, five, including Rasul Kudaev, were sen-



tenced to life imprisonment, eight were sentenced to 20 or more years' deprivation of freedom, and 40 received from 10 to 20 years' imprisonment, four received less than 10, and of those, three were released from the courtroom (since their time spent in pre-trial detention exceeded the length of their sentence). Even those against whom evidence was very weak were convicted."

On January 26, 2016, the Supreme Court of the KBR (translator's note: Kabardino-Balkarian Republic) announced its decision on the defendants' appeals. The court declined to reduce the sentence of those who received life sentences. As far as the others were concerned, the appeals court reduced the term of their sentences (but quite insignificantly in relation to their terms of imprisonment). "Not doubting the necessity of a fair



and adequate punishment of the guilty, the Human Rights Center 'Memorial' makes particular note of the fact that among those convicted, there were some people whose complete innocence was asserted for many years, and proven by their lawyers and human rights defenders."

Conclusions

Memorial writes that in the Northern Caucasus, there has been an almost complete return to the methods of state terror and a rejection of practically all of the elements of the "new course" adopted by some of the republics from 2009 - 2012.

The human rights defenders sum up: "A decrease in the activity of the terrorist underground continued in recent years: in 2013, 1.5 times less compared to 2012, in 2014, two times compared to 2013, and in 2015, three and a half times compared to 2014. By the beginning of 2016, the activity of the militants decreased to the point where there were just a handful of cases where security service personnel were injured or killed. Two factors are cited for this: the hard work of the Russian security forces, and a strong movement of a notable group of people — who could be mobilized for the underground — from the Northern Caucasus to the Middle East. In Dagestan, the large Salafi community is being subjected to a crackdown. The 'preventive offender registry,' on which thousands of people have already been placed, is a blatant violation of citizens' constitutional rights. The harassment of the Salafi community of the republic comprises closings (or attempts at closing) of mosques, falsification of criminal cases, wholesale unlawful detentions, and abductions. It is possible that the initiators of this policy sincerely believe that these actions will facili-

tate the strengthening of stability in the republic. That is a big mistake. It is more likely that this is the conscious policy of influential forces — in republican and federal power ministries, in neighboring Chechnya, in the corridors of power in Moscow — who are only capable of working in extreme circumstances, and exclusively within the paradigm of state terror. That is the environment they are used to, and which is desirable for them, one of confrontation with, and repression of any dissidence — civic or religious. For them, the very idea of a constructive dialogue between the authorities and society is unacceptable... in recent years in the Northern Caucasus it is precisely among moderate Salafis that leaders have appeared who condemn violence and armed struggle against the state. The extremists of the Islamic State, banned in Russia, call these people 'traitors.' Instead of a dialogue with them, the state unleashes repression against them. This is an inimical and short-sighted policy. In the Chechen Republic, during the lengthy struggle with separatism, and later with the terrorist underground, with the help of the methods of state terror, what is, in essence, a totalitarian 'state within a state' was built: the cure was worse than the disease. The existence in our country of an enclave with a totalitarian regime represents a serious danger for the future of Russia, as a state based on the rule of law, and for the observation of the rights of all of its citizens. However, it is obvious that there are influential forces who desire that the country move in the direction of Chechnya. In the meantime, Ramzan Kadyrov and his circle are trying to spread the methods of repression of dissidence put in place by them in Chechnya, to the rest of Russia. Particular efforts are being made in that direction as concerns the republics bordering Chechnya: Dagestan and Ingushetia."

TAUS SERGANOVA A TALENT FOR COMPASSION



Prague is an amazing and beautiful city. Here one can meet unusual people, and meeting them provides inspiration for the good and the beautiful. After one such acquaintanceship, I felt an express desire to write about a Person with a capital "P" — one who, her whole life long has been creating space for kindness. My Czech friends introduced me to Pani Vera — Vera Shormova. They called her "Grandma Vera" or "Grandma — Crocheter." It was all the more unusual that in her twilight years her fate was tied to far-away and unfamiliar Chechnya...

She received us in a small apartment in Malovanka, one of the verdant neighborhoods of Prague. I imagined in advance what this meeting might be like, with a very old woman (really, a 96-year-old woman!), frail as a

feather, who might fall over if we breathed in the wrong direction. But a spry and smiling woman met me and my colleagues, and immediately invited us to sit down at the table. She had prepared some tasty dishes for us, and plenty of tea and coffee. She was genuinely surprised and pleased to see us, people from the Chechen Republic. She had worried about us at a trying time for us, and did everything to somehow mitigate the suffering of children in the city of Grozny, ruined by war. For two hours we conversed with this person who embodied the history of the Czech Republic for the past hundred years. It simply came alive in her stories. It is well worth describing the life and fate of this unusual woman, her integrity, her ability to feel compassion for anyone in distress.

Vera Shormova (her maiden name was Albrekhtova) was born in 1920 into a Czech-Polish family. She was a witness to several eras, one following the other. If you recall, the twentieth century, was also full of discord, whole nations suffered terrible tragedies, dictatorships came about and were overthrown; world was ignited, which spread death and destruction. Vera saw much in her century, and the motto of her life became the thought: "People only keep what they give away to others."

She lovingly recalls her childhood: "We had a beautiful life! We celebrated the holidays, especially Easter, which, in keeping with Polish tradition, was given more prominence than Christmas. My father — Bedrich Albrecht, was a military engineer; before the First World War, he served on the border of Russia and Poland — in Lvov, where he met his future wife Stefania — a Polish woman, my mother. She was from a family of the high nobility. Her mother had live-in tutors in French; she studied different humanities subjects, and played piano. My parents loved each other but they were forced to be apart for long periods of time. In 1914, Mama went to the Krakow Monastery, when my father was transferred to the garrison in the village of Tonal, where he participated in heavy fighting during the First World War. He was in the war right up to the end, in 1917. I was in Tonal twice — I wanted to see the place and understand my father's life, and it became clear to me that it was really awful there..."

In 1934, Vera's father fell seriously ill, and he died in 1941. During his illness the parents decided that Vera should learn a practical skill that would allow her to provide for herself. She wanted to go to a school for languages, grammar and philosophy. So, Vera became a professional translator, and from 1938 on, she worked for the most part in this field.

But life did not remain calm and peaceful for long. Pani Vera tells us: "I remember the day when the occupation of Czechoslovakia began — it was horrible. It was snowing. It was frightening — in Smichov we saw German soldiers as they were arriving in trucks from Pilsen. We didn't know how to get home, and were in despair. Father was in the hospital then... In September, 1939, the German Army invaded Poland and occupied it. My grandmother lived in the occupied portion, and the Germans wanted to mark her down as a German, and offered her a pension, but grandmother flat out refused. She didn't receive a kopek, but remained a Pole." To all appearances, the feelings of honor and dignity of the older members of her family were formative for Vera, as well as bravery which she displayed in the most dramatic of situations.

Vera survived the German occupation — with searches, interrogations by the Gestapo, fear, terror, bombings and the deaths of relatives. She witnessed the burning of the villages of Lidice and Lezaky.

In 1942, an aunt found her a position as an editor at the well-known Czechoslovak publishing house Orbis, where Vera worked until 1945. They had an amateur theatrical club, and Vera played in productions of both national and avant-garde repertoire with famous thespians, and danced Czech dances in on-stage performance groups. They traveled from village to

village where the artists were greeted joyously.

After the war, Vera returned to Orbis, but her department was phased out. Starting in 1945, she worked as an editor at Tsentropress publishers, and as the secretary of the poet Frantisek Halas. Then she was offered a job in the Czechoslovak embassy in London. In the plane, she got to know the Czech consul in Ireland, and met Bogumil Shorm, whom she would later marry. Bogumil was working as a representative of Czechoslovakia in international transportation organizations — he worked first in the trade mission in Russia, and then at the end of 1945, was sent to England. "I lived in an apartment in Paddington, which cost 13 pounds a month, and my salary was 26, so I constantly felt hunger. Then I bought a crochet hook, which has gotten very old now, but I hold on to it like the apple of my eye," says Pani Vera. "In my free time, I went to symphony orchestra concerts of the Boyd Neel string orchestra. But I used to walk home through a bombed area of London, since I did not have money for public transportation."

In 1946, Bogumil and Vera met in London. He told her that his company's management was moving to Paris and asked if she would like to go with him. She answered that she would love to go, but that she had a job. He proposed to her, and then produced a bouquet of violets from behind his back, and...two months later, the wedding took place. They traveled to France together. A year later in Paris, their son Tomas was born. At that time, Vera's husband was on a business trip in Geneva. He could not get to her because of transport strike. Vera sent him a telegram that it was a boy. A week later, Bogumil finally made it to the hospital. Vera was happy that the family was finally together: "he brought me a bag of sweets, and then took me home. In the summer we

traveled to the land of the Basques with little Tomasek. There on the beach, we met a woman who also brought her children. Her father was the well-known French writer Georges Duhamel. We became friends. We have been lucky to meet interesting people."

At the end of 1947, Vera and her husband returned to Prague, but in their homeland, serious problems awaited them. Unexpectedly, Bogumil was laid off, transferred to the National Fund for Renewal, and then he had to quit work altogether. Vera's passport was confiscated by the Ministry of Internal Affairs. They lived in Prague under the watchful eye of the security services, which followed the young woman everywhere. Bogumil, trading intellectual work for physical, found a job in an artists' metalworking shop. Fortunately, he was very welcome there. From him, Vera learned technical terminology which she made use of in her translation work.

Because of the heavy work, Bogumil got varicose veins, and so had to quit that job. He changed jobs several times. He was fired repeatedly as politically unreliable — the secret police made life difficult for the family. In the end, Bogumil found work in a technical night school — in the department for translation of documentation. "We were so poor that we could either buy movie tickets, or get on the trolley," Pani Vera remembers. The college sent Bogumil for six months to Slovakia, where he had to translate documentation from Russian into Slovak, and vice versa. "Only then did we come into some money. I was teaching children foreign languages for 5 crowns per hour. We bought boots for 50 crowns, went to the mountains for the weekend, and stayed in a beautiful cottage — it was a fantastic vacation!"

In 1949, Vera and Bogumil had a second son, Shtepanek. But tragedy struck

— the child died of the measles when he was two and a half.

Vera has a very negative attitude toward the political and social situation of the 1950's. The only source of light and joy for her was the birth of her daughter Tereza in 1953. The family found a refuge in the village of Hubenov Dobritse, putting up a tent by a stream. There they spent the most wonderful years of their lives. "I would get up early in the morning and watch the sun rise over the water," says Vera. "It was incredible. The birds flew so close that they would touch the strings of our tent. We were profoundly happy..."

At that time, Vera was working as a salesperson in the Moser store on National Boulevard in Prague. This was a very difficult job: she was constantly moving boxes with china which were sent from Karlovy Vary. In 1957, she landed a job as a translator for the Skoda company in the research department studying fuel fired furnaces; and later, in the university. But in 1971, a commission made a decision to fire her because of her political views. The pretext was that Vera Shormova had sympathized with the Dubcek government. She contacted a labor union lawyer, but he refused to help her. "I was against the German and Soviet occupations and they knew it," says Pani Vera.

Later, she earned money by doing occasional translations and... by crocheting. She also taught children English and German. After 1989, Vera was rehabilitated, and she was offered a job after they remembered that she was a top-notch translator. But she categorically refused. Bogumil at that time was gravely ill and died soon after. She could only count on herself now.

A difficult and colorful life taught Vera to overcome trials and bear them with

honor — they tempered her character and strengthened her desire to help people. During the Second Chechen War, from the beginning of 2000, Pani Vera began to be concerned about Chechen children. She was inspired by an article by Petra Prohaskova, the well-known Czech journalist, who wrote about the "Chechen War," reporting the truth about its horrors, including the killing of the civilian population, to the residents of a calm and trouble-free Europe and the Czech Republic. In addition, Petra founded a Center for Children in Grozny, for those children whose parents had perished in the bombings or bombardments. They went to the Center during the day, and returned to the ruins of their blown-up houses in the evening. The children could not sleep in the surviving buildings, because those could become the targets of the next Russian bombing mission. "This reminded me of my own experience, when immediately following the Second World War, in 1945, I headed to France through Germany to join my husband," Pani Vera explains. "I traveled at night through the ruins of German cities; it was cold and dark, and a feeling of horror enveloped me. I spent nights in the ruins of destroyed cities. To this day, I remember the cold, the smell of charred garbage, the dampness and the dark. Reading the article about the children of Grozny, I recalled that frightening postwar journey. I could imagine how it was for these children to live in the middle of war, cold, the dark, and dankness... And for that reason, I began to crochet sweaters, hats, socks and gloves — things that could warm them up if only a little bit."

She managed to get in touch with Petra Prohaskova. The latter came to see her, and this acquaintanceship of two women who did not know the phrase "somebody else's children," united them. Petra would take the

things made by Pani Vera, bring them to Grozny and give them to those very much in need of them. In addition, Pani Vera got in touch with the organization Berkat, which was sending shipments to Grozny. Later, she got in touch with the well-known Czech humanitarian organization Caritas which was active in the Northern Caucasus. "Some people said then that I was helping terrorists. They did not understand that I was helping children who had suffered a calamity because of the war."

Vera Shormova sent her things not only to Grozny, but to Ukraine when fighting began there in 2014, and continues to send packages to Kiev, to Aspern, a foundation for children. Most recently, she has been giving regular financial assistance to and sending her tricots to a hospital in Baltistan (Pakistan), founded by the Czech mountain climber Dina Sterbova. The long hours of crocheting produce pain in her hands and sometimes she cannot move her fingers. But, forced to take a break, she goes back to work, which has given her a purpose in life...

For a long time, Pani Vera helped Anisa — a Chechen girl with a heart condition. The money raised by her went to towards surgery. "But, unfortunately, she died in the end," she says, sadly. "The last photograph I received of Anisa was of her in a pink dress, lovingly crocheted for her by me..."

She supported another girl for a long time — Malden Agaeva, who was born in 2001 in the basement of a building in Grozny. Right after the war, there were many people living somewhere else after their own abodes were destroyed. No one knew Malden's mother and no one knew what happened to her, or where she lived before. The three-day-old baby girl was found in a damp basement, alone, and without care or food. The hapless



Oleg Orlov, member of the Board of the Human Rights Center "Memorial", at the opening of an exhibit about the First Russo-Chechen War

child was taken in immediately by Larisa Agaeva, a childless woman from Grozny, and Malden was saved. When the girl was two years old, it turned out that she had a serious illness. Malden could not stand; she spoke very badly and very little, and did not react to her surroundings. After a battery of tests, it was discovered that Malden's central nervous system was damaged; she had cerebral palsy. Through Caritas, Pani Vera cared for her for many years, sending her money from her modest pension, letters and presents. "I did all of this and am doing all of this in the name of my mother, my father and my grandmother Johanna Wolf," Pani Vera explains. "They inspired me to do charitable work. I did it not for recognition, but in memory of them. In 1917, my grandmother and my mother went to the railroad workers hospital and spent three months in the cholera ward. Both of them received high accolades — the Red Cross Medal of Honor... My mother encouraged me to do charitable work. I want to emphasize that it is very important that young people grow up understanding how important it is to help one's fellow man. A different road leads only to ruin..."

Budyonovsk is one of those rare cases when it was possible to achieve something; it was possible to save people. That is the most important thing. I think that we all remember Budyonovsk with a certain degree of pride. After all, human rights defenders were able to save the lives of many people. That is very important. But at the same time we also experience a feeling of grief, because we human rights defenders, pro-democracy activists, people with democratic convictions in Russia, were not able to stop Russia from slipping into where we have ended up. We slipped into it, and I completely agree with my colleagues, because of the First Chechen War, because of the Second Chechen War, and of course, there cannot be any collective responsibility in the sense of collective punishment; that is not right, but nations do bear collective guilt in the historical sense, in my opinion. And what our nation is going through now, what the people of

Russia are going through now, what our country is going through now, that ditch, that dead end, in which our country and people find themselves now — that we deserve, because the country went through the First and the Second Chechen Wars, and put up with them. If during the first war, there were a fair number of protest demonstrations, then during the second, we saw a couldn't-care-less, indifferent attitude in society, or whole-hearted support for the war. And when now many liberals criticize the Putin regime, they say: yes, of course, the pivotal moment was when Khodorkovsky was put in jail. That was the pivotal moment for them. But after all, they don't want to understand that the present regime was a bloody regime from the very beginning, and committed terrible, grievous, mass crimes. Our colleagues in the liberal camp did not want to recognize it then, and to this day they do not notice it; for them, Putin reached some kind of turning point only when something happened to Khodorkovsky. And so, what about these crimes, mass murder of people earlier — this somehow did not register with them. For that reason, our society deserves what is now happening to us..."

ABDULLA DUDUEV A PEACE WHICH DID NOT END THE WAR



The 20th Anniversary Of The Khasavyurt Accord

And by August 22nd, the "Jihad" inflicted a devastating defeat on the military forces of its adversary, which outnumbered it by factor of ten in terms of both troops and armament.

In the aftermath, on August 31, 1996, the chief of staff of the armed forces of the Republic of Ichkeria, former Colonel of the Soviet Army Aslan Maskhadov, and Alexander Lebed, then secretary of the Security Council of Russia, signed a peace agreement.

In Russian political and military circles, and also in certain media outlets, the Khasavyurt agreements were subjected to harsh criticism right then and there; many called them treasonous, and demeaning for Russia. In the three years following, there were periodic calls and attempts to revise or completely repudiate them.

The defeat of the federal forces which became the basis for the short-lived Khasavyurt peace caused deep offense among the Russian general staff, begat a feeling of humiliation and gave rise to an insurmountable striving for revenge, which, in point of fact turned into the Second Chechen War, launched in the fall of 1999.

A member of the Russian delegation to the 1996 negotiations, Vladimir Lukin (he was then the chairman of the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the State Duma, and a representative of the Yabloko Party which was against the war), in an interview with the newspaper Kommersant, talked about the negotiations and the peace agreement. Nonetheless, rumor had it that it was Lukin who spoke the words that supposedly echoed in the hallways during the Khasavyurt negotiations, that in five years, (according to the signed document, the question of the status of Chechnya would be put off until December 31, 2001), Russia would become stronger and return to Chechnya. However, Lukin himself, in an interview with "Dosh" in 2005, denied these assertions of some of the members of the Chechen delegation at those negotiations in Khasavyurt.

"Many people began to say that this war was terrible and that it was dragging on tragically. However, if we talk about individuals, then of course, the decisive role in getting intensive peace negotiations started was played by Alexander Ivanovich Lebed. He was the one who initiated this

process. As you know, a presidential election was under way in Russia at the time. Lebed was third in the polls, which gave him leverage. And Alexander Ivanovich imagined very clearly that he could play a historic role. And, of course, he hoped that he would become a major figure, and that it would be he who would take the place of the seriously ill Boris Nikolaevich Yeltsyn as president," says Lukin. According to him, Alexander Lebed thought that a reputation as a peacemaker would smooth his path to the presidency. And then, undistracted by the war, he would successfully solve the political and economic problems of the country.

"It was for that reason that he set out to remove this splinter from the body of the country, to end this military action which was essentially a civil war... Boris Nikolaevich (Yeltsyn) was, of course, in a difficult position and by that time was already starting to realize that this war, into which he had been drawn, was politically counterproductive for him. Because of it he had lost a significant amount of political capital. But he was at a dead end: in his inner circle they couldn't figure out how to end the war, and in the army things were complicated too," Lukin explains.

He noted that Russian generals did not want to admit that they could not win, although they really could not win in that period; as a result, a situation arose which required someone to come up with a solution. That person turned out to be Alexander Lebed.

"There were some things I didn't like in the final document; one would have wanted something a little different. The Chechens, for example, insisted that there be no references to the Russian constitution in the document, so the accord would look like it were intergovernmental. I objected, but

Alexander Lebed was in a hurry. He understood that either we sign this agreement now, or later there would be foot-dragging and so forth. And he insisted. Anyway, later, Yeltsyn also agreed to this accord and accepted it. But the decisive things in this agreement were, without a doubt, the cessation of hostilities, material assistance to the republic, and other things, that gradually the illegal militias would be disbanded," Lukin says.

"It was obvious that our army had gotten bogged down there. It would have taken serious measures in order to strengthen the army, reinforce it, to create a situation whereby one could have solved the situation militarily. Well, I think that it was with that goal in mind that the federal forces decided on negotiations with the Chechens. This also became clear judging from events which later took place in Chechnya," Lukin, an ex-leader of Yabloko notes. Lukin believes that those military men who took part in the unsuccessful battles were trying to save face by saying that the peace accord was "treasonous."

"After all, the military always needs just five minutes more to achieve complete victory. Do you see? For that reason, I think that this was them flexing muscles after the battle. When their calculations were pointed out to them, that they had ample time to suppress the resistance of the militias, then they fell silent," notes Lukin.

On the other hand, as he emphasizes, there were many challenges in terms of support from the government, governmental mobilization. For that reason, "a breathing spell was needed."

"It is another story how that break was utilized. Overall, it was OK, because the second war ended differently than the first. No matter what people might say, I still believe that the cessation of the



war at that time was the right decision, because otherwise, the bloodshed would have continued, and there would have been many more victims," the politician states.

He emphasized that it would have been possible to come to an agreement with the first president of the Chechen Republic of Ichkeria, Dzhokhar Dudayev, before the beginning of the war.

"I would put it this way: if Kremlin officials had displayed more tact and personal respect in dealing with the Chechen leaders, I think bloodshed would have been avoided... How is it that these kind of revolutionary eras come about? This is part of human life. In each of us there is a person who can solve issues rationally, analyze them. But suddenly something happens — as the expression goes, a person gets up on the wrong side of the bed — and a stampede away from reality begins, towards some kind of heroic and categorical solution to the problem. That is how all revolutions start. But you must also take into account the fact that the Chechens have the reputation of being very virile and very fiery people who often pound their fists on the table first and only later think about what is happening. Then you have the fact that more Chechens were deported by Stalin's regime than other peoples of the Caucasus. And the memory of that deportation, in my opinion, played a not insignificant role," Lukin notes.

PANORAMA OF THE CAUCASUS



Citizens of Russia may have been involved in the terrorist act in the Turkish airport

On June 28, 2016, three terrorists attacked Ataturk International Airport in the capital of Turkey. They arrived at the terminal in a taxi. Getting out of the car, they opened fire near the security checkpoint, killing a security guard. Inside the terminal, the terrorists divided up, and began to shoot passengers, employees and policemen. Blasts shook two floors of the terminal. No fewer than 238 people were wounded. Around 40 people died. The majority of the dead were citizens of Turkey. Among the victims were citizens and subjects of Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Jordan, Tunisia, Iran, Uzbekistan and Ukraine.

On June 30th, Reuters reported that immigrants from Russia, Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan were behind the Istanbul airport attack. The agency quoted a Turkish government official who wished to remain anonymous.

On July 1st, there were reports in the media that at least two of those involved in the terrorist act came from the Northern Caucasus — a Chechen Akhmed Chatayev (long known to the Russian intelligence agencies; he had been hiding from them abroad for several years), and also a certain Osman Vadinov, according to some sources, a resident of Chechnya; according to others — Dagestan.

The name of Chatayev, as Gazet.ru writes, appeared in the domestic press at the beginning of 2010 in connection with the activity of Imarat Kavkaz (translator's note: the Caucasus Emirate) — the North Caucasian terrorist organization banned in Russia. Akhmed Chatayev, known by his nickname One-Arm, was considered to be the representative of the leader of Imarat Kavkaz, Doku Umarov in Europe. According to *Kommersant*, which cited the FSB, after the end of the second war in Chechnya, Chatayev who had fought in the ranks of the Chechen resistance fled to Austria and was placed on the international wanted list. European courts refused to

hand him over to Russia. In 2008, he landed in a Swedish prison for transporting armaments and explosives. Later, he appeared in Ukraine, detained at the request of the Prosecutor General of the Russian Federation, but he was released. In 2012, he was held in Georgia for an attempt to cross the border into Russia with other militants. During a special op, 11 militants were killed. Chatayev succeeded in convincing a Tbilisi court that he had nothing to do with those people. After his acquittal, he made his way to Turkey. Since 2013, he has identified himself with the Islamic State, Russian authorities assert.

The ex-president of Georgia, Mikhail Saakashvili commented on information about One-Arm on his Facebook page: "As it has been reported, a citizen of Russia Akhmed Chatayev is the principal organizer of the terrorist act at the Istanbul airport. He was arrested by my government in Georgia during a counterterrorist operation headed by General Georgy Lordkipanidze, who at the present time is the chief of police in Odessa. Three of our security officers perished in that operation," Saakashvili wrote. He explained that the Georgian government headed by the Russian oligarch Ivanishvili which came to power in 2012, immediately released Chatayev, considering him a political prisoner.

On July 11th, TASS announced that at the very least, seven more people had been detained on suspicion of complicity in the terrorist act at the Istanbul airport. Before that, the Turkish authorities had detained around 40 people. Of them, 13 had been arrested and by court order put in prison during the investigation. Their nationality was not disclosed. For now, there has been no more information about the investigation of this act of terror.

By a decision of the European Court of Human Rights, Russia is obligated to pay 123,000 euros to relatives of people abducted in Makhachkala

The European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) has required Russia to pay 123,000 euros to relatives of two residents of Dagestan, who were abducted in Makhachkala in 2012.

As the applicants noted in the complaint, Sirazhudin Aliyev and Gazimagomed Abdulaev were abducted in January, 2012. They were stopped in downtown Makhachkala by armed men dressed in uniforms of the STSI (State Traffic Safety Inspectorate). They were dragged by force from their car, handcuffed, and taken away to an unknown destina-



tion — first, as the relatives of the abducted were able to learn, to one of the police stations of Makhachkala, and afterwards, to the Stavropol Krai. Up to the present moment, there is no information about the abducted. The authorities of the Russian Federation do not dispute the circumstances of the abduction, but deny any participation of representatives of the power ministries in it.

The ECHR ruled that Russia violated Aliyev's and Abdulaev's rights to freedom, security of their person, and life, calling the investigation into the circumstances of the abduction improper. According to the ruling of the European court, Russia is obligated to pay compensation within three months after the effective date of the decision.



Did Abu Umar al-Shishani perish again?

On July 13, 2016, the news agency of the Islamic State (an organization banned in the Russian Federation), Amaq, reported that one of the influential field commanders of the terrorist group Abu Umar al-Shishani, also known as Tarkhan Temorovich Batirashvili (according to some reports, he commanded all of the military formations of the Islamic State), died in battle near the Iraqi city of Shergat,

south of Mosul. The U.S. Department of Defense presumes that al-Shishani was killed on July 10th as a result of an air strike in the suburbs of Mosul, where he was supposed to meet up with 16 more rebel leaders of ISIS.

In the opinion of the Iraqi military expert Hisham al-Hashimi, Batirashvili was wounded as a result of a March air strike and was recovering in a hospital in Shergat. The death of Batirashvili was confirmed by the assistant head of the administration of the Akhmet District of Georgia, who said that "the family is already accepting condolences," however, he ruled out the transfer of the body to relatives.

Nevertheless, on the 14th of July, it became known that relatives of al-Shishani were not confirming reports of his death. They recalled that this was not the first time that al-Shishani's death had been reported. Specifically, in November, 2014, Ramzan Kadyrov announced on Instagram the killing of

"the enemy of Islam." In May, 2015, the Iranian media reported the death of Abu Umar al-Shishani together with ten more ISIS militants in the province of Salakh-ed-Din during an operation of the Iraqi Army. But on May 5th, a cousin of Batirashvili, Idilkhan, refuted the announcement of his death. At the end of June, 2015, an announcement of al-Shishani's death appeared in the Italian news magazine Panorama, but in subsequent publications it was not confirmed. At the beginning of October, 2015, a notice appeared that as a result of an airstrike by the Iraqi Air Force, Abu Umar al-Shishani was killed together with other key figures of the Islamic State — Abu Said al-Karbouli and Abu Anis al-Suri. On March 8, 2016, U.S. government sources announced the possible death of Batirashvili in an airstrike conducted by the U.S. Air Force on March 4th near the city of Al-Shaddadah in Syria, and on March 15th, the U.S. Department of Defense announced that it had received confirmation of the death of Batirashvili.



In Moscow, there was picketing by individuals on the anniversary of the death of Natalia Estemirova

In Moscow on July 15th, at the reception desk of the Investigative Committee of the Russian Federation, activists of Amnesty International conducted a series of pickets demanding an effective investigation into the murder of Natalia Estemirova, and the bringing to justice of all those who carried out and organized the crime.

"Exactly seven years ago, on the morning of July 15, 2009, a member of the Human Rights Center 'Memorial,' the Chechen journalist Natalia Estemirova

was abducted by persons unknown right in front of her house in Grozny. Witnesses saw her pushed into a white Lada automobile, and she managed to scream that she was being abducted. The evening of the same day her body was found with bullet wounds to the head and chest one hundred meters from the 'Kavkaz' Federal Highway in Ingushetia. The murderers of Natalia Estemirova and those who were behind this murder were never found and were not brought to justice. A history teacher by training and in her first profession, in 2000, she began to work for Memorial in Grozny. She investigated forced disappearances and unlawful executions of people in Chechnya, fought against torture, advocated for jailhouse visitation rights, and worked on investigative

pieces. Her work caused indignation with the authorities of the republic..."

According to Natalia's colleagues, she was openly threatened. "Seven years later, we still do not know the names of those who killed Natalia Estemirova and of those who ordered the hit. Year after year, the investigators refuse to answer that question, and attacks on human rights activists and journalists in Russia, and especially in the Northern Caucasus, continue," human rights activists assert.

On the part of the authorities, there was no reaction to the picketing. A policeman came up to the individual picketers one by one, asked for their papers, and wrote down the information.

An illegal "preventive offender registry"

Since June, 2016, the MVD (translator's note: Ministry of Internal Affairs) has been compiling lists as a preventive offender registry of citizens who are suspect; and authorities in Dagestan have started to hand out warnings to those included in the registry in which

they demand to be informed if the person changes his residence or travels outside the republic. The newspaper *Kommersant* wrote about this on July 27th.

Residents of Dagestan told that publication about the demands by Dagestani police on certain citizens (including those who attend Salafi

mosques) to be informed of travel outside the republic, changes of residence and phone number. This practice of a preventive offender registry in Dagestan has existed for several years now. Those who end up on the list are the objects of stepped-up attention from the MVD: they are fingerprinted, DNA samples are taken, and they are detained at checkpoints.



"On the 23rd of July, 2016, a federal law entitled 'On the framework of a system for the prevention of the violation of the law in the Russian Federation' went into effect," a publication of the Council for Civil Society and Human Rights of the Russian Federation cites expert Rasul Kadiev. The law states, among other things, that the MVD has the right, as a preventive measure, to take precautionary steps in the form and manner that the Ministry itself decides.

"This law contains a section on a preventive registry, which, in essence, legalizes the practice of putting people on a preventive offender registry as exists in Dagestan, and now will spread to the rest of the country. It is worthy of note that according to this law, the MVD is not the only entity with the right to take measures to prevent violations of the law, but any agency of the executive branch," Kadiev notes. However, the new law does not obligate citizens who are the object of stepped-up attention to report their trips and changes of residence.

In an interview with the radio station Ъ FM, member of the Moscow Helsinki Group Valery Borshchev stated: "This does not have anything to do with the ramping up of security measures. It is good that law enforcement suspects someone, that they have them under observation, let them observe them;

that is done everywhere, not only in our country. But here it really is an illegal restriction, without trial or investigation. They put you in a special position — you are, it seems, not convicted and not even under suspicion, you are only on their radar. Yes, of course, there was a room for children at the police, there they put children and teenagers on the registry, but even those teenagers were less restricted in their activities."

On August 4th, the Supreme Court of the Republic of Dagestan upheld, for the first time, a ruling by a city court on the unlawful placement of a person on the preventive offender registry. Attorney Aida Kasimova told *Kavkazskaya Politika* about this case: "I filed a complaint with the Khasavyurt City Court about an unlawful placement on the registry. The court redressed the grievance. The placement on the registry was deemed unlawful. During the court proceedings, to the query as to what the basis for placement on the registry was, the answer received was that the basis for placement on the registry was participation by my client in an unsanctioned demonstration about the closing of the mosque in Khasavyurt." According to Kasimova, during the court hearing of the case, the local police officers who had put her client on the registry were not able to prove his participation in the demonstration, and an administrative case was not initiated.

"In order to put someone on the registry, one needs to do a certain amount of work. There are a number of requirements. There must be a conversation with the person to be put on the registry. That was not done. The authorities also tried to claim that my client had some relatives in Syria. All of their data were, putting it bluntly, figments of their imagination. The court decided in my favor. For me, that was surprising. Because the practice is that these kinds of claims are denied," the lawyer says.

The appeal by the local police to the Supreme Court of the Republic of Dagestan was not successful.

"I believe that this case will become the issue preclusion for other decisions. That is my subjective opinion. At the present time there are other cases about placement on the registry before the courts and they have been suspended for different reasons. Everyone was waiting for August 4th: what would the Supreme Court say about this case... They say that right now in Dagestan there are around 20,000 people on the registry. I don't know the exact figure. But I think that it is a lot more, because they put people on it without the proper procedure, 'automatically', even people who do not pray. I know cases where even active law enforcement officials were put on the preventive registry by mistake," Kasimova notes.

A Dialogue of Theologians

In Magas, on the 26th of July, a regular meeting of religious leaders took place, continuing a discussion of certain aspects of Islamic theology. The initiator of the meeting was the Head of Ingushetia, Yunus-Bek Yevkurov. The leader of the region began to speak about the necessity of these kinds of meetings after the conflict of the mosque-goers of the Nasyr-Kort mosque with the representatives of the muftiate which took place in the summer of last year.

"Commenting on the incident in the mosque, Yevkurov promised that a way out of the present situation would be found which would satisfy all sides. A deepening of the conflict was prevented, but attempts by the leadership of the republic to reconcile the participants have not been successful," *Echo Kavkaz* writes. Back then, the differences were not overcome, despite a formal reconciliation of the parties. Yevkurov approached the Ingush Mufti Isa Khamkhoev with a proposal to voluntarily give up his position, since he felt that he was not

capable of getting a process of reconciliation going, and of reforming the work of the muftiate. The mufti refused to resign, declared his antagonism to the Salafi community and in effect went over to the opposition to the republic's authority. A congress of Muslims of Ingushetia planned over this issue was postponed indefinitely.

"The clergy and leaders of the Chechen Republic expressed themselves unmistakably in support of Mufti Khamkhoev; however, the Chechen leadership also does not intend to mar relations with the leader of Ingushetia. So, for example, the Mufti of Chechnya, Salakh Mezhiev, spoke several times harshly criticizing the Ingush Salafis, but at the same time met with the Head and the spiritual authorities of Ingushetia, not dividing them into us and them. No change in position on this issue has been observed in official Magas," the publication writes.

Also recently, Yevkurov criticized a legislative initiative of Ingush deputies on the subject of a law requiring

mandatory legal registration of religious groups.

"You write as if there were no civil authority in Ingushetia... Everything comes down to the fact that because of Ingushetia one must pass this law," Yevkurov said. According to him, there are no Wahhabis and unregistered mosques in the republic, and no religious groups harboring evil intent. The law is needed, but it should be adopted for all religious groups, of any denomination, functioning in the territory of Russia.

"A forum for discussion was created in Ingushetia precisely so that there would not be any unregistered religious groups in the republic, and also to bring together and unite all Muslims. In this forum authoritative Ingush theologians can discuss all contentious issues and work out a consensus on important religious topics. It cannot be said that the dialogue is smooth sailing, but for now not a single party is refusing to take part in it. In order to preserve stability in society, the Muslims of Ingushetia have no alternative," *Echo Kavkaz* notes.



The Presidential Envoy of Putin in the North Caucasian Federal District (NCFD) believes that there are too many mosques in Dagestan

At the Third North Caucasus Civil Forum "Arkhyz-XXI", Presidential Envoy for the NCFD Sergei Melikov talked about his vision of the problems in Makhachkala. The publication *On Kavkaz* reported about this on August 4th.

For instance, the Dagestani journalist Eduard Urazaev asked Melikov how he felt about the fact that the People Against Corruption Party was removed from the election, and eight people from the Rodina (translator's note: homeland) Party withdrew under pressure from the authorities. According to Urazaev himself, as the publication reports, these questions set Melikov off. "The day before yesterday I had a 1 1/2 hour conversation with the mayor of Makhachkala, and I asked him that question, and I ask you that very same question. Why is it when there are enough energetic civic activists in Dagestan that a development plan for Makhachkala came about only in May, 2016? No one from the government answered that. Here is a question for the civic activists: why were you OK with this for the past 10 years? Why didn't you ask that question of the former mayor of Makhachkala?" the presidential envoy fumed. Despite the objections

of Urazaev that the question had been asked, the envoy continued the monologue: "How could Makhachkala develop if everyone accepted the fact that only in May of 2016 did a development plan appear? You tell me how many religious institutions and cultural institutions have been built in Makhachkala recently? There is a definite bias towards religious institutions. I am only in favor of people performing their religious obligations. After visiting their religious institution, they have no place to go — not to a cultural venue, not to a sporting arena. So after mosque, he goes to Hungarian Fighters Street to compatible organizations which are sending our citizens to Syria, and there, it is not Salafis, not Wahhabis, not gang members we are losing, but first and foremost young citizens of the Russian Federation! The task of civic activists is not only to criticize the authorities, but to participate in work with them. As far as the idea of a museum, that is a great idea. But before building a museum in the park, I would like to see civic activists organize a day of voluntary Saturday work to clean up the rubbish heaps from the streets of this wonderful city and to clean the streets," Melikov noted. But, the publication notes that days of voluntary Saturday work already take place regularly in Makhachkala — the former mayor, Magomed Suleymanov, got government workers to take part in them.

"As far as pressure on parties is concerned, I have not seen it. People Against Corruption is a needed movement with a good name. But is it a party ready to bring forward people who will change the situation in Dagestan? In my opinion, those people have not yet come into their own as politicians. There is another deviation, when Dagestani deputies are known more by their nicknames than by their last names. One ought to fight against that too. If the NPK (translator's note: People Against Corruption) is going to hinder stability in Dagestan, and there is that tendency, because representatives of the movement not only fight corruption, but are after certain political dividends; then its actions are premature. I will ask you not to engage in verbal speculation, if there were pressure, there would be no NPK, if there were pressure, there would be no Rodina. But who do we have as the leader of Rodina? It may be that we can speak later outside this forum in order not to discredit people in Rodina who have a constructive position? Sergei Ivanov and Viacheslav Volodin announced at a meeting in Moscow that nobody is striving for a 99 percent showing of United Russia in the elections. On the contrary, if, in past elections there were seven parties, in these elections we have 74. Is this not democracy? There ought to be more, or we will end up in a worse situation. Before discussing anything, one must know the situation," Melikov said in conclusion.

In Ingushetia a mother of three children was sentenced to eight years in prison



On August 11th, the Nazran District Court sentenced Leila Chemurzieva, accused of endeavoring to take the lives of law enforcement personnel, participation in illegal militias, and of illegal arms trafficking, to eight years in a standard regime penal colony. Relatives of Chemurzieva called the sentence unlawful, and the case fabricated, Caucasian Knot writes.

On October 31, 2015, in the indoor market in Nazran, a shootout occurred during which two people were killed. The MVD says that they had given armed resistance to officers of the security services who had tried to detain them. The slain were identified as the leader of the militants of the Sunzhen District Beslan Makhauri and the leader of the "Nazran" group Ilyas Vedzizhev. According to the MVD, they gave armed resistance. During the special op, Leila Chemurzieva was wounded. According to information from the security services, she was an accom-

pllice of the militants, the publication writes.

Chemurzieva's mother denies the claims of the security services about her daughter's connection to the militants. However, a source in law enforcement disclosed that Chemurzieva is suspected of being an accomplice to Makhauri and Vedzizhev, whom she brought to Nazran in an automobile. In this car, according to the source, a homemade bomb was discovered.

"We don't agree with this sentence. My sister — the mother of three children, one of whom is suffering from cancer, was tortured, and she was forced to confess to being an accomplice of the militants. On October 31st of last year, she was shot by federal officers, and not at the security perimeter, but to the side. It may be that they became frightened that she was behind the wheel and wearing a hijab," a relative of the convicted woman, Zalina

Gurazheva, stated. The state prosecutor requested a sentence of 15 years' deprivation of freedom; the court reduced it to eight.

Not one of the articles of the indictment contained an iota of proof of the guilt of Chemurzieva, states the lawyer Magomed Gandaur-Egi. According to him, after being wounded and after his client was brought to the Nazran District Hospital, she was pressured, and a criminal case was opened, violating all the procedural norms.

"They started to pressure Leila on the second day, when she was brought right from the operating room to a special hospital room of the Ingush Republican Committee on Security, which doubled the guard. On the second day, two FSB agents came to see her, put pressure on her, forced her to give testimony, denounced her, pressed down on her wounds, and grabbed her by the throat. Leila wrote complaints about these facts. They were looked at, but they refused to prosecute. We appealed and are prepared to go to the European Court of Human Rights," says the lawyer.

In St. Petersburg, the special services killed four militants from the Northern Caucasus

On August 17th, in St. Petersburg, the FSB and the Federal National Guard Troop Service conducted an operation in a high-rise apartment building to detain militants from the Northern Caucasus. Four militants were killed and no one else was hurt, *Fontanka* writes.

The operation began at 11:20 a.m. in a high-rise apartment building at 92 Leninsky Prospekt, Building 3. Eye-witnesses recalled explosions and shooting. The security forces were looking at the possibility of announcing a counterterrorism operation in St. Petersburg but decided against it in order to avoid panic.

The FSB, according to the publication, was working at the behest of the directorate in charge of Karbardino-Balkaria. The special op was connected with the murder of one of the leaders of the republic's Islamist underground, Khizir Likhov, who as of October, 2014 had been on the federal wanted list. He had been killed on the Kavkaz federal highway by officers of the State Traffic Safety Inspectorate. The names of three militants in the apartment are known: 30-year-old Zalim Shebzukhov, 34-year-old Vyacheslav Nyrov and 25-year-old Astemir Sheriev. The national antiterrorism committee calls them rebel commanders of the gangland underground of Kabardino-Balkaria. Special forces got into the apartment by breaking through the ceiling of the apartment above, having first tossed in

a tear gas grenade. The investigative committee reported that none of the residents of the building or of the assault team were hurt. However, before that, a correspondent of RIA Novosti who was at the scene said that one person in a mask was carried out of the building and brought to an ambulance, notes *Dozhd* TV station. Later, *Fontanka* suggested that that was a diversionary maneuver: it was precisely at that time that the assault began.

The main investigative directorate of the Investigative Committee for St. Petersburg opened a criminal case according to the statutes of the criminal code for an "attempt on the life of a law enforcement official" and "illegal trafficking in weapons, ammunition and explosives."

Putin and Kadyrov: a night meeting before the elections

On August 25th, Russian President Vladimir Putin received the interim Head of Chechnya Ramzan Kadyrov in the Kremlin, according to RBK, citing the official Kremlin website.

Kadyrov told Putin that "a good dynamic" can be observed in the republic. "This year, in the first half of the year, the volume of industrial output rose by 11.6%; and of agricultural output — by 7.4%. Towards the goal of import substitution in agriculture, we also have opened a dairy farm with 1,200 milk cows in the dairy unit and a feed lot for 4,000 head of cattle," the interim head of Chechnya stated. According to him, in Chechnya this year, unemployment has shrunk to the level of 1.3%, and 5,000 jobs were created in the republic in 2016. He also characterized the situation in Chechnya as stable, "especially in terms of serious and very serious crimes of terrorism."

Also, Kadyrov told of the preparations for the beginning of the school year, and about the situation with dilapidat-



ed housing. "So, gradually, we are solving these problems, but of course, not without your participation; without your support we wouldn't be able to do it: there are some issues that demand your intervention," Kadyrov summed up.

The two conversed about sports and Kadyrov expressed the desire for the president to come to observe training.

"I will be happy to come. Thank you very much," Putin answered.

Kadyrov's term as the head of Chechnya expired at the beginning of April of 2016. Putin appointed him as the interim head of the region. On August 2nd, the electoral commission of Chechnya made a unanimous decision to register Kadyrov for the election of the head of the republic.

The Russian soldier Permyakov was convicted and sentenced to life in prison for the murder of an Armenian family

On August 28th, a court in Armenia sentenced the Russian soldier Valery Permyakov, who killed seven members of an Armenian family, the Avetisyan, to life in prison. During one of the hearings, Permyakov stated that he killed the children "because of the noise," *Gazetaru* noted. According to the investigation, on January 12, 2015, the Russian soldier deserted from the military base in Gyumri and shot seven members of

the Avetisyan family with a machine gun. As was reported, six were found dead in their house in Gyumri, and a six-month-old infant died later. The murder sparked a public outcry. There were clashes between the police and protesters, who demanded Permyakov be handed over to the Armenian authorities. At the present time, the issue of where Permyakov will serve his sentence is being decided.





THE METHODS OF STATE TERROR

