



Stability in Russia's Chechnya and Other Regions of the North Caucasus: Recent Developments

-name redacted-

Specialist in Russian and Eurasian Affairs

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Summary

Terrorist attacks in Russia's North Caucasus—a border area between the Black and Caspian Seas that includes the formerly breakaway Chechnya and other ethnic-based regions—appeared to increase substantially in 2007-2009. Moreover, civilian and government casualties reached levels not seen in several years and terrorist attacks again took place outside the North Caucasus. Although the number of terrorist incidents may have leveled off or even declined slightly in 2010 from the high levels of 2009, the rate of civilian and government casualties continued to increase throughout the North Caucasus in 2010 and a rising number of terrorist incidents took place outside of Chechnya. Illustrative of the new range and scope of violence, the Moscow subway system was bombed in March 2010, resulting in over 40 deaths and dozens of injuries.

Before the recent rise in terrorism, it seemed that government security forces had been successful in tamping down their range and scope by aggressively carrying out over a thousand sweep operations (“zachistki”) in the North Caucasus. During these operations, security forces surround a village and search the homes of the residents, ostensibly in a bid to apprehend terrorists. Critics of the operations allege that the searches are illegal and that troops frequently engage in pillaging and gratuitous violence and are responsible for kidnapping for ransom and “disappearances” of civilians. Through these sweeps, as well as through thousands of direct clashes, most of the masterminds of previous large-scale terrorist attacks were killed.

Some observers suggest that the increasing scope of public discontent against zachistki and deep economic and social distress are contributing to growing numbers of recruits for terrorist groups and to increasing violence in the North Caucasus. Interethnic and religious tensions are also responsible for some of the increased violence. Many ethnic Russian and other nonnative civilians have been murdered or have disappeared, which has spurred the migration of most of the nonnative population from the North Caucasus. Russian authorities argue that foreign terrorist groups continue to operate in the North Caucasus and to receive outside financial and material assistance.

The United States generally has supported the Russian government's efforts to combat terrorism in the North Caucasus. However, successive Administrations and Congress have continued to raise concerns about the wide scope of human rights abuses committed by the Russian government in the North Caucasus. The conference agreement on Consolidated Appropriations for FY2010 (P.L. 111-117), calls for \$7.0 million to continue humanitarian, conflict mitigation, human rights, civil society and relief and recovery assistance programs in the North Caucasus. It also repeats language used for several years that directs that 60% of the assistance allocated to Russia will be withheld (excluding medical, human trafficking, and Comprehensive Threat Reduction aid) until the President certifies that Russia is facilitating full access to Chechnya for international nongovernmental organizations providing humanitarian relief to displaced persons.

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Background

During and after the breakup of the Soviet Union in 1991, the North Caucasus area of Russia experienced substantial disorder. Among such disorder, breakaway conflicts in neighboring Georgia rallied some North Caucasians to support their efforts; Chechen separatism gained ground, contributing to the breakup of the then-Chechen-Ingush Republic along ethnic lines; and ethnic Ingush clashed with ethnic North Ossetians over disputed territory. Russia's then-President Boris Yeltsin implemented a federal system that permitted substantial regional autonomy over governance and taxes. While most North Caucasus republics agreed to remain as parts of Russia, Chechnya was at the forefront in demanding independence. In 1994-1996, Russia fought against Chechen separatists in a bloody campaign that led to thousands of Russian and Chechen casualties and hundreds of thousands of displaced persons, but ceasefire accords in 1996 resulted in de facto self-rule in Chechnya. Organized crime and Islamic extremism subsequently greatly increased in Chechnya and spilled out into bordering and other areas of Russia, including the alleged bombing of apartment buildings in Moscow and elsewhere in 1999 by Chechen terrorists. Ostensibly in response to the rising cross-border violence, Russia's then-Premier Putin ordered military, police, and security forces to reenter Chechnya in late 1999. By early 2000, these forces occupied most of the region, resulting again in large numbers of civilian casualties and displaced persons.

Over the next few years, government security forces acted extremely aggressively to tamp down the range and scope of the insurgency by aggressively carrying out over a thousand counter-terrorism operations (termed "zachistki" or "cleaning-up" operations) in Chechnya and elsewhere in the North Caucasus. During these operations, security forces surround a village and search the homes of the residents, ostensibly in a bid to apprehend terrorists. Critics of the operations allege that the searches are illegal and that troops frequently engage in pillaging and gratuitous violence and are responsible for kidnapping for ransom and "disappearances" of civilians. Through these sweeps, as well as through thousands of direct clashes, most of the masterminds of previous large-scale terrorist attacks were killed and such attacks became rarer, although they did not cease completely. In September 2004, terrorists attacked the Beslan grade school in North Ossetia, where 300 or more civilians, police, and troops were killed, and in October 2005, terrorists attacked the town of Nalchik in Kabardino-Balkaria, where 50 or more were killed.

Although local Islamic extremist insurgents outside of Chechnya had cooperated to some degree with the Chechen insurgents for several years, in May 2005, then-Chechen rebel leader Abdul-Khalim Saydullayev decreed the formation of a Caucasus Front against Russia among Islamic believers in the North Caucasus. The goal of the front was to enhance Chechen ideological, logistical, and financial support for wider hostilities. In October 2007, his successor, Doku Umarov, declared a Caucasus Emirate embracing the North Caucasus and other Muslim areas of Russia.

Table I. The North Caucasus: Basic Facts

Republic	Population	Ethnic Groups
Adygea Republic	447,000	Russians (64.5%), Adyghe (24.2%), Armenians (3.4%), Ukrainians (2%), and others.
Chechnya Republic	1.1 million	Chechens (93.5%), Russians (3.7%), Kumyks (0.8%), and others.
Dagestan Republic	2.577 million	Avars (29.4%), Dargins (16.5%), Kumyks (14.2%), Lezgins (13.1%), Russians (6.7%), Laks (5.4%), Tabasarans (4.3%), Azeris (4.3%), Chechens (3.4%), Nogais (1.5%), and others.
Ingushetia Republic	467,000	Ingush (77.3%), Chechens (20.4%), Russians (1.2%), and others.
Kabardino-Balkar Republic	901,500	Kabardins (55.3%), Russians (25.1%), Balkars (11.6%), Ossetians (1.1%), and others.
Karachay-Cherkess Republic	439,500	Karachays (38.5%), Russians (33.6%), Cherkess (11.3%), Abazins (7.4%), Nogais (3.4%), and others.
North Ossetia-Alania Republic	710,000	Ossetians (62.7%), Russians (23.2%), Ingush (3.0%), Armenians (2.4%), and others.

Source: 2002 Russian Census. According to some Russian demographers, population figures for the 2002 and 2010 censuses (the 2010 data have not yet been released in final form) may have been exaggerated by local officials to gain more economic subsidies from Moscow or to mask losses from conflict and out-migration.

Note: The North Caucasus Federal District, spun off in January 2010 from the Southern Federal District, consists of Stavropol Territory and the Republics of Chechnya, Dagestan, Ingushetia, Kabardino-Balkaria, Karachay-Cherkessia, and North Ossetia-Alania. The Adyghe Republic, within Krasnodar Territory, remained in the Southern Federal District.

Recent Changes in the Range and Scope of Violence

Terrorist attacks in Russia's North Caucasus area appeared to greatly increase in numbers since 2007, according to many observers. Moreover, civilian and government casualties reached levels not seen in several years and large-scale terrorist attacks again took place outside the North Caucasus. Although the number of terrorist incidents may have leveled off or even declined slightly in 2010 in Chechnya and Ingushetia from the high levels of 2009 (see below), civilian and government casualties continue to increase throughout the North Caucasus and a rising number of terrorist incidents take place outside of Chechnya. Illustrative of the new level of violence, suicide bombings took place in Moscow on March 29, 2010—the first since 2004—resulting in over 40 deaths and dozens of injuries.

The rise in terrorist attacks in the late 2000s has been met by an increase in *zachistki* and in reported human rights abuses linked to security forces, such as abductions for ransom or “disappearances.” In Chechnya, leader Ramzan Kadyrev has advocated holding families responsible for the terrorist actions of their relatives, and local security forces allegedly have

tortured family members or burned their houses.¹ The increased conflict also has placed human rights and aid workers in renewed jeopardy. Some observers suggest that the increasing scope of public discontent against zachistki and deep economic and social distress are contributing to growing numbers of recruits for terrorist groups and to increasing violence in the North Caucasus. Interethnic and religious tensions are also responsible for some of the increasing violence.

The violence in the North Caucasus has spurred migration from the North Caucasus of some of the native population and most of the nonnative population. Unlike in most other federal subunits of Russia, eponymous or other native ethnic groups have strengthened their majority status in all the North Caucasian republics except in Adygea, and even there, ethnic Russians are declining as a percentage of the population. According to some reports, few ethnic Russians reportedly remain as residents in Chechnya and Ingushetia, except for military personnel.²

The Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), a private research organization, has suggested that the incidence of jihadist-related violence started to increase in the North Caucasus in 2007 and that such violence greatly increased in 2008-2009. Data for 2010 compiled by CSIS and by the Monterey Terrorism Research and Education Program, an endeavor of the private Monterey Institute of Middlebury College, also appear to indicate a substantial but slightly slowing rate of increase of terrorist incidents in the North Caucasus in 2010.³

According to data compiled by the U.S. government Open Source Center, there were 1,082 violent incidents in January through November 2010, compared to 1,382 in 2009. These data may suggest that the number of violent incidents peaked in 2009 and may have evened off or be slightly lower when complete data are compiled for 2010. However, the Open Source Center data also suggest that the injuries and deaths suffered by local officials and civilians increased in 2010 compared to 2009, and that the numbers of security personnel injured or killed declined, perhaps indicating that mujahidin are increasingly targeting civilians.⁴ Recent statements from the Caucasus Emirate seem to set forth a strategy of targeting civilians. Analyst Mairbek Vatchagaev has stated that “the militants seem to have taken the idea that there is a ‘peaceful civilian population’ off their agenda and this attests to the radicalization of the Islamist movement in the North Caucasus. . . . Apparently, the radical forces that insist on waging total war throughout Russia have gained the upper hand.”⁵

¹ Human Rights in Russia Hearing May 6, 2010

North Caucasus Panel

Testimony by Tanya Lokshina, Human Rights Watch Russia Office

² Valery Dzutsev, “North Caucasus’ Ethnic Russian Population Shrinks as Indigenous Populations Grow,” *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, November 13, 2009.

³ *Summer 2010: Not Just a Chechen Conflict*, Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2010; Gordon Hahn, “Russian Officials Offer Data on Counter-Jihadism Operations in 2010,” *Islam, Islamism and Politics in Eurasia Report*, Monterey Terrorism Research and Education Program, Monterey Institute for International Studies, November 29, 2010. CSIS defines violent incidents as including “abductions of military personnel and civilians, bombings, assassinations of key civilian and military leaders, rebel attacks, police or military operations against suspected militants, destruction of property by militants, and the discovery of weapons.”

⁴ *North Caucasus Incidents Database Aug 08-End Nov 10*, Open Source Center; The Open Source Center data include incidents in Stavropol Krai that are not reported in the CSIS database. Both the CSIS and OSC data were compiled from Russian and other media reports.

⁵ Mairbek Vatchagaev, “The Radicals Among the North Caucasus Rebels Appear to Have Gained the Upper Hand,” *North Caucasus Analysis*, September 10, 2010.

All three data sources mentioned above appear to indicate that the incidence of violent incidents continues to broaden beyond Chechnya. According to the Open Source Center data, violent incidents in Chechnya and Ingushetia declined substantially in 2010 from the previous year, from 452 in 2009 in Chechnya to 241 in the first eleven months of 2010, and from 436 in Ingushetia in 2009 to 248 in 2010. However, this data source also reports that the number of violent incidents substantially increased in 2010 over the previous year in Dagestan, Kabarda-Balkaria, and Stavropol Territory, from 384 in Dagestan in 2009 to 412 in 2010; from 70 in Kabarda-Balkaria in 2009 to 147 in 2010; and from 6 in Stavropol Territory in 2009 to 11 in 2010.

All three data sources rely on media reports and may be influenced by censorship in the North Caucasus, particularly in Chechnya. The validity of the Russian government's own data was questioned by President Medvedev at a meeting of police, security, and political officials in the North Caucasus Federal District on November 19, 2010. He mentioned that crime had increased in the North Caucasus and that crime-solving rates had declined, but retorted that "let me make this clear to the heads of our law-enforcement agencies: we cannot believe the statistics because they are often nonsense." While he reported that several dozen terrorism-related crimes had been prevented (such as by defusing improvised explosive devices) and that many "bandits" had been "neutralized" during 15 combat operations per day and over one *zachistka* per week in 2010 in the District, he stressed that there had been "little improvement" in halting "the number of shootings, explosions, [and] murders of civilians, religious leaders and law enforcement personnel" by terrorists. Responding to Medvedev, Aleksandr Bortnikov, the Director of the FSB, appeared to challenge Medvedev by asserting that terrorist activity in the District had declined in 2010. However, he agreed with Medvedev that the situation remained "complicated," and that it "requires additional measures, not only security and preventive measures, but also steps to stimulate the regions economy, invigorate the job market and bring down unemployment."⁶

Even though the counter-terrorist operations regime in Chechnya was formally lifted in early 2009, dozens of *zachistki* against alleged terrorists have continued to be carried out or have even increased in the republic as well as elsewhere in the North Caucasus, involving the declaration of counter-terrorist operations areas in villages and rural areas where civil rights are curtailed.⁷

Among prominent recent terrorist incidents:

- Dagestani Internal Affairs Minister Adilgerey Magomedtagirov was killed on June 5, 2009. Partly in response to this murder, President Medvedev flew to Dagestan and convened a session of the Russian Security Council to discuss regional counter-measures against terrorism. He stated that during the first half of the year, over 300 acts of terrorism had taken place in the North Caucasus (including over 100 bombings), that 75 police and other local government officials had been killed, that 48 civilians had died, and that 112 terrorists had been "eliminated."⁸

⁶ The Kremlin, President of Russia, *Beginning of Meeting on Comprehensive Measures to Ensure Security in the North Caucasus Federal District, 19 November 2010*, Yessentuki, November 19, 2010.

⁷ Council of Europe. Commissioner for Human Rights. *Report by Thomas Hammarberg, Commissioner for Human Rights of the Council of Europe, Following His Visit to the Russian Federation (Chechen Republic and the Republic of Ingushetia) on 2 -11 September 2009*, November 24, 2009.

⁸ President of the Russian Federation. *Russian president addresses Security Council meeting on Caucasus*, June 10, 2009, at <http://www.kremlin.ru>.

- The president of Ingushetia, Yunus-bek Yevkurov, was severely wounded by a bomb blast on June 22, 2009.
- In July 2009, prominent human rights advocate Natalia Estemirova was abducted in Chechnya and, after passing through police checkpoints, was found murdered in Ingushetia.
- In August 2009, Zarema Sadulayeva and Alik Dzhabrailov, who ran a child rehabilitation center in Chechnya, were murdered.
- A suicide truck bombing in Ingushetia killed 25 and wounded 136 policemen and civilians in August 2009. The Caucasus Emirate's Riyadus Salikhin Battalion (see below) was implicated in the attack. President Medvedev fired the republic's Interior Minister and at a meeting of the Security Council in Stavropol he admitted that "some time ago, I had an impression that the situation in the Caucasus had improved. Unfortunately, the latest events proved that this was not so." He reportedly ordered a purge of corrupt policemen throughout the North Caucasus, called for rotating policemen into and out of the North Caucasus to combat corruption and inefficiency, and urged legal and judicial changes that would reduce procedural rights and streamline the prosecution of "bandits."⁹
- In October 2009, Ingush opposition leader and human rights activist Maksharip Aushev was killed in Kabardino-Balkaria.¹⁰
- The Nevskiy Express railway train was bombed outside of Moscow on November 27, 2009, killing 27 passengers and injuring 90. Some of the victims were high-ranking Russian officials, including a member of the Federation Council (upper legislative chamber). The same train had been bombed in 2007, allegedly by Pavel Kosolapov (an associate of Chechen rebel leader Doku Umarov and the late Chechen terrorist Shamil Basayev). Other explosions targeted trains in Dagestan the day before and the day after the Nevskiy Express bombing, although no casualties were reported. Russian media termed the Nevskiy Express bombing the worst terrorist act outside of the North Caucasian region since the August 2004 bombing of two airliners that had taken off from Moscow, killing 89. On December 2, Umarov allegedly took responsibility for ordering the Nevskiy Express bombing and warned that "acts of sabotage will continue for as long as those occupying the Caucasus do not stop their policy of killing ordinary Muslims."¹¹ In March 2010, the Russian Federal Security Service (FSB) reported that it had killed Said Buryatskiy (Aleksander Tikhomirov), a purported leader of the Riyadus Salikhin Battalion, and alleged that he had been involved in the bombing.
- On January 6, 2010, a suicide bomber killed six policemen and wounded 20 in Dagestan.
- On March 29, 2010, female suicide bombers killed 40 civilians and wounded more than 70 at two Moscow Metro stations. Umarov took responsibility for the

⁹ CEDR, August 14, 2009, Doc. No. CEP-950185; and August 25, 2009, Doc. No. CEP-546006.

¹⁰ Philip P. Pan, "Opposition Figure Maksharip Aushev Gunned Down in Russia's North Caucasus," *Washington Post*, October 25, 2009.

¹¹ *Reuters*, December 2, 2009.

attack, stating that it was carried out by the Riyadus Salikhin Battalion as revenge for what he termed a February 2010 “massacre by Russian invaders” of several children and adults in Chechnya. He reiterated to ethnic Russians/non-Muslims that the “war will come to your streets, and you will feel it with your own lives and skins.”

- On March 31, 2010, a double suicide bombing in Kizlyar, in Dagestan, killed 12 individuals, mainly police officers, and injured 23.
- On May 26, 2010, a suicide attack at a concert hall in Stavropol killed seven individuals and injured another 40.
- In July 2010, 3-5 attackers killed two guards at the Baksanskaya hydroelectric power plant in Kabarda-Balkaria and set off explosions that destroyed two turbines. The attack was the most prominent to date against North Caucasian infrastructure, and President Medvedev ordered stepped-up security at infrastructure facilities. The Russian FSB blamed the attack on Amir Abdullah (Asker Dzhappuyev), the commander of mujahidin in the Caucasus Emirate’s “province” of Kabarda, Balkaria and Karachay.
- On August 28, 2010, about 60 Mujahidin attacked Ramzan Kadyrov's native village, Tsentoroy, reportedly killing six police and wounding over two dozen police and civilians.
- On September 9, 2010, a car-bomb attack occurred at a crowded marketplace in Vladikavkaz, killing 19 adults and children and injuring over 190. President Medvedev responded that “we will certainly do everything to catch these monsters, . . . who have committed a terrorist attack against ordinary people. What's more, a barbarous terrorist attack. We will do everything so that they are found and punished in accordance with the law of our country, or in the case of resistance or other cases, so that they are eliminated.” The Caucasus Emirate’s Ingush Vilayet reportedly took responsibility, stating that the attack was aimed against “Ossetian infidels” on “occupied Ingush lands.”¹²
- On October 19, 2010, 3-5 Mujahidin raided the Chechen Republic legislative building in Grozny. They may have been targeting Kadyrov and Nurgaliyev, who reportedly may have been planning a meeting in the building. One suicide bombing occurred as the insurgents stormed the building, and others took place after a firefight, reportedly killing three and wounding 17 police and civilians.

In his November 2009 address to the Russian Federal Assembly (legislature), President Medvedev stated that the security situation in the North Caucasus “is the most serious internal problem,” of Russia, and announced that he would soon appoint “someone with enough authority to effectively coordinate” stepped-up socioeconomic development programs in the region.¹³ In January 2010, President Medvedev appointed Krasnoyarsk Territory Governor Aleksandr Khloponin as the presidential representative of the newly created North Caucasus Federal District. Khloponin was also appointed a deputy premier, which placed him more directly under the authority of Premier Vladimir Putin. Medvedev stated that Khloponin would wield authority

¹² CEDR, September 9, 2010, Doc. No. CEP-950171; September 17, 2010, Doc. No. CEP-4015.

¹³ The Kremlin, President of Russia, *Presidential Address to the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation*, November 12, 2009.

over economic development and would work to combat “mass unemployment, economic crime, cronyism and bribery.”¹⁴

Unlike the previous year, President Medvedev did not mention instability in the North Caucasus during his address to the Federal Assembly on November 30, 2010. However, Alexander Khloponin, presidential envoy in the North Caucasus Federal District (see below), hastened to state just after the address that many of Medvedev’s proposed domestic welfare initiatives would impact the area, and that the actions called for in the previous year’s address for the North Caucasus remained the *modus operandi*. That same day, Ministry of the Interior official Sergey Chenchik reported that over 600 terrorist crimes had been committed in the Federal District, resulting in the deaths of 242 law enforcement personnel, 127 civilians, and 351 militants, and that all the crimes had been solved with the killing or detention of the “bandits.” Also on November 30, 2010, law enforcement officials announced that a *zachistka* had been launched in the village of Balakhani in Dagestan “to track down militants and to see if weapons, ammunition or explosives were illegally being stored.”¹⁵

In line with Medvedev’s call in his 2009 address to the Federal Assembly for greater socioeconomic development efforts in the North Caucasus, an official strategy was promulgated in September 2010. It sets forth goals for the development of the area through 2025, stressing investments in agriculture, tourism, health resorts, energy and mining, and light industry. It also calls for encouraging ethnic Russians to resettle in the area, including by initially setting employment quotas for ethnic Russians. Eventually, by encouraging interethnic harmony, the strategy suggests, the practice of allocating jobs by ethnicity and clan rather than merit might be eliminated. The strategy sets forth an optimum scenario where average wages increase by 250% and unemployment decreases by 70% by 2025. A timeline for implementing the strategy was to be developed by December 2010, but has been delayed. To bolster entrepreneurship, a regional development bank with charter capital of \$16 million will be set up, to augment the public-private investment fund with capital of about \$200,000. Putin heads an inter-agency commission to monitor the projects; the commission plans to hold its first meeting in late 2010.

Impact of the August 2008 Russia-Georgia Conflict

Several Russian policymakers and others have suggested that the August 2008 Russia-Georgia conflict contributed to increased instability in the North Caucasus. Russian analyst Viktor Nadein-Raevsky has claimed that “external forces and the so-called Wahhabi underground ... aiming to weaken Russia and to sever the Caucasus from it laid great hopes on Georgia’s attack.” These groups “had planned a large-scale offensive in the Russian Caucasus in the wake of Georgia’s aggression. When it proved to be a failure these forces changed tactics,” and launched terrorist attacks instead.¹⁶ Dagestani President Mukhu Aliyev also asserted in late November 2009 that the activity of foreign terrorists had increased in the republic since August 2008. According to the Center for Strategic and International Studies, there was a “lull in violence” in the North

¹⁴ The Kremlin, President of Russia, *Beginning of Meeting with Aleksandr Khloponin, Newly Appointed Presidential Plenipotentiary Envoy to North Caucasus Federal District and Deputy Prime Minister of Russia*, January 20, 2010.

¹⁵ *Interfax*, November 30, 2010.

¹⁶ “Wave of Terror Looming Over the Caucasus?” *Russia Today*, November 7, 2008.

Caucasus during the Russia-Georgia conflict, but “following the conflict, the level of violence in the North Caucasus rose sharply, particularly in Ingushetia.”¹⁷

Several observers have accused Russia of hypocrisy in recognizing the independence of South Ossetia and Abkhazia while suppressing separatism in Chechnya. These observers warn that separatists in the North Caucasus could be encouraged by the example of Abkhazia and South Ossetia.¹⁸ Attempting to refute such a linkage, Prime Minister Putin claimed in September 2008 that before the conflict, some groups in the North Caucasus had advocated separatism because they felt that Russia was not defending the rights of South Ossetians. He asserted that by defending South Ossetia, Russia averted destabilization of the North Caucasus.¹⁹ Offering what may be a more plausible rationale, Russian analyst Aleksey Malashenko has argued that Russia’s use of overwhelming force against Georgia served as a potent example to the North Caucasus (as was the case of Chechnya) that Russia would continue to use force to safeguard its interests in the Caucasus. He has suggested that this example will constrain separatism, as will the fear of civil conflict and the fear of breaking what are regarded as essential economic ties with Moscow. He has warned, however, that Russia’s ongoing civil rights abuses in the North Caucasus are spurring the growth of Islamic terrorism.²⁰

Some residents of the North Caucasus have criticized Russia’s economic assistance to Abkhazia and South Ossetia—which ostensibly are foreign countries after being recognized by Moscow in the wake of the Russia-Georgia conflict—while the North Caucasus remains mired in poverty. Russian analyst Alexey Malashenko has warned that the global economic downturn and Russia’s boosted financial commitments to Abkhazia and South Ossetia could result in fewer Russian subsidies to the North Caucasus, perhaps triggering more discontent.²¹

Recent Developments in the North Caucasus

Chechnya

Some observers have argued that Russia’s efforts to suppress separatist and Islamic extremist movements in its Chechnya region have been the most violent in Europe in recent years in terms of ongoing military and civilian casualties.²² The high levels of conflict in Chechnya appeared to ebb markedly in the mid-2000s with the killing, capture, or surrender of leading Chechen insurgents. However, Russian security forces and pro-Moscow Chechen forces still contend with residual insurgency.

¹⁷ Violence in the North Caucasus.

¹⁸ *The Economist*, August 28, 2008-September 3, 2008.

¹⁹ *Interfax*, September 11, 2008; “Chairman of the Government of Russia Vladimir Putin Meets with Members of the International Discussion Club Valdai,” at <http://www.government.ru/content/governmentactivity/mainnews/archive/2008/09/11/8225672.htm>.

²⁰ *CEDR*, October 8, 2008, Doc. No. CEP-8015.

²¹ Alexey Malashenko, “The North Caucasus Today: The View on the Ground and from Moscow,” Event Summary, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, November 21, 2008.

²² For background information, see CRS Report RL32272, *Bringing Peace to Chechnya? Assessments and Implications*, by (name redacted); CRS Report RL31826, *Russia's Chechnya Conflict: Developments in 2002-2003*, by (name redacted); and CRS Report RL30389, *Renewed Chechnya Conflict: Developments in 1999-2000*, by (name redacted).

Russia's pacification policy has involved setting up a pro-Moscow regional government and transferring more and more local security duties to this government. An important factor in Russia's seeming success in Chechnya has been reliance on pro-Moscow Chechen clans affiliated with regional president Ramzan Kadyrov. Police and paramilitary forces under his authority allegedly have committed flagrant abuses of human rights, including by holding the relatives of insurgents as hostages under threat of death until the insurgents surrendered. Another technique has been the torching of relatives' homes and crops.

Russia's efforts to rebuild the largely devastated region have been impressive but are undermined by rampant corruption. Some types of crimes against civilians reportedly have decreased, such as kidnapping and disappearances, according to the Norwegian Helsinki Committee, a nongovernmental organization (NGO). Many displaced Chechens still fear returning to the region, and a sizeable number have emigrated from Russia.

Remaining rebels in Chechnya have split into three basic groups, one represented by Doku Umarov, another represented by mujahidin vying with Umarov, and perhaps until recently, a third somewhat disparate group represented by Akhmed Zakayev, who stresses independence for Chechnya more than jihad. In late 2007, Umarov declared himself the amir of the Caucasus Emirate and declared an end to the rebel Chechen Republic of Ichkeriya. Umarov allegedly called for establishing Sharia (Islamic law) in "all lands in Caucasus, where mujahidin who gave oaths to me wage Jihad ... including Dagestan, Chechnya, Ingushetia, Ossetia, the Nogai steppe and the combined areas of Kabardino-Balkaria and Karachai-Cherkessia." In August 2008, a colleague of Umarov's declared that the Caucasus Emirate could include other areas of Russia where mujahidin had given oaths to Umarov, such as Tatarstan.²³ In 2007, Umarov ousted Zakayev as "foreign minister" and in August 2009, the Shariah Court of the Caucasus Emirate sentenced him to death for abandoning Islam for "democratic religion."²⁴

In August 2010, Umarov's leadership of the Caucasus Emirate was challenged by amirs 'Mansur' Hussein Gakayev, Aslanbek Vadalov, Tarkhan Gaziyeu, and Jordanian Abu Anas Muhannad. Umarov responded by stripping them of their posts and requesting them to return financing for jihad. In October 2010, they formed their own Chechen section of the Caucasus Emirate, led by Gakayev. Zakayev announced his support for this group. Umarov asserted that the dissident mujahidin had allied with exiled Russian financier Boris Berezovskiy, with Zakayev, and other "Satanic" forces.²⁵

According to Interior Minister Rashid Nurgaliyev, the bombing at the Chechen legislative building in October 2010 may have represented an effort by Gakayev's group to assert its terrorist credentials.²⁶ Chechen leader Ramzan Kadyrov declared that "the act of sabotage may have been

²³ "The Official Version of Amir Dokka's Statement of Declaration of the Caucasian Emirate," *Kavkaz Center*, November 22, 2007, at <http://www.kavkazcenter.com/eng/content/2007/11/22/9107.shtml>; "We Have Taken Up Arms to Establish Laws: Interview with Movladi Udugov, Part I," *Prague Watchdog*, July 24, 2008.

²⁴ "Supreme Sharia Court of Caucasus Emirate Sentenced Akhmed Zakayev to Capital Punishment," *Kavkaz Center*, August 25, 2009.

²⁵ Gordon Hahn, "CE Amir Dokku Umarov Discusses Fitna (Sedition), the CE's Place in the Global Jihad, and Berezovskiy and Zakayev," *Islam, Islamism, and Politics in Eurasia Report*, November 29, 2010. Umarov proclaimed that the Caucasus Emirate had been given the task of fighting Russia, "the most despicable" of the infidel countries. Indicating his orientation toward global jihad, he condemned the conflict by "Christian-Zionist forces led by America" against the Taliban in Afghanistan.

²⁶ *CEDR*, November 18, 2010, Doc. No. CEP-950327.

organized by drunkard and alcoholic Akhmed Zakayev and the special services of some foreign states.”²⁷ He also continued to assert that there were only 50-60 terrorists left in Chechnya, but Maksim Shevchenko, the head of the Public Chamber’s working group on North Caucasus affairs, suggested that the attack indicated that “sociopolitical difficulties are causing more and more volunteers to join the underground and the sectarian ideology of the militants is turning them into suicide bombers.” He also alleged that “the armed underground clearly is being influenced now by foreign non-Islamic states pitting the Muslims against Russia.”²⁸ Other Russian observers suggested that the government should re-instate the counter-terrorism regime and increase the number of federal security forces in Chechnya.²⁹

Ingushetia

According to some observers, Ingushetia in recent years experienced increasing disorder and violence approaching that in neighboring Chechnya, which threatened to make it a “mini-failed state.”³⁰ The Chechen-Ingush Autonomous Republic, divided in the late Soviet period into separate Chechen and Ingush Republics, has proven unable to demarcate a common border. This has contributed to tensions between Chechens and Ingushes. Stalin’s deportation of the Ingush during World War II and their return in the 1950s to find that some of their lands had been ceded to the North Ossetian Autonomous Republic, has contributed to Ingush-Ossetian clashes. In October 1992, hundreds of Ingush reportedly were killed and over 60,000 forced from their homes in the Prigorodny District of North Ossetia.

According to Congressional testimony by Russian human rights advocate Gregory Shvedov in June 2008, there are up to 200 terrorists based in Ingushetia.³¹ Small-scale rebel attacks intensified in 2007 and 2008, prompting Russia to deploy more and more security, military, and police forces to the republic. Since 2007, there allegedly have been more killings, attacks, and abductions in Ingushetia—perpetrated by government and rebel forces, criminals, and others—than in any other republic in the North Caucasus.³² Ingushetia prosecutor Usman Belkharoyev has reported that more than 70 security personnel were killed in armed attacks in Ingushetia in 2008, compared to 32 in 2007. He also reported that 167 police and troops were injured in such attacks in 2008, compared to 80 in 2007.³³ According to the Center for Strategic and International Studies, the level of violent incidents in Ingushetia, particularly violent deaths, continued to increase in 2009.

²⁷ CEDR, October 20, 2010, Doc. No. CEP-15012.

²⁸ CEDR, October 20, 2010, Doc. No. CEP-15012.

²⁹ CEDR, October 20, 2010, Doc. No. CEP-15016; October 22, 2010, Doc. No. CEP-950172.

³⁰ “Commentators See Ingushetia as a ‘Failed State’ Where an Uprising Could Occur,” *Chechnya Weekly*, Vol. 8, Issue 34 (September 6, 2007); “Ingushetia Takes Chechnya’s Place as the North Caucasus Hot Spot,” *Chechnya Weekly*, September 6, 2007.

³¹ Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe. *Briefing: Ingushetia, the New Hot Spot in Russia’s North Caucasus*, June 19, 2008.

³² Andrei Smirnov, “Kremlin Adopts New Counter-Insurgency Methods in Ingushetia,” *Chechnya Weekly*, September 27, 2007. U.S. Department of State. *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices in 2007*, March 11, 2008. According to testimony by Magomed Mutsolgov, the Director of the Ingush Mashr Human Rights Organization, kidnappings in Ingushetia have decreased over the past year or so from previously high levels, but murders by the police have increased. Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe. *Briefing: Ingushetia, the New Hot Spot in Russia’s North Caucasus*, June 19, 2008.

³³ CEDR, December 20, 2008, Doc. No. CEP-950098.

What Russian analyst Sergey Markedonov termed a “loyal opposition” movement in Ingushetia—that supports Russian rule in the republic—increasingly opposed the leadership of Federal Security Service official Murat Zyazikov, who became governor in 2002 after an election that many observers viewed as manipulated by Moscow. Another group, the Islamic extremists, wants to evict “kafirs” (infidels) and “murtads” (apostate Muslims) and create a North Caucasus emirate.³⁴ This “loyal opposition” organized several rallies in 2007 and 2008 to protest local government corruption, extrajudicial killings, and other alleged abuses by security forces. On August 31, 2008, opposition figure Magomed Yevloyev was shot by police and dumped along the road. The Ingush opposition appealed to U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, condemning the killing as a sign of the “genocide” against the Ingush that was prompting more and more Ingush to seek independence from Russia.³⁵

After Russia recognized the independence of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, an opposition People’s Assembly of Ingushetia—composed of emissaries from nearly two dozen clans—called for Ingushetia’s secession from Russia if Zyazikov was not removed from office. Opposition activist Magomed Khazbiyev likewise stated that “We must ask Europe or America to separate us from Russia.”³⁶ On 18 October, 2008, a Russian military convoy came under grenade attack and machine gun fire near Nazran. Russia officially reported that two soldiers had been killed, but other reports were that as many as 40-50 Russian soldiers were killed. On October 30, 2008 President Zyazikov was removed from office and Army Col. Yunus-Bek Yevkurov was nominated by President Medvedev and quickly approved by the Ingush legislature. Yevkurov declared that he would suppress the local insurgency while reducing abuses against civilians by federal forces.

Analyst Mairbek Vatchagaev has reported that in 2009, “bombings and armed attacks are everyday occurrences in Ingushetia, with several such incidents sometimes taking place during a single day.”³⁷ In May 2009, federal security forces—assisted by Chechen units—launched large-scale *zachistki* aimed at eliminating terrorists. Yevkurov was severely wounded by a car bomb in June 2009. In August 2009, a bomb devastated Nazran’s police department, resulting in dozens killed or wounded. In October 2009, human rights advocate Maksharip Aushev was killed, who had supported Yevkurov’s efforts to get security forces to commit fewer human rights abuses. President Yevkurov denounced the killing and suggested that security forces might have been involved in the killing.

In June 2010, the Federal Security Service (FSB) announced that a *zachistka* had resulted in the capture of Emir Magas (aka, Ahmed Yevloev or Ali Taziev), the head of the Ingush Jamaat. Reportedly, he also was the military amir of the Caucasus Emirate, the second in command under Umarev. In late September 2010, Yevkurov asserted that the apprehension of Magas and the elimination of other mujahidin leaders had led to the easing of terrorism in the republic.

According to the Open Source Center, the number of violent incidents in Ingushetia in 2009 (436) nearly matched that in Chechnya (452), the leader in such violence. In 2010, the number of violent incidents appeared to decrease to 248 in Ingushetia, according to data for the first eleven months of 2010 compiled by the Open Source Center.

³⁴ CEDR, June 17, 2008, Doc. No. CEP-379001. See also CEDR, November 26, 2008, Doc. No. CEP-25007.

³⁵ Open Source Center. *Open Source Feature*, September 18, 2008, Doc. No. FEA-775593.

³⁶ Adrian Blomfield, “Russia Faces New Caucasus Uprising In Ingushetia,” *The Telegraph* (London), September 1, 2008.

³⁷ Mairbek Vatchagaev, “Moscow Struggles to Stabilize Ingushetia,” *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, October 26, 2009.

Some observers have warned that since Russia has strengthened ethnic Ossetian influence by recognizing the “independence” of South Ossetia, this ethnic group will be even less amenable to Russia’s encouragement of their conciliation with ethnic Ingush, including by encouraging North Ossetia to permit some Ingush to resettle in Prigorodny. In September 2010, an ethnic Ingush suicide bombing occurred in North Ossetia’s Vladikavkaz, possibly marking a shift in tactics by the mujahidin away from attacks on security forces in Ingushetia and toward attacks on North Ossetia.³⁸

Dagestan

The majority of the citizenry in Dagestan, a multi-ethnic republic, reportedly support membership in the Russian Federation rather than separatism. In August 1999, however, some Islamic fundamentalists—with the support of Chechen rebels—declared the creation of an Islamic republic in western Dagestan. Russian and Dagestani security forces quickly defeated this insurgency. There has been some growth in Islamic extremism in recent years. In late 2007, thousands of security personnel were deployed for a *zachistka* against the village of Gimry in central Dagestan, which continued for several months and resulted in the arrest of dozens of villagers on charges of terrorism. During 2008, attacks on government offices spread throughout Dagestan. Some of these attacks allegedly were triggered by a local government crackdown on practicing Muslims.³⁹ The International Crisis Group NGO has claimed that the extremist Islamist group Sharia Jamaat is responsible for a large share of the rising violence that has resulted in the killing of hundreds of local officials in Dagestan. The recruitment efforts of Sharia Jamaat benefit from the allegedly arbitrary and corrupt actions of local police and security forces. In 2007, Sharia Jamaat endorsed Umarov’s goal of establishing a North Caucasian Emirate.⁴⁰

In mid-March 2009, Dagestani Interior Minister Lieutenant-General Adilgerey Magomedtagirov claimed that there remained only about 50-70 militants in Dagestan, because of intensified counter-terrorist efforts during 2008. He pointed out that “we recently killed Omar Sheykhullayev [on February 5, 2009], the emir of Dagestan who was appointed by Doku Umarov. Before him there was [Ilgar Mollachiyev, who was killed on September 7, 2008], also an emir and the closest associate of Doku Umarov and Khattab. He was killed along with ten other people. I think all we need right now is a bit more time, and we will deal with these groups as well.”⁴¹

Appearing to belie Magomedtagirov’s assessment of the situation, counter-terrorism operations legal regimes were declared at least four times in February 2009. In March 2009, one was declared in mountain areas of Dagestan, where several insurgent groups—allegedly including some foreign mujahedin—engaged in fierce fighting with security forces. A mujahedin killed in April 2009 was claimed to be an emissary of Al Qaeda who had arrived from Turkey, and another Al Qaeda emissary killed in August 2009 was said to have been an organizer of jihad in Dagestan who worked under Al Qaeda’s North Caucasian regional leader Mohammed. In December 2009, the Dagestani Interior Ministry reported that attacks on police had increased from 100 in 2008 to

³⁸ Valery Dzutsev, “Ingushetia’s Islamists Adopt Nationalist Rhetoric,” *North Caucasus Analysis*, October 7, 2010.

³⁹ “North Caucasus: Instability In Dagestan Spreads To South,” *RFE/RL Russia Report*, February 15, 2008.

⁴⁰ *Russia’s Dagestan: Conflict Causes*, International Crisis Group, June 3, 2008.

⁴¹ *CEDR*, March 20, 2009, Doc. No. CEP-4001.

193 in 2009, and that 76 police had been killed and 155 wounded in 2009. It also reported that 15 civilians had been killed and 30 wounded in 2009.⁴²

In 2010, violent incidents appear to occur daily in Dagestan, ranging from suicide and roadside bombings to armed attacks on Russian and local security forces. According to the Open Source Center, the number of violent incidents increased in the republic from 384 in 2009 to 412 in the first eleven months of 2010, placing it at the top in terms of such violence in the North Caucasus.

In September 2010, the Russian Interior Ministry announced that it would establish an added local police contingent in Dagestan composed of former soldiers. Reportedly, the establishment of a force of local residents was aimed in part to reduce the number of federal police casualties in Dagestan, the highest in the North Caucasus. In early November 2010, President Medvedev ordered Khloponin to discuss progress with republic leaders in combating terrorism and threatened that “if someone cannot do the job he should not be doing it, and I will adopt corresponding decisions.”⁴³ However, just after this admonition, a series of terrorist attacks occurred in Dagestan, resulting in added police being deployed to protect government buildings. Although FSB head Aleksandr Bortnikov reported to President Medvedev on November 19, 2010, that “bandit activities” had declined in 2010 in Dagestan, the First Deputy Head of the Interior Ministry’s Main Directorate for the North Caucasus Federal District, Valeriy Zhernov, reported at a meeting the day before that in January-November 2010, 231 terrorist crimes were committed in Dagestan (including 95 bombings and 136 shootings), compared to 162 such crimes in 2009 (including 49 bombings and 113 shootings). His superior, Interior Minister Rashid Nurgaliyev, stressed at the same meeting that “the level of terrorist threat is the highest in two regions of the North Caucasus Federal District, Kabarda-Balkaria and Dagestan.”⁴⁴

Other Areas of the North Caucasus

The influence of Islamic fundamentalism that embraces jihad reportedly has spread throughout the North Caucasus, leading to the formation of terrorist groups in Chechnya, Dagestan, Ingushetia, Kabarda-Balkaria, and Karachay-Cherkessia.⁴⁵ According to testimony by Shvedov, 700 to 900 rebels are active in various areas of the North Caucasus, even though there are parts of Northern Caucasus where there are almost no rebels. He warns that “the most important point [is not] the number of active rebels nowadays. It’s an issue of the number of supporters among the civilian population.” Shvedov states that the civilian population has become widely radicalized and is able to quickly mobilize to join the rebels in attacks.⁴⁶

In March 2010, security forces killed Anzor Astemirov (Emir Seifullah), the leader of Kabarda-Balkaria’s Yarmuk Jamaat, in Nalchik, the republic’s capital. An ethnic Kabardin, he allegedly was the third-ranking officer in the Caucasus Emirate, behind Umarev and the military emir. He also was the head of the Sharia Court. In the 1990s until the early 2000s, he allegedly was peaceable, but then joined the mujahidin. In 2005, he carried out a large-scale attack in Nalchik.

⁴² CEDR, December 10, 2009, Doc. No. CEP-950292.

⁴³ CEDR, November 9, 2010, Doc. No. CEP-46019.

⁴⁴ CEDR, November 18, 2010, Doc. No. CEP-950327.

⁴⁵ Mairbek Vatchagaev, “The Truth about the ‘Kataib al-Khoul’ Ossetian Jamaat,” *Chechnya Weekly*, September 20, 2007.

⁴⁶ Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe. *Briefing: Ingushetia, the New Hot Spot in Russia’s North Caucasus*, June 19, 2008.

He reportedly was instrumental in helping to create the Caucasus Emirate to unite the struggle of North Caucasian Muslims and strongly opposed Zakayev by pronouncing a death sentence against him. Emir Abdullah (Asker Jappuev), a deputy to Astemirov, quickly became the Jamaat's new leader and launched new attacks in the republic.⁴⁷

According to the Open Source Center, the number of violent incidents in Kabarda-Balkaria doubled in the first eleven months of 2010 over those of the previous year, from 70 to 147. Using a somewhat similar accounting of "terrorist crimes," the First Deputy Head of the Interior Ministry's Main Directorate for the North Caucasus Federal District, Valeriy Zhernov, has stated that there were 117 terrorist crimes registered in Kabarda-Balkaria in January-November 2010 (including 57 bomb attacks and 60 shootings), compared to 21 in 2009 (including 11 bomb attacks and 10 shootings). Commenting on Zhernov's data, Russian Interior Minister Rashid Nurgaliyev argued that "the leaders of bandit groups are increasingly focused on the incitement of interethnic conflicts."⁴⁸ On November 29, 2010, Nurgaliyev visited Kabarda-Balkaria to discuss improvements to local law enforcement in response to the great increase in terrorist crimes in the republic. Republic Governor Arsen Kanokov reportedly stated that "the operational situation really is difficult. We are like at war. Interior ministry servicemen and civilians are getting killed."⁴⁹

Contributions to Instability

Former President Putin has claimed that terrorism in the North Caucasus has been caused mainly by foreign forces, but President Medvedev has appeared to stress domestic as well as international factors. Former President Putin claimed in a speech to the State Council in February 2008 that foreign elements had been responsible for the guerrilla attack on Dagestan in late 1999 that started the second Chechnya conflict. According to Putin, the conflict "was a case of the undisguised incitement of separatists by outside forces wishing to weaken Russia, and perhaps even to cause its collapse."⁵⁰ While he remained vague, a "documentary" aired on a Russian state-owned television channel in April 2008 alleged that France, Germany, Turkey, and the United States instigated and supported Chechen separatism.⁵¹ Putin also has in recent years blamed "international criminal networks of arms and drug traffickers," for supporting Chechen terrorists, and has been careful to assert that "terrorism must not be identified with any religion or cultural tradition," in order to sidestep criticism from the Islamic world for his actions in the North Caucasus.⁵²

In June 2009, President Medvedev argued that "no doubt, the situation [in the North Caucasus] is partially influenced by ... extremism brought from abroad," but he appeared to shift the responsibility for the conflict by stressing that the "problems in the North Caucasus ... are

⁴⁷ Mairbek Vatchagaev, "Death of Anzor Astemirov Does not Mark the End of the Insurgency in Kabarda-Balkaria," *North Caucasus Analysis*, April 7, 2009; Mairbek Vatchagaev, "Rebel Attacks on the Rise in Kabarda-Balkaria," *North Caucasus Analysis*, August 27, 2010.

⁴⁸ *ITAR-TASS*, November 18, 2010; *CEDR*, November 18, 2010, Doc. No. CEP-950327.

⁴⁹ *CEDR*, November 29, 2010, Doc. No. CEP-950135.

⁵⁰ *CEDR*, February 8, 2008, Doc. No. CEP-950541.

⁵¹ "Documentary Alleges West Sought Chechen Secession," *RFE/RL Russia Report*, April 23, 2008.

⁵² Jacques Lévesque, "Russia and the Muslim World: The Chechnya Factor and Beyond," *Russian Analytical Digest*, July 2, 2008.

systemic. By saying that I am referring to the low living standards, high unemployment and massive, horrifyingly widespread corruption....”⁵³

At May 2010 meeting of the Council for Civil Society Institutions and Human Rights, President Medvedev argued that there needed to be a youth policy for the North Caucasus, including to ameliorate the 20% unemployment in the region, which heavily impacted youth. He also requested his presidential staff to study the issues of dwindling schooling and healthcare in the region. He dismissed calls to investigate past extrajudicial killings and urged focusing on the future. He also objected to discussants distinguishing between a region and Russia, stating that “Dagestan is part of Russia,” and rejected use of the term “guerillas” instead of “terrorists.” He called for forging a new “Russian identity” in the region that would reduce interethnic conflict, and implored North Caucasian ethnic groups to stop being extra “touchy” and “sensitive” about the actions of governors he appoints.⁵⁴

In October 2010, Medvedev’s envoy Khlopinin suggested that the expansion of gangs and crime and the extinction of private enterprise in the North Caucasus was due more to poor governance and corruption than to ethnic conflict. At the same time, he emphasized that “in the run up to the Olympics, which will take place in Sochi in 2014 ... special services of many Western countries and individual provocateurs [will] inflame or stir up interethnic and international conflicts.” These instigators were actively fostering ethnic conflict in Karachay-Cherkessia, contention between Ossetians and Ingush, and a campaign in Stavropol Territory to secede from the North Caucasus Federal District, he claimed.⁵⁵

The North Caucasus suffers from extremely high rates of unemployment and poverty. Dagestan and Ingushetia have the most unemployment and poverty in Russia, and major income inequality has fueled attacks against corrupt and wealthy officials.⁵⁶ Ingushetia’s economy suffered greatly during the Chechnya conflict, mainly from the influx of displaced persons which in effect doubled the population during intense periods of fighting in 1995 and 2000. Evidence of economic distress as a factor in the rise of terrorism in Kabarda-Balkaria Republic includes the closure of the main industry, the Tyrnauz Mining Complex, as well as the shuttering of many defense-related factories, and the decline of the agricultural sector. Infrastructure such as roads and airports also is in disrepair, and social services are inadequate.⁵⁷ According to Shvedov, the educational system in much of the North Caucasus is getting worse and unemployment is increasing. Shvedov warns that the lack of career prospects has contributed to growing support for “Wahhabi agendas” among the population.

Ethnic tensions are another factor contributing to violence in the North Caucasus. Besides those between Ossetians and the Ingush (mentioned above), in early 2006, the Putin administration

⁵³ President of the Russian Federation. *Russian president addresses Security Council meeting on Caucasus*, June 10, 2009, at <http://www.kremlin.ru>. Perhaps reflecting a desire to provide a different explanation to a Western audience, at a joint news conference with visiting German Chancellor Angela Merkel in Sochi, President Medvedev claimed that the murders of human rights workers and officials were carried out by enemies of Russia financed and supported from abroad. See Voice of America. Press Releases and Documents. *Medvedev: Caucasus Murders Aim at Destabilizing S. Russia*, August 14, 2009.

⁵⁴ The Kremlin. *Speech at Meeting of Council for Civil Society Institutions and Human Rights*, May 20, 2010; ITAR-TASS, May 20, 2010.

⁵⁵ ITAR-TASS, October 27, 2010; CEDR, October 27, 2010, Doc. No. CEP-950191.

⁵⁶ *Russia’s Dagestan: Conflict Causes*, p. 12; CEDR, November 4, 2008, Doc. No. CEP-548006.

⁵⁷ “Kabardo-Balkaria Seeks To Break Out Of Economic Stagnation,” *RFE/RL Russia Report*, February 01, 2008.

abolished the Dagestani State Council, which represented the 14 largest ethnic groups, and whose chairman (Magomedali Magomedov, an ethnic Dargin) served as the chief executive of the republic. The State Council had helped to mollify ethnic tensions. Putin then appointed an ethnic Avar as the president of the republic. With the expiration of the president's term in early 2010, some Dagestanis called for reestablishing the State Council. Instead, Medvedev appointed Magomedislam Magomedov (the son of former president Magomedali Magomedov), thus reinstating a Dargin in the office. Magomedislam Magomedov selected Magomed Abdullayev, an Avar, as the prime minister (President Medvedev allegedly favored Abdullayev for the post). The selection of Abdullayev triggered protests among some ethnic Kumyks, the third largest ethnic group in Dagestan, who called for the post of prime minister to be retained by an ethnic Kumyk. Supporting informal ethnic quotas, Magomedislam Magomedov urged the sitting speaker of the Dagestani legislature, an Avar, to step down so that Magomed-Sultan Magomedov, an ethnic Kumyk, could become speaker.

Increasing Circassian nationalism has contributed to tensions and violence in Adyghea, Karachay-Cherkessia, and Kabarda-Balkaria, three republics with large numbers of ethnic Circassians (termed Adyghe, Kabardin, and Cherkess in the three republics), where they have clashed with Karachay and Balkar ethnic groups. In November 2008, a Congress of the Circassian People called for unifying Circassians in a new federal republic, even though Russian officials had warned it against issuing such a call. On November 26, 2009, reportedly about 3,000 Circassians demonstrated for ethnic rights in Karachay-Cherkessia. Some Circassians from Kabarda-Balkaria took part in this demonstration. Two days later, officials in Kabarda-Balkaria denounced leaders of the demonstration as terrorists. On November 30, some Circassian rights advocates issued an appeal to create an independent Circassian state. The next day, the legislature of Kabarda-Balkaria called for Circassian rights advocates to be arrested as terrorists and spies, and unidentified attackers beat some of the Circassian rights advocates.

In April 2010, Khloponin allegedly ordered the president of Karachay-Cherkessia, Boris Ebzeyev, to appoint an ethnic Circassian (Cherkess) as prime minister, to end prolonged protests by Circassians. Under prior practice, posts had been divided among the largest ethnic groups in the republic. Ebzeyev had eschewed the practice in 2008 and had appointed an ethnic Greek (a tiny ethnic group) as prime minister. Ethnic Russian Cossacks and Abazins also protested that they were not being accorded any top posts. The Adyghe Khase, a Circassian (Cherkess) group, called for the formation of a separate Cherkess republic. Ebzeyev eventually appointed Muradin Kemov, a Circassian, as prime minister.⁵⁸ During 2010, some Circassian groups have increased calls for the cancellation of the planned Winter Olympics in Sochi, asserting that the area was the site of the 19th century Tsarist "genocide" against the Circassians.

Russian analyst Aleksey Malashenko suggests that the North Caucasus region is undergoing "re-traditionalization," which will result in the consolidation of Sufi⁵⁹ and other traditional forms of Islam as part of the political and social fabric of the region. While Moscow and its local agents

⁵⁸ CEDR, November 17, 2010, Doc. No. CEP-950244.

⁵⁹ According to the *Encyclopedia Britannica Online*, Sufism is a "mystical Islamic belief and practice in which Muslims seek to find the truth of divine love and knowledge through direct personal experience of God. It consists of a variety of mystical paths that are designed to ascertain the nature of man and God and to facilitate the experience of the presence of divine love and wisdom in the world." Central concepts of Sufism were developed in the 8th-12th centuries C.E. Three denominations (or Tariqahs) of Sufism—the Naqshbandiya, Qadiriya, and Shazaliya—are prominent in the North Caucasus.

focus on combating visible elements of “Wahabbism,”⁶⁰ the region is becoming broadly Islamic and less integrated politically and socially with the rest of Russia, Malashenko warns. He also suggests that to the extent that sitting officials and favored Islamic leaders try to retain their unrepresentative control in the North Caucasus and ignore economic problems, Islamic extremist violence will continue.⁶¹ Analyst Mark Kramer likewise suggests that disaffection among youth in the North Caucasus is so deep and widespread that they are prone to distrust such favored Islamic leaders and institutions and to be receptive to underground Islamic extremism.⁶²

Reportedly, authorities have enlisted the assistance of Sufi Imams in Dagestan, Ingushetia, and Chechnya to identify “Wahabbi” Muslims, who are then arrested, killed, or disappear. Young Muslims may be targeted as “Wahabbis” if they end their prayers at the mosque too soon (Sufis pray longer), attend the mosque frequently, or attend early services at the mosque. In Kabarda-Balkaria, Karachay-Cherkessia, and Adygea, where there are few Sufis and Islam does not have such deep roots as elsewhere in the North Caucasus, Muslims allegedly may be targeted as “Wahabbis” merely for attending the mosque or praying in public.⁶³ There are some reports that foreign Sunni Salafi terrorists operating in the North Caucasus in turn are targeting Sufis.

Analysts Emil Souleimanov and Ondrej Ditrych have urged students of events in the North Caucasus not to fail to consider the role of clans, members of which may become radicalized by zachistki and repression by Moscow-installed authorities. According to these analysts, “in the North Caucasus, there has occurred over time a mutual intertwining of ... jihadist ideology and the mechanism of blood feud.... It is the young people in particular who ... are the ones who are physically able [to take revenge. They were] not raised in the established traditions in these regions of traditionalist Sufi Islam and [are] thus more susceptible to absorbing the extremist ideologies of jihad.” These analysts caution that “rather than vague ideas of global jihad, the resistance in the North Caucasus is far more driven by the ideas of North Caucasian, mountain dweller Muslim solidarity and the necessity of a joint struggle in the name of a common religion (Islam) and the liberation of holy ground from the yoke of the ‘infidels’.”⁶⁴

U.S. analyst Gordon Hahn has warned that the Caucasus Emirate proclaimed by Chechen Doku Umarev in 2007 forms the hub of Islamic terrorism in Russia and receives substantial material and ideological support from the global terrorist network. The Caucasus Emirate provides ideological, financial and weapons support and loose guidance and some coordination for the

⁶⁰ Wahabbism is a term used by some observers to identify a form of Sunni Islam dominant in Saudi Arabia and Qatar that calls for a return to fundamental or pure principles of Islam. The term is often used interchangeably with Salafism. As used in a derogatory sense by some in Russia, it can refer to any non-approved practice of Islamic faith. Quintan Wiktorowicz, “Anatomy of the Salafi Movement,” *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, Vol. 29, 2006.

⁶¹ Aleksey Malashenko, “Islam and the State in Russia,” *Russian Analytical Digest*, July 2, 2008. See also Vakhit Akayev, “Conflicts Between Traditional and Non-Traditional Islamic Trends: Reasons, Dynamics, and Ways to Overcome Them (Based on North Caucasian Documents),” *Central Asia and the Caucasus*, No. 2, 2008. Unlike Malashenko, Akayev does not view the counter-Wahabbism alliance of Russia’s central authorities with the traditionalists as eventually unraveling.

⁶² Mark Kramer, “Prospects for Islamic Radicalism and Violent Extremism in the North Caucasus and Central Asia,” *PONARS Eurasia Memo*, No. 28, August 2008. Gordon Hahn stresses that indigenous forms of Islamic practice in the North Caucasus are influenced by contacts with foreign mujahidin, with Islamic fundamentalists, and with the internet. *Islam, Islamism and Politics in Eurasia Report*, September 22, 2010.

⁶³ Andrei Smirnov, “The Kremlin Intensifies Reprisals against Muslims in the North Caucasus,” *Chechnya Weekly*, October 4, 2007.

⁶⁴ Emil Souleimanov and Ondrej Ditrych, “The Internationalization of the Russian–Chechen Conflict: Myths and Reality,” *Europe-Asia Studies*, September 2008, pp. 1199 – 1222.

activities of perhaps up to three dozen republic/regional and local combat jamaats (assemblies or groups of believers) in the North Caucasus and Volga areas, Moscow, and elsewhere. The Caucasus Emirate may take the lead when major terrorist operations are planned. In April 2009, Umarov announced that the former 'Riyadus Salikhin' Martyrs' Battalion (which had taken responsibility for attacking the grade school in Beslan in September 2004 and which appeared defunct after its leader, Shamil Basiyev, was killed in 2006) had been revived and was carrying out suicide bombings across Russia. Hahn reports that major ideologists of the global jihadi movement have praised these bombings and have urged greater material and other support for the Caucasus Emirate.⁶⁵

After several warlords repudiated their allegiance to Umarov, in late November 2010, he attempted to reassure local and international supporters that the rebel command of the Caucasus Emirate was still united, was still cooperating with other mujahidin in Tatarstan, Bashkortostan, and other areas of Russia, and was still carrying out terrorist operations.⁶⁶

Implications for Russia

Ethnic prejudice by Russians against North Caucasian migrants reportedly has contributed to a substantial share of hate crimes in Russia. The Moscow Human Rights Bureau estimated that about 170 xenophobic attacks occurred in Russia in 2010, leaving 39 people dead and about 213 injured. These numbers have declined in recent years, perhaps partly attributable to the creation of an extremist crimes subunit in the Interior Ministry. Some hate crimes in Moscow and elsewhere against North Caucasians have been linked to military and police veterans of the Chechnya conflict.⁶⁷ Reacting to the hate crimes, Caucasian youths in Moscow formed a group they termed "Black Hawks" to carry out revenge attacks. Members of the Congress of the Peoples of the Caucasus have attempted to intercede between the "hawks" and Slavic ultranationalist groups.

Seemingly indicating that ethnic prejudice by Russians against North Caucasians remains potent, on December 7, 2010, an ethnic Russian soccer fan was killed in Moscow during a clash with North Caucasians. The next day, soccer fans demonstrated, breaking shop windows and shouting ethnic slurs against North Caucasians and other ultra-nationalist slogans. On December 11, 2010, up to 5,000 soccer fans—including neo-Nazis, ultra-nationalists, and others—marched in protest in Moscow against the killing, shouting ethnic slurs against North Caucasians and later clashing with North Caucasians on the subway and elsewhere in the city. President Kadyrov denounced the "thugs who beat up and knifed non-Slavic-looking people," and stated that real soccer fans would not have shouted "'kill' and 'get people from the Caucasus.'" While seeming to blame foreign interests for fomenting the violence in Moscow, he also stressed the people of Chechnya call for the reestablishment of law and order in Moscow and the punishment of the "criminals" who attacked Caucasians. He termed the ethnic violence a "disgrace" and stated that the incident demonstrated that "one of the priority areas of the state's policy" should be "to firmly speak up

⁶⁵ *Russia's Islamic Threat*, pp. 59-66; Gordon Hahn, "The Caucasus Emirate's Return to Suicide Bombing and Mass Terrorism," *Islam, Islamism, and Politics in Eurasia Report*, November 30, 2009, reported on *Johnson's Russia List*, November 30, 2009; Gordon Hahn, "Abu Muhammad Asem al-Maqdisi and the Caucasus Emirate," *Islam, Islamism, and Politics in Eurasia Report*, January 2010, reported on *Johnson's Russia List*, January 8, 2010.

⁶⁶ *CEDR*, November 26, 2010, Doc. No. CEP-950136.

⁶⁷ *Interfax*, March 10, 2009; *CEDR*, March 11, 2009, Doc. No. CEP-25004.

against xenophobia and against provocations aimed at dividing Russia. This is what shows the genuine patriotism of Russians.”⁶⁸

Kadyrov’s harsh methods of combating terrorism have contributed to vendettas. Kadyrov’s reportedly widespread human rights violations have received the acquiescence, if not support, of central authorities, and his methods have been used to certain degrees by other leaders in the North Caucasus. As one sign of such support, Vladimir Vasilyev, head of the Duma Security Committee, stated during a March 2009 visit to Chechnya that the region “could be an example to other regions of how terrorism should be countered. The experience and positive practice employed here in the fight against terrorism are of great interest, particularly against the background of the unstable situation that remains tense in some regions of the North Caucasus.”⁶⁹

Some observers speculate that Russia’s encouragement and support for individuals from the North Caucasus to travel to Abkhazia and South Ossetia to fight against Georgia in 2008 might have gained sentiments that Caucasian guerrillas could defeat government forces. Personnel from Chechnya’s former Vostok (East) Battalion served in South Ossetia, and “the Adyghe and Cherkess formed groups of fighters and, alongside Chechens, participated in removing the Abkhaz government-in-exile from the Kodori gorge. They also temporarily patrolled Georgian villages in the Gali region of Abkhazia.” Among other repercussions, surreptitious arms transfers from Georgia through South and North Ossetia to other North Caucasian areas could increase.⁷⁰ On the other hand, a perhaps favorable repercussion—from Russia’s viewpoint—might be the easing of population pressures in North Ossetia if some residents move to South Ossetia, where there is more arable land.⁷¹

Russian analyst Boris Mezhyuev has asserted that the ongoing disorder in the North Caucasus has caused increasing numbers of the Russian elite to contemplate granting independence to the area. He has suggested that Vladimir Putin might someday be criticized for keeping Chechnya as part of Russia rather than permitting it to have a relationship with Russia that is similar to that of Abkhazia.⁷² Among such advocates of granting independence, Stanislav Belkovskiy, the director of Russia’s National Strategy Institute, stated in December 2010 that “I remain a supporter of the theory of secession and independence for the North Caucasus. At least for the Muslim republics.... [In fact,] the North Caucasus is not under Russia's control ... in terms of either mentality, or law, or security.... The sooner that Russia amputates this diseased organ, the fewer negative consequences [growing foreign Islamic influence] will have on the main part of Russia.” He also warned that much of Russia’s re-development budget allotted to the North Caucasus is being used by local “business interests” to deepen their influence throughout Russia by buying up domestic firms.⁷³

⁶⁸ CEDR, December 13, 2010, Doc. No. CEP-950218.

⁶⁹ CEDR, March 26, 2009, Doc. No. CEP-21002.

⁷⁰ C W Blandy, *Provocation, Deception, Entrapment: The Russo-Georgian Five Day War*, Defense Academy of the United Kingdom, March 2009; Stacy Closson, “The North Caucasus after the Georgia-Russia Conflict,” *Russian Analytical Digest*, December 4, 2008.

⁷¹ *Provocation, Deception, Entrapment*.

⁷² CEDR, November 19, 2010, Doc. No. CEP-4019.

⁷³ CEDR, November 26, 2010, Doc. No. CEP-41009.

International Response

The United States and several other countries and international organizations have maintained that while Russia has the right to protect its citizenry from terrorist attacks, it should not use “disproportionate” methods that violate the human rights of innocent bystanders. They have objected to Russia’s 2006 counter-terrorism law, which permits police and other security forces to declare a “counter-terrorism operations regime” in a locality and to detain suspects for up to 30 days, search homes, ban public assemblies, and restrict media activities without any pre-approval by the courts or legislative oversight. As a result of this and other permissive laws and government actions, Human Rights Watch, a nongovernmental organization, has argued that Russia’s security forces “believe they may act with impunity when carrying out any operation related to counter-terrorism.”⁷⁴ The U.N. Human Rights Committee in October 2009 reflected these concerns when it urged Russia to “take stringent measures to put an end to enforced disappearances, extrajudicial killings, torture, and other forms of ill-treatment and abuse committed or instigated by law enforcement officials in Chechnya and other parts of the North Caucasus; ensure the prompt and impartial investigations by an independent body of all human rights violations allegedly committed or instigated by state agents, [and] prosecute perpetrators,” among other measures.⁷⁵

The European Court of Human Rights of the Council of Europe (COE) has ruled in dozens of cases brought by Chechens that the Russian government used indiscriminate force that resulted in civilian casualties and failed to properly investigate and prosecute Russian personnel involved. Hundreds of cases remain to be adjudicated. According to Russian human rights advocate and jurist Karinna Moskalenko, the Russian government has paid damages awarded by the Court to the plaintiffs, but has not taken the verdicts into account by reforming the justice system.⁷⁶ In many cases, the plaintiffs have been attacked and even killed by unknown assailants in Chechnya and elsewhere before their cases are adjudicated.

In June 2008, the Parliamentary Assembly of the COE appointed Dick Marty a rapporteur on the North Caucasus to report on the human rights situation in the region. He prepared three reports about the situation in the region. In the third report in June 2010, Mr. Marty agreed with Medvedev that the clan culture, corruption, and police inefficiency were causes of violence in the North Caucasus, and pointed to a culture of vengeance, inefficiency of the judicial system, high unemployment, Islamic extremism, and ethnic prejudice between Russians and Caucasians as other factors. He stated that the large number of cases heard by the European Court of Human Rights “points to the fact that the North Caucasus has for many years been the European region where the worst and most massive violations of human rights take place.” In over 150 decisions, he argued, the Court had rejected the assertions of the Russian government that “abductions, arson attacks on houses, and murders of human rights defenders are carried out solely by ‘bandits.’” Instead, the evidence has pointed to the lack of professionalism and discipline among law enforcement agencies and to a cowed judiciary. Mr. Marty indicated his deep dismay that the

⁷⁴ *‘As If They Fell From the Sky’: Counterinsurgency, Rights Violations, and Rampant Impunity in Ingushetia*, Human Rights Watch, June 2008, p. 5.

⁷⁵ United Nations, Human Rights Committee, *Consideration of Reports Submitted by States Parties Under Article 40 of the Covenant: Concluding observations of the Human Rights Committee [Regarding] Russia*, CCPR/C/RUS/CO/6, October 29, 2009.

⁷⁶ Karinna Moskalenko, “Civil and Human Rights and the Judicial System in Today’s Russia: A Legal Practitioner’s View,” Carnegie Endowment, September 28, 2007.

COE's Committee of Ministers has failed to take Russia's human rights record into full account in assessing Russia's compliance with the commitments of membership in the COE.⁷⁷

Mr. Marty's report was considered by the COE's Parliamentary Assembly in June 2010. For the first time, the Russian delegation voted in favor of a COE report on the North Caucasus. Members of the Russian delegation, including Yunus-bek Yevkurov, the President of Ingushetia, and Leonid Slutskiy, a Duma deputy, expressed agreement with much of Mr. Marty's "balanced and accurate" report, but they argued that the human rights situation in the region was much improved compared to the past and that Russia needed the support of the COE to carry out further reforms. They also alleged that foreigners had fostered much of the terrorism in the region, but Mr. Marty replied that "infiltration had taken place because injustice in the region had created fertile ground for radicalization," and called for Yevkurov to denounce human rights abuses by his security services.

Based on the report, the Parliamentary Assembly of the COE in June 2010 approved a resolution recommending that the Russian government combat terrorism in a law-based fashion, prosecute members of security forces involved in human rights violations, ensure that victims of human rights abuses have access to the courts, and carry out the decisions of the European Court for Human Rights. The Parliamentary Assembly reiterated that "the situation in the North Caucasus region, particularly in the Chechen Republic, Ingushetia and Dagestan, constitutes today the most serious and most delicate situation from the standpoint of safeguarding human rights and upholding the rule of law, in the entire geographical area covered by the Council of Europe."⁷⁸

A debate on the situation in the North Caucasus was held at the European Parliament that resulted in the approval of a strongly-worded resolution in October 2010. The resolution stated that the situation of human rights defenders in the North Caucasus region, particularly in Chechnya, was alarming, and that a climate of fear prevailed in Chechnya. It condemned indiscriminate violence against the civilian population from both armed opposition groups and law-enforcement bodies, and "strongly condemned" the burning of homes of relatives of alleged terrorists. The resolution called for the Russian government to facilitate access to the North Caucasus by human rights nongovernmental organizations (such as Memorial), the media, and governmental organizations (such as the Council of Europe, the OSCE, and the U.N.). It expressed regret that continued human rights abuses in Russia "are having a very negative impact on Russia's image and credibility in the world and casting a shadow over relations between the European Union and the Russian Federation, which are important and should develop into a strategic partnership." The resolution also called for the EU-Russia human rights consultations to be stepped up and to include input from the European Parliament, the Duma, and Russian judicial authorities and civil society and human rights organizations. It urged that recommendations contained in the June 2010 COE resolution be carried out by Russia. It condemned the filing of criminal charges against Russian human rights advocate Oleg Orlov, argued that the charges violated Orlov's free speech rights, and urged that the charges be dropped, and pointed that because he was awarded

⁷⁷ The Council of Europe, Parliamentary Assembly, Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights, Report: Legal Remedies For Human Rights Violations in the North-Caucasus Region (including Appendix C: Explanatory Memorandum by Mr. Marty, Rapporteur), Doc. 12276, June 4, 2010.

⁷⁸ The Council of Europe, Parliamentary Assembly, 21st Sitting, Resolution 1738, Legal Remedies for Human Rights Violations in the North Caucasus Region, June 22, 2010; *Verbatim Report, 2010 Ordinary Session, 21st Session, Third Part*, AS (2010) CR 21, June 22, 2010.

the European Parliament's 2009 Sakharov Prize, he "is thus under the European Parliament's special moral and political protection."⁷⁹

Implications for U.S. Interests

The former Bush Administration appeared to increasingly stress the threat of terrorism in Chechnya and the North Caucasus, although there continued to be criticism of Russian government human rights abuses in the region.⁸⁰ Russian analyst Igor Obdayev has stated that U.S. worldwide anti-terrorism efforts were instrumental in reducing terrorist financing in the North Caucasus.⁸¹ In keeping with such an Administration stress, the State Department in April 2008 reported that "the majority of terrorist attacks [in Russia during 2007] continued to occur in the North Caucasus, where the pacification of much of Chechnya has correlated with an increase in terrorism in Dagestan and Ingushetia.... There was evidence of a foreign terrorist presence in the North Caucasus with international financial and ideological ties."⁸² Similarly, in June 2008 at the 16th session of the U.S.-Russia Working Group on Counter-terrorism, the two sides mentioned that they had cooperated on a case involving financial support for terrorist activity in Chechnya.⁸³

In a "get acquainted" meeting on April 1, 2009, Presidents Obama and Medvedev pledged to cooperate in countering terrorism, although the North Caucasus was not publicly singled out. In the first few days of the Obama Administration, the State Department issued its annual human rights report for 2008, which contained (as in 2007) lengthy descriptions of human rights abuses in the North Caucasus. The human rights report for 2009 stressed that the Russian "government's poor human rights record in the North Caucasus worsened" during the year.⁸⁴

In July 2009, the State Department called for bringing the killers of Natalia Estemirova in Chechnya to justice, and in August 2009, it called for bringing the killers of Zarema Sadulayeva and Alik Dzhabrailov in Chechnya to justice. The U.S. Mission to the OSCE also has raised concerns about these killings, as well as about the killing of Dagestani journalist Abdulmalik Akhmedilov in August 2009 and Ingush opposition politician and government human rights

⁷⁹ The European Parliament, *Resolution of 21 October 2010 on the Situation of Human Rights in the North Caucasus (Russian Federation) and the Criminal Prosecution Against Oleg Orlov*, P7_TA-PROV(2010)0390, October 21, 2010.

⁸⁰ The White House, Office of the Press Secretary, *President Commemorates Veterans Day, Discusses War on Terror*, November 11, 2005. President Bush stated that some "militants are found in regional groups, often associated with al Qaeda—paramilitary insurgencies and separatist movements in places like Somalia, the Philippines, Pakistan, Chechnya, Kashmir and Algeria." The last Bush Administration report on its efforts to advance human rights stated that "senior U.S. officials expressed concern to government leaders about the conduct of Russian security services and the government of the Chechen Republic, which was linked to abductions and disappearances of civilians. In meetings with federal and local officials during a visit to the North Caucasus in December [2006], the ambassador conveyed US concerns and expressed US willingness to assist in ways that promote respect for the rule of law." U.S. Department of State. *Supporting Human Rights and Democracy: The U.S. Record 2006*, April 5, 2007.

⁸¹ Olga Shlyahina, "Igor Obdayev on the Origins And Meaning of North Caucasian Terrorism," at <http://www.kavkazforum.ru>.

⁸² U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports on Terrorism 2007*, April 2008. The Report stated that it was "often difficult to characterize whether [violence in Ingushetia and Dagestan was] the result of terrorism, political violence, or criminal activities" (p. 87).

⁸³ U.S. Department of State. *The United States-Russia Working Group on Counter-terrorism: Joint Press Statement and Fact Sheet*, June 20, 2008.

⁸⁴ U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices*, February 25, 2009 and March 11, 2010.

council member Maksharip Aushev in October 2009. During her October 2009 visit to Moscow, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton reportedly did not stress U.S. concerns about human rights problems in the North Caucasus, although she did mention “attacks against human rights defenders” in Russia as a concern.⁸⁵ During her visit, a civil society working group, set up as part of the U.S.-Russia Bilateral Presidential Commission, held an initial meeting, but no details were released. The working group has held two meetings in 2010, but has not publicized specific work on the North Caucasus.

The chairs of the U.S.- Russia Counterterrorism Working Group met in November 2009 and agreed to focus on Afghanistan with particular regard to counterterrorism/terrorist finance issues; strengthen U.N. Security Council Resolution 1267 sanctions; counter the ideological dimension of violent extremism; and work on improving the bilateral exchange of transportation security issues.⁸⁶

Among other recent U.S. actions:

- In May 2010, the State Department released its *Advancing Freedom and Democracy Report* that details its diplomatic initiatives in 2009. Its section on Russia did not mention efforts to address human rights abuses in the North Caucasus, beyond mentioning that support is given to NGOs that provide training and support for legal services to displaced persons.⁸⁷
- On June 23, 2010, Secretary of State Clinton designated Caucasus Emirates leader Doku Umarov as a terrorist under Presidential Executive Order 13224, which targets terrorists and those providing support to terrorists or acts of terrorism, to help stem the flow of financial and other assistance to Umarov.
- In July 2010, the State Department issued a statement on the anniversary of the killing of Natalya Estemirova, stating that “we will continue to shine the spotlight on this case as part of our efforts to protect the brave journalists and civil society activists across the globe who, like Natalya, speak out against abuses and work to secure fundamental freedoms for their fellow citizens.”⁸⁸
- In August 2010, the State Department’s Country Reports on Terrorism reported that most terrorism in Russia remained linked to the North Caucasus.

Omnibus Appropriations for FY2009 (P.L. 111-8), signed into law on March 11, 2009, called for \$9.0 million for the North Caucasus for humanitarian, conflict mitigation, human rights, civil society, and relief and recovery assistance. The Administration’s budget request for FY2010 called for \$6.0 million for conflict mitigation and reconciliation activities in the North Caucasus, “to help stem the spread of violence and instability.” The request also called for unspecified amounts of assistance for the North Caucasus to promote economic opportunities, youth employment, health, sanitation, and community development, and to discourage “the spread of extremist ideologies.”⁸⁹ The conference agreement on Consolidated Appropriations for FY2010

⁸⁵ U.S. Department of State, *Secretary Clinton’s Remarks at Town Hall Meeting at Moscow State University*, October 14, 2009.

⁸⁶ U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports on Terrorism 2009*, August 5, 2010.

⁸⁷ U.S. Department of State, *Advancing Freedom and Democracy Reports*, May 2010.

⁸⁸ U.S. Department of State, *Press Statement: Anniversary of the Murder of Natalya Estemirova*, July 15, 2010.

⁸⁹ U.S. Department of State, *Congressional Budget Justification for Foreign Operations FY2010*, May 12, 2009.

(H.R. 3288), signed into law on December 16, 2009, called for not less than \$7.0 million for the North Caucasus, slightly less than that provided in FY2009 but still above the Administration's budget request. The conference agreement also repeats language used for several years that directs that 60% of the assistance allocated to Russia will be withheld (excluding medical, human trafficking, and Comprehensive Threat Reduction aid) until the President certifies that Russia is facilitating full access to Chechnya for international nongovernmental organizations providing humanitarian relief to displaced persons. See **Table 2** for a breakdown of spending by program for the North Caucasus for FY2007-FY2008.

In addition to the provisions in H.R. 3288, Congress has raised concerns about ongoing terrorism and human rights violations in the North Caucasus. H.Res. 1315 (Hastings), introduced on April 29, 2010, called on the Secretary of State to designate the Caucasus Emirate as a foreign terrorist organization. H.Res. 1539 (Hastings), introduced on July 20, 2010, urged the Secretary of State to raise the issue of human rights abuses in the North Caucasus and elsewhere in Russia during meetings of the OSCE and other international forums.

According to some international NGOs and the State Department, all foreign NGOs face constraints by the authorities on their access and operations in Chechnya. While almost all NGOs operating in Chechnya have offices there with local staff, most continue to retain their main or at least branch offices outside the region. However, if the security situation continues to improve in Chechnya and deteriorate elsewhere in the North Caucasus, NGOs may consider moving more operations to Chechnya. Access to Chechnya by international staff is strictly controlled by the regional branch of the Federal Security Service (FSB), according to reports, and NGOs must provide detailed monthly information on activities and travel to the FSB and other authorities. At times, the local authorities have limited or refused access, although reportedly the FSB has been more cooperative in recent months. Local authorities in Chechnya, Ingushetia, and Dagestan closely oversee the finances and programs of foreign NGOs. In addition, the Russian Migration Service and other federal offices require financial and program information. Chechen officials repeatedly have turned down requests by UNHCR to open an office in Grozny to monitor whether returnees are ensured international standards of safety and dignity. The State Department's Bureau of Consular Affairs advises "U.S. citizens against travel to Chechnya and all other areas of the North Caucasus, including North Ossetia, Ingushetia, Dagestan, Stavropol, Karachayevo-Cherkessiya, and Kabardino-Balkariya, areas of continued civil and political unrest."⁹⁰

⁹⁰ U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Consular Affairs, *Russian Federation: Country Specific Information*, at http://www.travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_1006.html#safety.

Table 2. U.S. Assistance to Russia's North Caucasus Region, FY2007 and FY2008
(U.S. dollars)

Program Area	Activity	Implementer	FY2007	FY2008
Conflict Mitigation & Reconciliation	Socio-Economic Recovery	IRC	929,211	2,200,000
	Poverty Reduction	World Vision	565,000	200,000
	Improved Community Infrastructure	CFNO	100,000	500,000
	Youth Exchange & Development	IREX	1,050,000	1,300,000
	TBD & Prog. Support		—	748,000
Rule of Law & Human Rights	Judicial Reform	Chemonics	30,000	
	Human Rights	Faith, Hope, Love	100,000	
	Human Rights	Perspektiva	15,000	
	Tolerance Regional Councils	Bay Area Council	75,000	
Good Governance	Local Governance	IUE	250,000	400,000
	Public Finance & Budgeting	CFP	235,000	230,000
	Policy Advocacy	CIPE	—	30,000
Political Competition	Election Monitoring	Golos	20,000	—
Civic Participation	Sustainable Community Development	FSD	400,000	400,000
	Community Connections	World Learning	50,000	400,000
	Civil Society Development In Southern Russia	SRRC	350,000	400,000
	Civic Education	JAR	15,000	
	Key Stone Program in the Region	Key Stone	340,000	
	Civil Society Support Program	IREX	70,000	
	Program Support			122,000
	Health	TB Control	IFRC	300,000
Social Services	Psycho-Social Support for Children in the NC	UNICEF	200,000	
	Program Support			15,000
Economic Opportunity	Microfinance Support	RMC	332,000	500,000
	Rural Credit Coops and Agric. Business Development	ACDI/VOCA	1,167,000	1,100,000
	Economic Opportunity/Program Support		60,000	
Total			6,653,211	8,845,000

Source: U.S. Department of State, Office of the Coordinator for Assistance to Europe and Eurasia.

Note:

ACDI/VOCA—Agricultural Cooperative Development International and Volunteers in Overseas Cooperative Assistance

CFNO—Children's Fund of North Ossetia
CFP—Center for Fiscal Policy
CIPE—Center for International Private Enterprise
FSD—Foundation for Sustainable Development
IFRC—International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent
IRC—International Red Cross
IREX—International Research and Exchanges Board
IUE—Institute for Urban Economics
JAR—Junior Achievement Russia
RMC—Russian Microfinance Center
SRRC—Southern Regional Resource Center

Author Contact Information

(name redacted)
Specialist in Russian and Eurasian Affairs
[redacted]@crs.loax 7-....

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