

**Refugee Review Tribunal
AUSTRALIA**

RRT RESEARCH RESPONSE

Research Response Number: RUS35174
Country: Russian Federation
Date: 31 July 2009

Keywords: Russian Federation – Belogorsk – local government – mayoral elections – Amur Region – Residence registration

This response was prepared by the Research & Information Services Section of the Refugee Review Tribunal (RRT) after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the RRT within time constraints. This response is not, and does not purport to be, conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim to refugee status or asylum. This research response may not, under any circumstance, be cited in a decision or any other document. Anyone wishing to use this information may only cite the primary source material contained herein.

Questions

- 1. Can you please provide me with background information on the city of Belogorsk. (population, distance from Moscow Vladivostok etc)?**
- 2. Can you please provide me with details about local government in Belogorsk?**
- 3. How often are mayoral elections held in Belogorsk? Can you provide details of how the mayoral elections are conducted in Belogorsk?**
- 4. Can you provide me with information about the October 2008 mayoral elections in Belogorsk. How many candidates were there for mayor in October 2008. Is the current mayor of Belogorsk Mr S Melyukov?**
- 5. Can you provide some details about the current mayor?**
- 6. Who was the mayor in Belogorsk before the current mayor?**
- 7. Can you provide me with information about the independent mayoral candidate Mr S Melyukov?**
- 8. Is it possible to challenge the results of a mayoral election? What is the process?**
- 9. Who is the Governor of the Amur region? Would the Governor of the Amur region be involved in mayoral elections?**
- 10. Would the United Russian Party be involved in mayoral elections in Belogorsk?**
- 11. Do you have to register if you move to another city in Russia?**

RESPONSE

- 1. Can you please provide me with background information on the city of Belogorsk (population, distance from Moscow, Vladivostok etc)?**

Belogorsk city is located in Russia's far eastern region of Amur and had a recorded population of 68,000 in 2006. The main industrial processing in the city is related to forestry and timber, and food and beverages. The capital of Amur region is the nearby city of

Blagoveshchensk (population 241,300 in 2006), which is located approximately 7,985 kilometres from Moscow. The Amur region had a population of around 880,000 in 2006. Belogorsk is approximately 900 kilometres north of Vladivostok, as shown in the map below ('Amur Region – General Information' (undated), *Kommersant* website http://www.kommersant.com/t-34/r_5/n_377/Amur_Region/303 – Accessed 23 July 2009 – Attachment 1; 'Amur Region' (undated), Russia: All Regions Trade & Investment Guide website <http://www.russiasregions.com/79%20Amur%20Region.pdf> – Accessed 23 July 2009 – Attachment 2; for a map of Russia showing Blagoveshchensk and Vladivostok, see United Nations 2004, 'Russian Federation', Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada website <http://www.un.org/Depts/Cartographic/map/profile/russia.pdf> – Accessed 23 July 2009 – Attachment 3).



(Source: 'Belogorsk: Amur Region' 2000, *Microsoft Encarta Interactive Atlas* – Attachment 4).

2. Can you please provide me with details about local government in Belogorsk?

No news reports in English were found providing detailed information about the Belogorsk local government. Belogorsk is one of approximately 12,000 municipalities across Russia, with powers and responsibility varying across the country. Close to 4,500 of these did involve the election of a mayor (Stevens, A. 2006, 'Local government in Russia: Its powers vary across the country', City Mayors website, 18 August

http://www.citymayors.com/government/russia_government.html – Accessed 27 July 2009 – Attachment 5).

The role of the mayor, the city government, and deputies within the administration of the Amur Region is briefly described on the *Kommersant* website: “City governments include functional committees, departments, and offices... a mayor heading a city government has a vice-mayor and three deputies under him”:

The [Amur] region includes 9 cities, 24 towns, and 616 villages. The cities of Belogorsk, Zeya, Raichikhinsk, Svobodny, Tynda, and Shimanovsk are under regional jurisdiction, and Zavitinsk, and Skovorodino are under district jurisdiction.

...The Amur Region Administration is the highest executive body. The regional Council of People’s Deputies, formerly known as the regional Legislative Assembly, is the highest legislative body.

City governments include functional committees, departments, and offices. A mayor, who directs the work of the executive body, is the head of a city government. The first mayoral elections took place in March 1997. Today, a mayor heading a city government has a vice-mayor and three deputies under him. Administrative transformations are still going on.

The Administration of Blagoveshchensk maintains contacts with its neighbors in the region and has its own representative in the Association of Siberian and Far Eastern Cities.

The city government system of Blagoveshchensk comprises the mayor as head of the city government, the city Duma, the city Administration, and territorial local government bodies (‘Amur Region – General Information’ (undated), *Kommersant* website http://www.kommersant.com/t-34/r_5/n_377/Amur_Region/303 – Accessed 23 July 2009 – Attachment 1).

The official website address of Belogorsk city is <http://www.belogorck.ru/>, with content provided only in the Russian language. Some information on the local government is attainable using Google translation of several of its web pages. Provided below are details of the names and positions of significant officers in the Belogorsk city local government.

(Please Note: Google translations can often be poor and can contain errors – as such they give only a rough indication of the contents of a document. For any further reliance on this information, a better translation should be obtained.)

The web page ‘Administration/Vice Mayor’ provides photographs, names, and position titles of four deputy heads and the Chief of Staff:

- Lee Eugene I. – 1st deputy head of the city Belogorsk;
- Burmistrova Galyna Afanasevna – Deputy Head of Social Policy;
- Musiyenko Andrei Borisovich – Deputy Head of Economics;
- Rozonov Vladimir Aleksandrovich – Deputy Head of Building and Land Use; and
- Oliynyk Elvira V. – Chief of Staff (‘Vice Mayor/ Заместители главы города’ 2009, Belogorsk City website http://www.belogorck.ru/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=54&Itemid=45 – Accessed 27 July 2009 – Attachment 6).

The 'Contacts' page of the website lists the above persons and approximately thirty other subordinate office holders, their names and positions, within various administrative sections of the local government. This list is headed by the mayor or "head of municipal formation", Melyukov Stanislav Y. The "municipal formation" is located on "Gagarina street" ('Contacts: Administration of municipal formation town Belogorsk' (undated), Belogorsk city website http://www.belogorck.ru/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=124&Itemid=49 – Accessed 27 July 2009 – Attachment 7).

Two recently published academic articles by Dr Cameron Ross provide helpful overviews of the functions of local governments, the role of mayors and conduct of local elections in Russia. These articles do, however, rely on data on local elections no later than the 2004-2005 cycle (Ross, C. 2009, 'Municipal elections and electoral and authoritarianism under Putin' in *Federalism and Local Politics in Russia*, eds. C. Ross & A. Campbell, Routledge, London, pp.284-304 – Attachment 8; Ross, C. 2007, 'From Party and State Domination to Putin's 'Power Vertical' : The Subjugation of Mayors in Communist and Post Communist Russia' in *Heads of the Local State Mayors, Provosts and Burgomasters since 1800*, eds. J. Garrard, Ashgate, England, pp.173-190 – Attachment 9).

The articles by Dr. Ross include the following general characteristics of local government in Russia and the election of mayors:

- Full implementation of a new 2003 Federal Law, *On the Principles of Local Self-Government in the Russian Federation*, was expected to occur by 1 January 2009 and after the 2007-2008 cycle of elections;
- Prior to this the foundation, types and powers of local governments are regulated by the 1995 Federal Law, *On Local Self-Government in the Russia Federation*;
- Under the 1995 Law, five basic types of local self-government were created:
 1. a local legislature and a generally elected local administration head (a mayor); the latter also presides over the local legislature,
 2. a local legislature and a mayor elected by the legislature,
 3. a local legislature headed by a person who has no right to make decisions on his own, and a hired head of the local administration,
 4. a local legislature and a local administration formed out of the legislature's members who combine representative and executive functions; in this case, the head of the legislature is also the head of the local administration,
 5. a local community assembly (*skhod*) and local government head (occurs in small rural settlements).
- The following form the responsibility of local councils:
 - 1) To adopt local laws; 2) approve the local budget and report on its execution; 3) adopt plans and programmes of local development and approve reports on their implementation; 4) establish local taxes and fees; 4) establish procedures for the management and disposal of local property; 5) monitor the activities of local governments and officials.

- Deputies numbers vary from four in rural to 30 in large cities;
- Assemblies are elected for four years and usually meet six times a year (Ross, C., 2009, 'Municipal elections and electoral and authoritarianism under Putin' in *Federalism and Local Politics in Russia*, eds. C. Ross & A. Campbell, Routledge, London, pp.288- 290 – Attachment 8; Ross, C. 2007, 'From Party and State Domination to Putin's 'Power Vertical' : The Subjugation of Mayors in Communist and Post Communist Russia' in *Heads of the Local State Mayors, Provosts and Burgomasters since 1800*, eds. J. Garrard, Ashgate, England, pp. 180-183 – Attachment 9; for information on the implementation of the new 2003 Federal Law, *On the Principles of Local Self-Government in the Russian Federation*, see: 'Medvedev urges Chechen local self-gvt bodies formation by Oct 2009' 2008, *ITAR-TASS World Service*, 5 November – Attachment 35; Ross, C. 2007, 'Municipal Reform in the Russian Federation and Putin's "Electoral Vertical"', *Demokratizatsiya*, Spring, pp.191-208 – Attachment 36).

3. How often are mayoral elections held in Belogorsk? Can you provide details of how the mayoral elections are conducted in Belogorsk?

The first mayoral elections in the Amur Region took place in March 1997. Currently mayoral elections take place every four years: prior to those in October 2008, mayoral elections in Belogorsk were held in October 2004. Eight candidates sought election to the mayoral post in 2004, with "the chances of four of them considered equal", according to a brief *ITAR-TASS World Service* report ('Amur Region – General Information' (undated), *Kommersant* website http://www.kommersant.com/t-34/r_5/n_377/Amur_Region/303 – Accessed 23 July 2009 – Attachment 1; Savelyev, B. 2004, 'Belogorsk mayor re-elected in Sunday's Amur region polls', *ITAR-TASS World Service*, 11 October – Attachment 10; Savelyev, B. 2004, 'Elections to be held in 4 Amur municipal entities Sunday', *ITAR-TASS World Service*, 7 October – Attachment 11; 'Belogorsk District and City Belogorsk' (undated), Election Commissions of Subjects of the Russian Federation – Amur Region website <http://www.amur.izbirkom.ru/way/934355.html> – Accessed 21 July 2009 – Attachment 12).

The Electoral Commission website for the Amur Region shows that a main vote for "heads of local elections" in Belogorsk city occurred on 10 October 2004, 12 October 2008, with their powers set to end next in 26 October 2012:

City Belogorsk

Title Defense	Heads of local elections somoupravleniya			election of a representative body		
	Election Day	end powers	type of election	Election Day	end powers	type of election
City Belogors to	10.10.2004 10.10.2004	15.10.2008 15.10.2008	main	27.03.2005 27.03.2005	27.03.2009 27.03.2009	– 4 созыв major – 4 convening
	12.10.2008 12.10.2008	26.10.2012 26.10.2012	main	12.03.2006 12.03.2006	- --	№ 3 re-election of deputies to trehmandatnomu constituency number 3
	26.10.2008 26.10.2008			second vote	02.12.2007 02.12.2007	- --
				02 .12.2007 02 .12.2007	- --	№ 3 additional and re-elections of deputies to trehmandatnomu constituency number 3
				01.03.2009 01.03.2009	01.03.2013 01.03.2013	– 5 созыв core – the convening of 5

(Source: ‘Belogorsk District and City Belogorsk’ (undated), Election Commissions of Subjects of the Russian Federation – Amur Region website <http://www.amur.izbirkom.ru/way/934355.html> – Accessed 21 July 2009 – Attachment 12).

Conduct of mayoral elections in Belogorsk and Russia:

No information was found on how mayoral elections are conducted specifically in Belogorsk. Dr. Cameron Ross, in the two articles referred to above, provides the following points on mayoral elections more generally in Russia:

- Mayors can be elected directly by the citizenry by secret ballot or can be chosen from among, and by, local council members or assembly members: in 2000, 57% of mayors were elected by ballot. The latter indirect method is “much more open to manipulation and control from the regional authorities than popular elections”;
- In 2004-2005, a minimum turnout of 20% was required to validate elections but in January 2007 thresholds were abolished;
- The majority of mayoral elections used first past the post system, with second round run-offs for the two top candidates;

- “Outright falsification of elections is also widespread” (Ross, C. 2009, ‘Municipal elections and electoral and authoritarianism under Putin’ in *Federalism and Local Politics in Russia*, eds. C. Ross & A. Campbell, Routledge, London, pp.288-290 – Attachment 8; Ross, C. 2007, ‘From Party and State Domination to Putin’s ‘Power Vertical’ : The Subjugation of Mayors in Communist and Post Communist Russia’ in *Heads of the Local State Mayors, Provosts and Burgomasters since 1800*, eds. J. Garrard, Ashgate, England, p.183 – Attachment 9).

Ross concludes his 2007 article with the following assessment of the election of mayors in Russia under the new 2003 adopted Federal Law, *On the Principles of Local Self-Government in the Russian Federation*, with full implementation due by 1 January 2009:

Election of the heads of municipal districts

As under the 1995 law, mayors can be elected by popular vote or indirectly by city councils. However, the new [2003] law states that a municipality head ‘may not concurrently hold the positions of a chairperson of the representative body of the municipality and the head of the local administration’. Moreover, the head of the executive branch of these new bodies is to be an ‘executive manager’, hired by contracts’. **One third of the members of the panels charged with appointing these new managers are to be chosen by regional administrations thereby giving governors key influence over such appointments. Under the new system, mayors will be left with largely ceremonial duties, real power being placed in the hands of city managers.** Meanwhile, Putin’s latest policy initiative to grant governors power to directly appoint mayors clearly violates article 32 of the Russian Constitution, which states that, ‘Citizens of the Russian Federation shall have the right to elect and to be elected to bodies of state governance and to organs of local self-government’.”

In conclusion, Russia’s mayors continue to work under a highly centralised and politicised system of state administration where informal extra-legal rules of the game dominate formal constitutional and legal norms. **Parties play only a minor role in city politics and patron-client relations dominate the political landscape. Putin’s new law on local self-government has left mayors at the mercy of regional governors,** and as Maiyakin stresses, the President’s federal reforms have instigated:

the construction of a rigid vertical of power in which regional law conforms to federal law, the president enforces federal standards on the governors through the federal districts, and the governors in turn control local government through the municipal districts” (Ross, C. 2007, ‘From Party and State Domination to Putin’s ‘Power Vertical’ : The Subjugation of Mayors in Communist and Post Communist Russia’ in *Heads of the Local State Mayors, Provosts and Burgomasters since 1800*, eds. J. Garrard, Ashgate, England, pp.189-190 – Attachment 9).

News articles on specific mayoral contests provide other evidence on the conduct of such elections. In April 2009, *The Washington Post* described the conduct of mayoral elections in a town with a population similar to Belogorsk but two hours distance from Moscow:

For nearly two months, Dmitry Belanovich woke before dawn to make the two-hour drive from Moscow to this small, bucolic town [Mozhaisk] west of the capital.

Every day, from 6 a.m. until 11 p.m., the burly, bearded environmental inspector campaigned for votes in the snow, working street corners and storefronts, even stopping residents as they picked up milk, trying to persuade them to elect him mayor.

And every night, he drove back to Moscow because the inns in Mozhaisk turned him away. “I was under a certain administrative pressure,” he explained, alleging that local officials made it clear that anyone giving him a room would be punished.

But if the odds were against Belanovich as he challenged Vladimir Putin’s United Russia party, which dominates and often fixes elections in this country, he built his campaign on an issue that seemed to resonate -- environmental protection. And when the votes were counted March 1, he won in a landslide.

The surprise victory showed that, despite a decade of tightening political controls by the Kremlin, it is still possible to take on Putin’s ruling party in a local election and prevail. The win was also a small milestone for Russia’s environmental movement, which has struggled against public apathy and government pressure since Putin came to power as president and then prime minister.

...The interest in municipal elections may seem misplaced given the limited powers that most Russian mayors enjoy, but these races are among the few remaining venues for open political competition in Russia, said Vladimir Milov, a Nemtsov ally in the democratic opposition movement Solidarity.

“Russia is suffocating from a lack of real, open politics,” he said, but mayoral elections offer an outlet for voters to express their frustration with the government -- and for opposition politicians to address concrete problems and prove themselves as effective managers to a skeptical public.

Putin eliminated elections for regional governors, and his government has often blocked opposition candidates and parties from the ballot in federal races. **But the Kremlin’s ability to influence local elections such as the one in Mozhaisk is limited in part because candidates can bypass its control of the media.**

Belanovich, 34, said his bid to become mayor of this town of 70,000 received no coverage on television or in major newspapers. But by speaking to residents directly and distributing campaign brochures, he won 45 percent of the vote, compared with 27 percent for the second-place United Russia candidate. He attributed his victory to his promise to protect the natural ecology of this rural municipality, which he calls the “lungs of Moscow” because nearly half its territory is covered with forests. He campaigned on pledges to block construction along rivers and a major reservoir, clean up a polluting pig farm and promote agriculture and tourism instead of industry.

...Some environmentalists have hailed Belanovich’s election. But others have played down its significance because of Belanovich’s ties to Oleg Mitvol, the deputy chief of the federal environmental watchdog agency and a controversial figure in the movement.

Mitvol made headlines in 2006 by accusing Royal Dutch Shell of violating environmental regulations at a huge oil and natural gas project off the far eastern island of Sakhalin. Belanovich was a senior inspector at the agency and served as Mitvol’s representative in Sakhalin at the time. Critics have portrayed Mitvol as a Kremlin attack dog who used the environmental charges to pressure Shell to sell its controlling stake in the project to the state energy giant Gazprom. But Mitvol has also gone after Russian firms, and the head of his agency has been trying to fire him for more than a year.

Belanovich came under pressure too last year and decided to leave his job and make the mayoral bid in Mozhaisk with Mitvol’s support. The two men campaigned together and launched an organization called Green Alternative with a Russian pop star, Alyona Sviridova.

Belanovich had no connection to Mozhaisk before the campaign but said he was born in a nearby town and recalled childhood visits with his parents to its woods and rivers. **There is no residency requirement for the mayor's post.**

Sergei Isakov, editor of the Mozhaisk Review, a local newspaper, said he impressed residents by reaching out to them and even seeking their support at the local banya, or public steam bath.

“He’s a huge man who speaks quietly and calmly, and it gives a feeling of confidence, reliability and security,” he said, adding that Belanovich’s status as an outsider helped because many residents believed his rivals were beholden to local businesses. Since he took office, several officials suspected of corruption have already resigned, Isakov said.

But Alexei Yablokov -- a scholar who served as an adviser to President Boris Yeltsin and is often regarded as a founding father of the Russian environmental movement -- questioned Mitvol’s motives, describing him as an opportunist who engineered Belanovich’s victory to win a leadership position in an opposition party.

Other activists defended Mitvol, saying he has drawn attention to environmental causes. “He may not be the most knowledgeable environmentalist, but he has good intentions,” said Ivan Blokov, director of the Russian branch of Greenpeace.

A millionaire who made his fortune in the early days of Russian capitalism, Mitvol is not shy about his role in the Mozhaisk election. In an interview at a Moscow restaurant, he said he “took Belanovich by the hand” and helped him win by touting their record of prosecuting corrupt officials and other environmental criminals.

On election day, he added, the campaign bused in 350 people to serve as observers at the polling stations and kept a team of lawyers on call. Belanovich did well at every site except one on a military base off limits to their monitors. There, Mitvol said, the United Russia candidate won almost all the votes.

Mitvol described Mozhaisk as a trial run and said Green Alternative plans to field environmental candidates in local elections across the country. “Everybody says you can’t win elections in Russia, that the ruling party always wins,” he said, “but I want to try for myself” (Pan, P.P. 2009, ‘Russian Voting Tinged with Green -Environment out muscles Kremlin Controls in Mayoral Election’, *The Washington Post*, 10 April <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/04/09/AR2009040904524.html> – Accessed 27 July 2009 – Attachment 13).

In April 2009, *The Guardian* reported on the local elections in Sochi, stating that “Sochi’s bureaucrats were extremely keen to avoid a run-off, which would be triggered if no candidate won more than 50% of the vote, Lebedev said. He claimed they had resorted to dirty tricks in a desperate attempt to guarantee that Pakhomov, the acting mayor, won a straight first-round victory. Election fixing in Russia is depressingly routine” (Harding. L. 2009, ‘Standard owner Alexander Lebedev disqualified from Sochi mayoral race’, *The Guardian*, 13 April <http://www.guardian.co.uk/media/2009/apr/13/court-disqualifies-lebedev-sochi-mayor-race> – Accessed 27 July 2009 – Attachment 14).

4. Can you provide me with information about the October 2008 mayoral elections in Belogorsk? How many candidates were there for mayor in October 2008? Is the current mayor of Belogorsk Mr S Melyukov?

Some information on the October 2008 local government/mayoral elections in Belogorsk is available on the website of the Electoral Commission of Amur Region, accessed (along with those of other regions) via the 2004 Presidential Elections website http://pr2004.cikrf.ru/president_engl_ver.html. The Electoral Commission of Amur Region website is in Russian and the following English translations derive from Google-based software. Based on this information, a first round of voting took place on 12 October 2008 and a second round on 27 October 2008. In the first round Vodolagin Nikolaj won 3755 votes or 20.62% of the vote and Stanislav Y. Melyukov 8913 or 48.94% of the vote; in the second round Melyukov Stanislav Y. won 8767 votes or 56.33%, Vodolagin Nikolay won 6309 or 40.54%. The Google translation provides the following information:

October 13, 2008

October 12, elections were held in the Amur region. Total – 74.

Election of the Head of municipal formation town Belogorsk. Took part in the election of 36.25% (elections were held). In the first round or who are not elected, a second vote. In the second round were Vodolagin Nikolaj (self) – 3755 – 20,62% of the vote, and Stanislav Y. Melyukov (self) – 8913 – 48.94% of the vote.

...**27 октября 2008 года**October 27, 2008

Повторное голосование по выборам Главы муниципального образования города Белогорск.Re-vote on the election of the Head of municipal formation town Belogorsk. Приняли участие в выборах 30,97%. Took part in the election of 30.97%. Избран Мелюков Станислав Юрьевич (самовыдвижение) – 8767 - 56,33%, Водолагин Николай Васильевич набрал (самовыдвижение) – 6309 - 40,54% (Elected Melyukov Stanislav Y. (self) – 8767 – 56.33%, Vodolagin Nikolay won (self) – 6309 – 40.54% (‘1- 29 October: Election Belogorsk’ 2008, Election Commissions of Subjects of the Russian Federation – Amur Region website, 29 October <http://amur.izbirkom.ru/way/935191/sx/art/936801/cp/1/br/935171> – Accessed 21 July 2009 – Attachment 15).

A Google search using the Russian characters for the mayor (“Мелюков Станислав Юрьевич”) resulted in reference to a 13 October 2009 Russian-language Fedpress.com report on “complaints” between the two rounds of voting. The Google translation provides the following result:

In Belogorsk have not yet made a decision to hold a second vote. Сейчас городской избирком рассматривает жалобы, поступившие от наблюдателей кандидата-самовыдвиженца Станислава Мелюкова.

Now the city is considering izbirkom complaints from observers candidate Stanislav samovydvizhentsa Melyukova. Они просят пересчитать голоса на двух участках. They are asked to re-vote on the two sites.

По приблизительным подсчетам для победы на выборах Мелюкову не хватило всего 192 голоса.According to a rough estimate for the election victory Melyukovu not enough just 192 votes. Видимо, кандидат надеется, что после пересчета появятся недостающие

голоса, что позволит ему одержать победу в первом туре. Apparently, the candidate hopes that the recalculation will be missing after the vote that would enable him to win the first round. Как сообщил председатель облизбиркома, решение по этим жалобам комиссия Белогорска примет в ближайшее время. According to Chairman oblizbirkoma, a decision on these complaints, the Commission will Belogorsk shortly. Напомним, наибольшее количество голосов на выборах набрали главный редактор телекомпании «Видеосервис» Станислав Мелюков (48,94%) и гендиректор Белогорского маслозавода Николай Водолагин (20,62%).

Remember, the greatest number of votes at the elections took up the chief editor of TV «Video» Stanislav Melyukov (48.94%), and director Nicholas Vodolagin Belogorskoe butter (20.62%).

Кроме того, поступила жалоба на то, что бейджи наблюдателей отличаются цветом и размером шрифта. In addition, the complaint that the badges are different color monitors and text size. В Белогорском избиркоме представителям кандидатов объяснили, что это не влияет на ход голосования и нет смысла регламентировать вид бейджей. In Belogorskoe vote to representatives of candidates explained that this did not affect the course of voting and it makes no sense to regulate the kind of badges (‘Местные выборы в Приамурье: пейзаж после 12 октября Local elections in Priamur’e: landscape after the October 12’ 2008, Fedpress.com website, 13 October http://fedpress.ru/federal/polit/vibori/id_117187.html – Accessed 27 July 2009 – Attachment 16).

A second article from the Fedpress website dated 27 October refers to “two minor violations” and to “five candidates” running in the 12 October election. The Google translation provides the following result:

He surpassed his rival by more than 2 thousand votes

The new mayor was elected editor-in-chief Belogorsk Television «Video» Stanislav Melyukov. As «AmurPolit.ru» in city election commission, on the basis of past voting yesterday repeated his preference for 56% of voters (8 thousand 767 people).

His opponent director Belogorskoe butter Nicholas Vodolagina he ahead by more than 2 thousand votes. As mayor Vodolagina like to see 40% of voters (6 thousand 309 Belogortsev). All that day the polls were 30.97% of citizens (15 thousand 564 people).

During the voting was fixed two minor violations in the precinct election commissions. But, as explained «AmurPolit.ru» in territorial vote, «they do not represent the interest on the background of the actual elections».

Remember, October 12, none of the five candidates have managed to overcome the 50 percent barrier. Then the voices of the past in the second round of candidates was as follows: Stanislav Melyukova supported 8 thousand 913 voters (48.94%), Nicholas Vodolagina – 3 thousand 755 (20.62%) (‘At the elections in Belogorsk defeated Stanislav Melyukov’ 2009, Fedpress.com website, 27 October http://fedpress.ru/federal/polit/vibori/id_118759.html – Accessed 30 July 2009 – Attachment 17).

5. Can you provide some details about the current mayor?

The official website address of Belogorsk city is <http://www.belogorck.ru/> and this provides information in Russian on the current mayor, Stanislav Melyukov. Information provided below in English is again derived from a Google translation:

Melyukov Stanislav Y.

Born March 23, 1963 at Mary the Turkmen Soviet Socialist Republic in the home builder.

In 1977, after seven secondary schools in Baku, enrolled in special schools

Suvorov type them. Nakhichevan, which graduated 10 classes, and in 1980 entered the Simferopolskoye top military and political construction college.

After graduating from college with the rank of lieutenant on his own will distributed to the Far East and was established in g.Belogorsk in the / h at UNR-47.

He served in several military units from g.Belogorska to Cape Schmidt, ensuring the construction of various objects, from houses to airports.

According to seniority in the rank of captain retired. For impeccable service is the government awards.

In December 1994, founded the first private television in Belogorsk – TV “Video”, in March 1997 – the first non-government newspaper in Belogorsk “FA – announcement.”

In July 2007, launched in the fifth Belogorsk account ethereal TV Rehn – TV “. He worked as general director of broadcasting “Video” and “City – TV”.

From December 1999 to October 2004 was deputy Belogorskoe City Council of People’s Deputies of the two convocations.

Married. Raising two children (‘Head of municipal formation g.Belogorsk/ Мелюков Станислав Юрьевич Melyukov Stanislav Y.’ (undated), Belogorsk Municipality website http://www.belogorck.ru/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=27&Itemid=40 – Accessed 23 July 2009 – Attachment 18).

In February 2009, *Pravda* (Amur) published in Russian an interview with Stanislav Melyukov. The article appears to point out that Melyukov is a successful businessman, first came to Belogorsk in 1984, and hopes to arrest the migration of individuals away from the city to the capital Blagoveschenck (‘Stanislav Melyukov: “My motive – self”/Станислав Мелюков: “Мой мотив – самореализоваться”’ 2009, *Pravda* (Amur) website, 19 February <http://www.amurpravda.ru/articles/2009/02/19/14.html> – Accessed 27 July 2009 – Attachment 19).

6. Who was the mayor in Belogorsk before the current mayor?

The only information found on previous mayors in Belogorsk is the following: that Alexander Khodunov won the previous mayoral elections in 10 October 2004 as the standing mayor (‘Belogorsk mayor re-elected in Sunday’s Amur region polls’, *ITAR-TASS World Service*, 11 October – Attachment 10; Savelyev, B. 2004, ‘Elections to be held in 4 Amur municipal entities Sunday’, *ITAR-TASS World Service*, 7 October – Attachment 11).

7. Can you provide me with information about the independent mayoral candidate Mr S Melyukov?

Please see information provided above in response to question five.

8. Is it possible to challenge the results of a mayoral election? What is the process?

While information indicates that mayoral elections may be challenged in Russia, limited information was found on processes to be followed. Based on a May 2009 report on a challenge to elections in the high-profile city of Sochi and involving former deputy prime minister Boris Nemtsov, suits can be filed in the first instance in a municipal court, followed by the regional and federal court, and then the European Court of Human Rights:

The Kremlin critic Boris Y. Nemtsov filed suit in a municipal court in the southern Russian city of Sochi on Thursday, seeking to overturn the results of the April 26 mayoral elections. The Moscow-backed candidate, Anatoly N. Pakhomov, won 76.8 percent of the popular vote, with Mr. Nemtsov, left, running a distant second with 13.6 percent. High-profile candidates crowded into the mayoral race, hoping to lead the city during the 2014 Winter Olympics, but opposition campaigners were unable to gain much visibility. Mr. Nemtsov's lawsuit cites 40 violations of election laws, among them the destruction of campaign materials and the suppression of news coverage. Olga Shorina, a spokeswoman for Mr. Nemtsov, said the campaign was prepared to appeal to regional and federal courts and then, if necessary, to the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg (Barry, E. 2009, 'Candidate Sues to Overturn Election Results', *The New York Times*, 14 May http://www.nytimes.com/2009/05/15/world/europe/15briefs-russia.html?_r=1 – Accessed 27 July 2009 – Attachment 20).

An earlier report on the same local elections in Sochi indicates that written complaints on electoral irregularities can also be made to the local electoral commission:

Turnout appeared to be low on Sunday, but city officials said that 30,565 residents, nearly 11 percent of registered voters, had voted early. Early voting generally hovers from 1 to 4 percent, and Mr. Nemtsov charged that the unusually high turnout was the result of voters having been pressured by their employers to vote early for Mr. Pakhomov.

"It is voting under pressure, voting by blackmail," he said.

Ms. Tkacheva, of the election commission, said there was no evidence that early voters were pressured. She said the city had received two written complaints about workers being bussed to vote during a work day, but an investigation showed that their employers were simply being accommodating.

"Other than emotion, there are no grounds" to challenge the results, she said.

Mr. Pakhomov was favored to win from the outset, and many voters said they trusted him because he had the approval of leaders in Moscow.

Still, other factors may have bolstered his odds.

Seven candidates were disqualified because of clerical errors in their registration forms. The remaining challengers had little space to campaign; local television blacked out news coverage and advertising of opposition candidates, and businesspeople who helped publicize their campaigns were threatened and intimidated (Barry, E. 2009, 'Kremlin's Candidate Headed to Victory in Sochi', *The New York Times*, 26 April <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/04/27/world/europe/27sochi.html> – Accessed 22 July 2009 – Attachment 21).

9. Who is the Governor of the Amur region? Would the Governor of the Amur Region be involved in mayoral elections?

10. Would the United Russian Party be involved in mayoral elections in Belogorsk?

The Government of the Amur Region website shows the current Governor of the Amur region to be KOZHEMYAKO, Oleg Nikolayevich. He was referred to as the new governor in an October 2008 *ITAR-TASS World Service* article: “The new Governor of the Amur Region, Oleg Kozhemyako, has signed an injunction to dismiss the Amur regional government. However, “the local government will go on discharging its duties until a new cabinet is formed”” (“Губернатор Governor КОЖЕМЯКО Олег Николаевич KOZHEMYAKO Oleg Nikolayevich Губернатор Амурской области The Governor of the Amur Region’ (undated), The Government of the Amur Region website <http://translate.google.com/translate?sourceid=navclient&hl=en&u=http%3a%2f%2fwww%2eamurobl%2eru%2f> – Accessed 23 July 2009 – Attachment 22; ‘Amur Regional Governor dismisses local government’ 2008, *ITAR-TASS World Service*, 22 October – Attachment 23).

The new governor was appointed during the conduct of the mayoral elections in Belogorsk in October 2008. On 21 October 2008 the *Itar-Tass* news agency reported on some details of the appointment by Russian President Dmitry Medvedev of Oleg Kozhemyako as governor of the Amur region. Kozhemyako was sworn in on 20 October 2008 in an extraordinary session of the Amur assembly, following a vote of the 39 deputies dominated by the United Russia party. Previously, on 16 October 2008, Russian president Dmitry Medvedev had accepted the resignation of the previous governor Nikolai Kolesov and appointed 36-year old Kozhemyako as acting head of the region:

Oleg Kozhemyako was sworn in as governor of the Amur region on Monday, an official in the press service of the Legislative Assembly of the region told Itar-Tass.

The governor regards as one of his main tasks “restoring people’s confidence in the authorities.” He stated this at a briefing after the inauguration ceremony. Kozhemyako has said there are “many problems” in the Amur area.

The extraordinary session of the Legislative Assembly of the Amur region vested Kozhemyako with governor’s powers on Monday as a result of a secret ballot voting of 22 to 9 in his favour. Thirty-one deputies of the 36 participated in the session. The candidate had to earn at least 19 votes to receive the post.

Past Thursday Russian President Dmitry Medvedev signed the decree “On early termination of powers of Amur region governor,” accepting the resignation of Nikolai Kolesov and appointing 36-year old Kozhemyako as acting head of the region “until the coming into office of a person vested in gubernatorial powers.” On the same day Kozhemyako’s candidature was suggested to the regional parliament.

Oleg Safonov, the presidential envoy in the Far Eastern Federal District, presented Oleg Kozhemyako to the Legislative Assembly on Monday.

The candidate to governor’s post took part on Sunday in the meetings of all committees, answered questions of regional deputies and met with party factions in the Legislative Assembly. United Russia’s faction of 25 deputies declared in the candidate’s support and this decided the voting in Kozhemyako’s favour.

In 2005-2007 Oleg Kozhemyako was governor of the Koryak Autonomous Area and held that post until the merger of the Kamchatka region and the Koryak area into one entity of the Russian Federation in 2007. He worked until recently as deputy chief of the Russian president's administration ('New governor of Amur Region Oleg Kozhemyako assumes office' 2008, *DV Times*, source: *Itar-Tass*, 21 October http://dvtimes.org/New_governor_of_Amur_Region_Oleg_Kozhemyako_assumes_office_89272.html – Accessed 23 July 2009 – Attachment 24).

In May 2007, President Putin dismissed the then Amur governor Leonid Kolesov and appointed Nikolai Kolesov to the position ('Amur Parliament Speaker Surprised By Putin's Choice of Governor' 2007, *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty* website, 20 May <http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1143881.html> – Accessed 29 July 2009 – Attachment 25; 'Amur Legislature Confirms New Governor' 2007, *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty* website, 1 June <http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1143883.html> – Accessed 29 July 2009 – Attachment 26).

Involvement of the Governor of the Amur Region and the United Russian Party in mayoral elections in Belogorsk:

No information was found on the involvement of either the Governor of the Amur Region or the United Russian Party in mayoral elections in Belogorsk. A report by the Russian independent media monitoring company *WPS* on all the regional and municipal elections which were held on 12 October 2008, includes the following on the United Russia party's results in municipal and mayoral elections:

This autumn's combined voting day in Russia was Sunday, October 12. The United Russia party won regional legislature elections in five regions. The election performance of the other three parties represented in the federal parliament improved in all regions except Chechnya and the Kemerovo region, which observers described as "anomalous."

Regional legislature elections were held in Chechnya, the Trans-Baikal territory, the Irkutsk region, the Kemerovo region, and the Sakhalin region. Mayoral elections were held in four regional capitals: Vologda, Magadan, Stavropol, and Khabarovsk. **There were also a number of minor municipal elections and by-elections.**

...In *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, Central Electoral Commission (CEC) member Elena Dubrovina says **that United Russia's relatively low results were due to the absence of an ideological component in regional elections: "There is none at all at the municipal level.** The lower the level of elections, the more often people base their votes on the actual state of affairs in their regions. If United Russia's top candidate is a regional leader who has been in power for years, but road-building promises have not been kept, people won't vote for him."

...According to *Lenta.ru*, the most important elections at the municipal level were the mayoral elections in four regional capitals. United Russia's incumbents were re-elected with overwhelming majorities in three of these cities: Magadan Mayor Vladimir Pechenyi with 85.9% of the vote, Khabarovsk Mayor Alexander Sokolov with 79.89%, and Nikolai Paltsev in Stavropol – no longer acting mayor, having defeated the CPRF candidate by 73% to 15%.

United Russia's candidate won in Vologda as well, but Yevgeny Shulepov's results were more modest: around 56% of the vote, closely followed by the CPRF and LDPR candidates who finished second and third.

The only shock defeat for United Russia happened in the mayoral election of Nizhny Tagil (Sverdlovsk region). Alexei Chekanov, a regional lawmaker officially nominated by United Russia, lost to independent candidate Valentina Isayeva (deputy speaker of the municipal legislature). Then again, Isayeva is also a United Russia member (Sedunova, G. 2008, 'Regional elections: parties encounter an "electoral anomaly"', *WPS Agency* website, 17 October <http://www.wps.ru/en/pp/politruk/index.html> – Accessed 29 July 2009 – Attachment 27).

In articles based on local elections prior to those in 2008, Cameron Ross has concluded that "Clientelism, not party politics, dominates Russian local government"; and that "parties played a relatively minor role in the 2004-2005 round of municipal elections"; but that "in my study of seventy mayors of capital cities (in post as of March 2007), sixty-two were members of a political party, and of these, fifty-nine were members of United Russia" (Ross, C. 2009, 'Municipal elections and electoral and authoritarianism under Putin' in *Federalism and Local Politics in Russia*, eds. C. Ross & A. Campbell, Routledge, London, p.292 – Attachment 8; Ross, C. 2007, 'From Party and State Domination to Putin's 'Power Vertical' : The Subjugation of Mayors in Communist and Post Communist Russia' in *Heads of the Local State Mayors, Provosts and Burgomasters since 1800*, eds. J. Garrard, Ashgate, England, p.184 – Attachment 9). In his 2009 article Ross provides the following assessment on this the issue of party membership and the United Russia party:

Party membership of municipal councils and administrations

In the territory of the Russian Federation in 2004, 1,538 regional and 5,328 local branches of political parties were registered. **However, parties played a relatively minor role in the 2004-5 round of municipal elections.** The most active parties were United Russia (UR), the Communist Party of the Russian Federation (CPRF), the Liberal Democratic Party of Russia (LDPR), and Motherland (Rodina). Also taking part to a lesser degree were the regional branches of the Russian Party of Pensioners (RPP), the Russian Party of Life (RPL), the Agrarian Party of Russia (APR), Yabloko, and the Union of Right Forces (SPS). There were also a host of other minor parties, which fielded less than 1 per cent of the total number of candidates. **However, only 17 per cent of candidates to- local councils and 8.9 per cent .of those standing for posts as heads of local municipalities stood on a party ticket.** Moreover, of the 198,815 elected deputies just 18.6 per cent were party members and of the 13,655 elected heads of local municipalities, only 20.2 per cent declared a party affiliation.

...The dominance of United Russia

Where parties did compete, United Russia was by far the most active and successful. In total, as Table 13.3 demonstrates, in the elections to municipal councils it won 15.2 per cent of the seats in rural settlements, 17 per cent in city settlements, 15.4 per cent in municipal raions and 17.5 per cent in city okrugs. **In elections for heads of municipalities the percentage of votes for United Russia were all slightly higher:** 16.7 per cent in rural settlements, 20.1 per cent in city settlements, 20.8 per cent in municipal raions, and 21.0 per cent in city okrugs. As can be seen the Communists (CPRF) came a very distant second with figures ranging from 0.6 to 4.24 per cent. All the other parties had a token representation of less than 1 per cent.

...However, many parties declared that their actual electoral support was much higher than the above official data would suggest. Many of the so called 'independent candidates', it is claimed, were in fact party members.

...Party competition was also much greater in the capital cities of the federal subjects where there were fierce battles for power. Thus for example, in Izhevsk, the capital city of

Udmurtiya, 223 candidates contested the 42 seats for the City Council in the elections of 16 October 2005. **Party membership is also much higher amongst the mayors of capital cities. Thus, for example, in my study of seventy mayors of capital cities (in post as of March 2007), sixty-two were members of a political party, and of these, fifty-nine were members of United Russia: two were members of ‘A Just Russia’, and one was a member of the ‘People’s Will’ party** (Ross, C. 2009, ‘Municipal elections and electoral and authoritarianism under Putin’ in *Federalism and Local Politics in Russia*, eds. C. Ross & A. Campbell, Routledge, London, p.294 – Attachment 8).

In the recent March 2009 mayoral elections for the Amur capital of Blagoveshchensk, the United Russia candidate was successful:

Disorder in the Mayoral Elections

Far more interesting were the municipal elections, where the degree of “cleansing” of the political field overall was lower than on the regional level, and where in many regions the main political and interpersonal rivalries were shifted.

In a number of cities, mayors currently in office were convincingly reelected: V. Gorodetskiy in Novosibirsk, A. Migulya in Blagoveshchensk, A. Vinnikov in Birobidzhan, A. Mikhalev in Chita, M. Yuryevich in Chelyabinsk. On this occasion they were formally nominated from **United Russia**, but they would have won had they been self-nominated or on the slate of any other party (‘Website examines results of regional elections, performance of One Russia’, 2009, *BBC Monitoring Former Soviet Union*, source: *Gazeta.ru* website, 10 March – Attachment 28).

11. Do you have to register if you move to another city in Russia?

The residence registration system introduced into law in Russia in 1993, whereby a person is required to register their temporary or permanent residence at a new location with local authorities within a specified time, remains in place. Reports provided below indicate that the granting of residence registration is the responsibility of the police and Federal Migration Service (US Department of State 2009, *2008 Human Rights Report: Russia*, 25 February, ‘Internally Displaced Persons, Protection of Refugees, Stateless Persons’ – Attachment 29; United States Committee for Refugees and Immigrants 2008, *World Refugee Survey 2008 – Russian Federation*, UNHCR website, 19 June <http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/485f50ccc.html> – Accessed 28 July 2009 – Attachment 30; Niaz, A. (undated), ‘Russian Federation – Freedom of movement within state territory’, Legislationonline website <http://www.legislationonline.org/topics/country/7/topic/10/subtopic/44> – Accessed 24 July 2009 – Attachment 31).

A brief summary on the use of the internal passport and residence registration system in Russia is provided in a June 2008 report on displaced persons from Chechnya, written by Nadine Walicki for the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre. According to this report, residence registration is stamped in the internal passport by the Federal Migration Service (FMS) authorities; in order to register at a new residence a person must first de-register from their previous residence; and registration is in practice required to access some basic services:

Internal passport

An internal passport is the main compulsory document confirming identity and residence of citizens within the country. Citizens of the Russian Federation are first issued the passport at 14 years of age, and must renew it at the ages of 20 and 45. They may apply for the document at their local office of the Federal Migration Service by submitting an application, a copy of their birth certificate, personal photographs and an excerpt from the housing register confirming their residence. They may renew the document at the same office by submitting an application, the passport to be renewed, personal photographs and a document confirming the basis for renewal of the passport.

..Renewal may necessitate a journey to Chechnya despite recent legislation which should have made this unnecessary. In the past, IDPs with permanent residence registration in Chechnya had to return there to renew their internal passport...However, since December 2006, people have been able to renew their internal passport from their current place of residence, regardless of whether they are permanently registered there. Despite this legislation, a displaced man in Rostov explained how his daughter and son had been refused internal passports after 2006 since they had only temporary residence registration in Rostov. They had applied to the court for their passports to be issued at their current place of residence and were awaiting a decision.

Residence registration

...The Soviet Union's *propiska* system, whereby the State granted residency, was replaced in 1993 by a system whereby all people living or staying in the Russian Federation had to register at a temporary or permanent address. **This registration is stamped in Russian citizens' internal passport by the local office of Federal Migration Service and, in practice, gives access to health care, employment, pensions and education, and other benefits and services** [23]. Temporary registration is valid for a determined period, while permanent registration is valid for an indefinite period. **In order to register at a new residence, one must first de-register from their previous residence.**

Some regions introduced their own residence registration requirements that were not always in line with federal law. Moscow has long been the city of choice for migrants as there is the perception that there is a better chance of finding a job there. In order to control population movements to and from the city, the residence registration rules of the City of Moscow are designed to limit the number of people registering. Registration has been limited by the requirement that people pay for their utilities one year in advance, though this demand is illegal. Some IDPs interviewed could not pay this amount and were therefore prevented from registering their residence. In the past registration was also only issued to those who had relatives in Moscow, but now tenants of municipal apartments can register one person per six square metres and owners of apartments can register as many people as they like. While in 1996 illegal restrictions on registration were in force in an estimated 30 regions, some of the inconsistencies between regional and federal law were removed after a legislation review was conducted in 200126.

Citizens can stay in a location away from their registered residence for up to 90 days, after which they must re-register with the authorities. However, some IDPs interviewed were still registered in Chechnya, and one ethnic Chechen family in Moscow was travelling to Chechnya every three months since they had been unable to register their residence in Moscow.

Federal law provides that lack of registration at the place of residence cannot obstruct citizens' rights and freedoms. Article 3 of the 1993 law entitled "On the right of citizens to freedom of movement, choice of place of arrival and residence" states:

“Citizens of the Russian Federation are required to register at their place of arrival and place of residence in the Russian Federation. Registration or the lack thereof cannot serve as a basis for the limitation of, or a condition for the realization of, rights and freedoms of the citizens provided for by the Constitution of the Russian Federation, laws of the Russian Federation and the Constitutions and laws of republics within the Russian Federation.” [unofficial translation]

Nonetheless, the lack of residence registration limits the ability of IDPs to enjoy their rights. IDPs who did not have residence registration reported difficulties in exercising their economic and social rights, including, for example, using free medical services, finding work in the official market, receiving a pension, opening a bank account and installing a telephone line. In 2006, the Council of Europe’s European Commission against Racism and Intolerance explained how people without residence registration are refused access to public services:

“ECRI expresses its deep concern at information according to which in some areas registration remains a prerequisite for the exercise of a wide range of basic rights in contradiction with the 1993 Russian Federal Law on the freedom of movement and choice of residence. It means that a person without registration can be refused access to many public services. In the case of state pensions and allowances, the law apparently states that they cannot be granted in the absence of residence registration. However, NGOs have indicated that in all other cases, the law does not stipulate residence registration as a prerequisite for public service. In general, it even states the contrary. Nevertheless, people with no registration are confronted with a refusal from public officials when they try to access public services such as social insurance, health protection medical aid and in some extreme cases, even emergency medical assistance. Employers are also said to refuse to employ a person without registration” (Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre 2008, *Struggling to integrate: Displaced people from Chechnya living in other areas of the Russian Federation*, June, pp.12-15 [http://www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004CE90B/%28httpDocuments%29/57F040FE352B955EC12574D7004E1DCE/\\$file/Russia_SCR_Jun08.pdf](http://www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004CE90B/%28httpDocuments%29/57F040FE352B955EC12574D7004E1DCE/$file/Russia_SCR_Jun08.pdf) – Accessed 24 July 2009 – Attachment 32).

Pages 8-9 of this report contains a table setting out the public services which in practice require residence registration before they can be received: employment in official labour market; unemployment benefit; medical policy; medical care; access list for those in need of improved housing; pension; vote; and a bank account (Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre 2008, *Struggling to Integrate: Displaced people from Chechnya living in other areas of the Russian Federation*, June, pp.8-9 [http://www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004CE90B/%28httpDocuments%29/57F040FE352B955EC12574D7004E1DCE/\\$file/Russia_SCR_Jun08.pdf](http://www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004CE90B/%28httpDocuments%29/57F040FE352B955EC12574D7004E1DCE/$file/Russia_SCR_Jun08.pdf) – Accessed 24 July 2009 – Attachment 32).

According to the September 2008 UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination report, the granting of residence registration is the responsibility of the police: “the Committee is concerned about reports that, in practice, the enjoyment of many rights and benefits depend on registration, and that the police is often reluctant to grant residence registration to Chechens and other persons originating from the Caucasus, Roma, Meshketian Turks, Yezidis, Kurds and Hemshils in Krasnodar Krai, Tajiks, non-citizens from Africa and Asia, as well as asylum-seekers and refugees” (UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) 2008, *Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under article 9 of the Convention: International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination: concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination: Russian Federation*, UNHCR website, 22 September,

para.22, CERD/C/RUS/CO/19 <http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/48ef5f4d2.html> – Accessed 28 July 2009 – Attachment 33).

Robin Oakley, in his 2008 Council of Europe publication, *Policing and minorities in the Russian Federation – Key international guidance documents and case studies*, makes the following points of the relationship between police and residence registration:

- All persons are required to register their place of residence with the local police, who are responsible for registering residents;
- The registration appears as a stamp on the identity document (internal passport);
- Registration is obligatory “but only for the purpose of information”;
- Police “often” add elements not required by law such as fingerprints and photos;
- Police are in charge not only of registration “but also of checking whether people are duly registered”;
- Lack of registration is an administrative offence punishable with a fine (Oakley, R. 2008, *Policing and minorities in the Russian Federation – Key international guidance documents and case studies*, Strasbourg, Council of Europe, pp.125-127, Google books website http://books.google.com.au/books?id=BsjobIcsRFgC&pg=PA1&dq=russia+residence+registration+police++2009+OR+2008+OR+2007&source=gbs_selected_pages&cad=3 – Accessed 28 July 2009 – Attachment 34).

The current US State Department human rights report (published 25 February 2009) refers to the registration system in its summary of freedom of movement within Russia:

The law provides for these rights; however, the government placed restrictions on freedom of movement within the country and on migration. The government cooperated with the UNHCR and other humanitarian organizations in providing protection and assistance to internally displaced persons, refugees, returning refugees, asylum seekers, stateless persons, and other persons of concern.

All adults must carry government-issued internal passports while traveling internally and must register with the local authorities within a specified time of their arrival at a new location. Authorities often refused to provide governmental services to individuals without internal passports or proper registration. The official grace period for registration given to an individual arriving in a new location is 90 days; however, darker-skinned persons from the Caucasus or Central Asia were often singled out for document checks. There were credible reports that police arbitrarily imposed fines on unregistered persons in excess of legal requirements or demanded bribes from them.

Although the law gives citizens the right to choose their place of residence freely, many regional governments continued to restrict this right through residential registration rules that closely resembled Soviet-era regulations. **Citizens moving permanently must register to reside, work, or obtain government services and benefits or education for their children in a specific area within seven days of moving there; those who are temporarily residing in a new place may stay for only 90 days before they must register.** Citizens changing residence within the country and migrants, as well as persons with a legal claim to citizenship who decide to move to the country from other former Soviet republics, often faced great difficulties or simply were not permitted to register in some cities. Corruption in the registration process in local police precincts remained a problem. There were frequent reports of police demanding bribes when processing registration applications and during spot checks for registration documentation (US Department of State 2009, *2008 Human Rights Report*:

Russia, 'Freedom of Movement within the Country, 25 February, 'Internally Displaced Persons, Protection of Refugees, Stateless Persons' – Attachment 29).

List of Sources Consulted

Internet Sources:

Government Information & Reports

Election Commissions of Subjects of the Russian Federation – Amur Region website
<http://www.amur.izbirkom.ru/>

United Nations (UN)

UNHCR website <http://www.unhcr.org/>

Non-Government Organisations

Legislationonline website <http://www.legislationline.org/>

International News & Politics

Kommersant website <http://www.kommersant.com/>

The Guardian <http://www.guardian.co.uk>

The Washington Post <http://www.washingtonpost.com/>

Region Specific Links

Russia: All Regions Trade & Investment Guide website <http://www.russiasregions.com/>

Fedpress.com website <http://fedpress.ru/>

Pravda (Amur) website <http://www.amurpravda.ru/>

DV Times <http://dvtimes.org/>

Topic Specific Links

City Mayors website <http://www.citymayors.com/government/>

Belogorsk City website <http://www.belogorck.ru/>

Search Engines

Google search engine <http://www.google.com.au/>

Databases:

FACTIVA (news database)

BACIS (DIAC Country Information database)

REFINFO (IRBDC (Canada) Country Information database)

ISYS (RRT Research & Information database, including Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, US Department of State Reports)

RRT Library Catalogue

List of Attachments

1. 'Amur Region – General Information' (undated), *Kommersant* website
http://www.kommersant.com/t-34/r_5/n_377/Amur_Region/303 – Accessed 23 July 2009.
2. 'Amur Region' (undated), Russia: All Regions Trade & Investment Guide website
<http://www.russiasregions.com/79%20Amur%20Region.pdf> – Accessed 23 July 2009.

3. United Nations 2004, 'Russian Federation', Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada website <http://www.un.org/Depts/Cartographic/map/profile/russia.pdf> – Accessed 23 July 2009.
4. 'Belogorsk: Amur Region' 2000, *Microsoft Encarta Interactive Atlas*.
5. Stevens, A. 2006, 'Local government in Russia: Its powers vary across the country', City Mayors website, 18 August http://www.citymayors.com/government/russia_government.html – Accessed 27 July 2009.
6. 'Vice Mayor/ Заместители главы города' 2009, Belogorsk City website http://www.belogorck.ru/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=54&Itemid=45 – Accessed 27 July 2009.
7. 'Contacts: Administration of municipal formation town Belogorsk' (undated), Belogorsk city website http://www.belogorck.ru/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=124&Itemid=49 – Accessed 27 July 2009.
8. Ross, C. 2009, 'Municipal elections and electoral and authoritarianism under Putin' in *Federalism and Local Politics in Russia*, eds. C. Ross & A. Campbell, Routledge, London, pp.284-304.
9. Ross, C. 2007, 'From Party and State Domination to Putin's 'Power Vertical' : The Subjugation of Mayors in Communist and Post Communist Russia' in *Heads of the Local State Mayors, Provosts and Burgomasters since 1800*, eds. J. Garrard, Ashgate, England, pp.173-190.
10. Savelyev, B. 2004, 'Belogorsk mayor re-elected in Sunday's Amur region polls', *ITAR-TASS World Service*, 11 October. (FACTIVA)
11. Savelyev, B. 2004, 'Elections to be held in 4 Amur municipal entities Sunday', *ITAR-TASS World Service*, 7 October. (FACTIVA)
12. 'Belogorsk District and City Belogorsk' (undated), Election Commissions of Subjects of the Russian Federation – Amur Region website <http://www.amur.izbirkom.ru/way/934355.html> – Accessed 21 July 2009.
13. Pan, P.P. 2009, 'Russian Voting Tinged with Green -Environment out muscles Kremlin Controls in Mayoral Election', *The Washington Post*, 10 April <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/04/09/AR2009040904524.html> – Accessed 27 July 2009.
14. Harding. L. 2009, 'Standard owner Alexander Lebedev disqualified from Sochi mayoral race', *The Guardian*, 13 April <http://www.guardian.co.uk/media/2009/apr/13/court-disqualifies-lebedev-sochi-mayor-race> – Accessed 27 July 2009.
15. '1- 29 October: Election Belogorsk' 2008, Election Commissions of Subjects of the Russian Federation – Amur Region website, 29 October

- <http://amur.izbirkom.ru/way/935191/sx/art/936801/cp/1/br/935171> – Accessed 21 July 2009.
16. ‘Местные выборы в Приамурье: пейзаж после 12 октября Local elections in Priamur’e: landscape after the October 12’ 2008, Fedpress.com website, 13 October http://fedpress.ru/federal/polit/vibori/id_117187.html – Accessed 27 July 2009.
 17. ‘At the elections in Belogorsk defeated Stanislav Melyukov’ 2009, Fedpress.com website, 27 October http://fedpress.ru/federal/polit/vibori/id_118759.html – Accessed 30 July 2009.
 18. ‘Head of municipal formation g.Belogorsk/ Мелюков Станислав Юрьевич Melyukov Stanislav Y.’ (undated), Belogorsk Municipality website http://www.belogorck.ru/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=27&Itemid=40 – Accessed 23 July 2009.
 19. ‘Stanislav Melyukov: “My motive – self”/Станислав Мелюков: “Мой мотив – самореализоваться”’ 2009, Pravda (Amur) website, 19 February <http://www.amurpravda.ru/articles/2009/02/19/14.html> – Accessed 27 July 2009.
 20. Barry, E. 2009, ‘Candidate Sues to Overturn Election Results’, *The New York Times*, 14 May http://www.nytimes.com/2009/05/15/world/europe/15briefs-russia.html?_r=1 – Accessed 27 July 2009.
 21. Barry, E. 2009, ‘Kremlin’s Candidate Headed to Victory in Sochi’, *The New York Times*, 26 April <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/04/27/world/europe/27sochi.html> – Accessed 22 July 2009.
 22. ‘Губернатор Governor КОЖЕМЯКО Олег Николаевич KOZHEMYAKO Oleg Nikolayevich Губернатор Амурской области The Governor of the Amur Region’ (undated), The Government of the Amur Region website <http://translate.google.com/translate?sourceid=navclient&hl=en&u=http%3a%2f%2fwww%2eamurobl%2eru%2f> – Accessed 23 July 2009.
 23. ‘Amur Regional Governor dismisses local government’ 2008, *ITAR-TASS World Service*, 22 October. (FACTIVA)
 24. ‘New governor of Amur Region Oleg Kozhemyako assumes office’ 2008, *DV Times*, source: *Itar-Tass*, 21 October [http://dvtimes.org/New_governor_of_Amur_Region_Oleg_Kozhemyako_assumes_of_fice_89272.html](http://dvtimes.org/New_governor_of_Amur_Region_Oleg_Kozhemyako_assumes_office_89272.html) – Accessed 23 July 2009.
 25. ‘Amur Parliament Speaker Surprised by Putin’s Choice of Governor’ 2007, *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty* website, 20 May <http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1143881.html> – Accessed 29 July 2009.
 26. ‘Amur Legislature Confirms New Governor’ 2007, *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty* website, 1 June <http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1143883.html> – Accessed 29 July 2009.

27. Sedunova, G. 2008, 'Regional elections: parties encounter an "electoral anomaly"', *WPS Agency* website, 17 October <http://www.wps.ru/en/pp/politruk/index.html> – Accessed 29 July 2009.
28. 'Website examines results of regional elections, performance of One Russia', 2009, *BBC Monitoring Former Soviet Union*, source: *Gazeta.ru* website, 10 March. (FACTIVA)
29. US Department of State 2009, *2008 Human Rights Report: Russia*, 25 February.
30. United States Committee for Refugees and Immigrants 2008, *World Refugee Survey 2008 – Russian Federation*, UNHCR website, 19 June <http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/485f50ccc.html> – Accessed 28 July 2009.
31. Niaz, A. (undated), 'Russian Federation – Freedom of movement within state territory', *Legislationonline* website <http://www.legislationline.org/topics/country/7/topic/10/subtopic/44> – Accessed 24 July 2009.
32. Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre 2008, *Struggling to Integrate: Displaced people from Chechnya living in other areas of the Russian Federation*, June, pp.8-9 [http://www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004CE90B/%28httpDocuments%29/57F040FE352B955EC12574D7004E1DCE/\\$file/Russia_SCR_Jun08.pdf](http://www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004CE90B/%28httpDocuments%29/57F040FE352B955EC12574D7004E1DCE/$file/Russia_SCR_Jun08.pdf) – Accessed 24 July 2009.
33. UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) 2008, *Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under article 9 of the Convention: International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination: concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination: Russian Federation*, UNHCR website, 22 September, para.22, CERD/C/RUS/CO/19 <http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/48ef5f4d2.html> – Accessed 28 July 2009.
34. Oakley, R. 2008, *Policing and minorities in the Russian Federation – Key international guidance documents and case studies*, Strasbourg, Council of Europe, pp.125-127, Google books website http://books.google.com.au/books?id=BsjobIcsRFgC&pg=PA1&dq=russia+residence+registration+police++2009+OR+2008+OR+2007&source=gbs_selected_pages&cad=3 – Accessed 28 July 2009.
35. 'Medvedev urges Chechen local self-gvt bodies formation by Oct 2009' 2008, *ITAR-TASS World Service*, 5 November. (FACTIVA)
36. Ross, C. 2007, 'Municipal Reform in the Russian Federation and Putin's "Electoral Vertical"', *Demokratizatsiya*, Spring, pp.191-208.