

**THE NORTH CAUCASUS:  
THE CHALLENGES OF INTEGRATION (I),  
ETHNICITY AND CONFLICT**

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## THE NORTH CAUCASUS: THE CHALLENGES OF INTEGRATION (I), ETHNICITY AND CONFLICT

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Europe's deadliest conflicts are in Russia's North Caucasus region, and the killing is unlikely to end soon. The state has fought back against attacks, first claimed by Chechen separatists, now the work of jihad-inspired insurgents, that have hit Moscow, other major cities and many Caucasus communities. But its security-focused counter-insurgency strategy is insufficient to address the multiple causes of a conflict fed by ethnic, religious, political and economic grievances that need comprehensive, flexible policy responses. Moscow is increasingly aware of the challenge and is testing new approaches to better integrate a region finally brought into the Russian Empire only in the nineteenth century and that has historically been a problem for the Russian state. Diversity in religion, ethnicity, historical experience and political allegiances and aspirations complicate efforts to alleviate local tensions and integrate it more with the rest of the country. Understanding this pluralism is essential for designing and implementing policies and laws that advance conflict resolution rather than make differences more irreconcilable.

The challenge of ethnic nationalism has been most evident in Chechnya where two bloody wars caused tens of thousands of deaths. During the early 1990s, separatists sought full independence for their republic, but the failure of their state-building project and the ruthless manner in which Moscow fought transformed the nationalist cause into an Islamist one, with a jihadi component. Chechen fighters began to use terrorism widely, and the state responded with massive, indiscriminate force. After 2003, it adopted a policy of Chechenisation, transferring significant political, administrative and security functions to ethnic Chechens. Today the republic has gone through a major reconstruction, and its head, Ramzan Kadyrov, wields virtually unlimited power. Governance and rule of law remain major concerns, but human loss is significantly reduced. The effects of the ongoing insurgency continue to be felt across the North Caucasus, where it has spurred mobilisation around fundamentalist Islam.

Several inter-ethnic conflicts that developed at the end of the Soviet Union remain unresolved, continuing to fuel tensions. The Ingush-Ossetian conflict led to full-fledged

war in 1992, as both groups asserted claims over the Prigorodny district. Though Russia invested large sums to return displaced persons and rehabilitate their communities, the Ingush in Prigorodny remain unintegrated in the rest of North Ossetia. Exclusionary historical narratives and competition over land and decision-making, fuel conflicts in other multi-ethnic republics, especially Dagestan, Kabardino-Balkaria and Stavropol Krai. Some of the groups maintain maximalist aspirations, including the change of internal borders and establishment of new ethnically-identified entities.

Inter-ethnic tensions do not presently threaten major violence, but they may grow with the recent revival of national movements that were particularly strong in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Though political parties based on national or religious identity are prohibited, a new law simplifying registration is likely to make it easier for politicians with nationalist agendas to infiltrate small parties. Large investments and a return to regional elections are likely to facilitate ethnic competition and mobilisation if local communities feel their rights and interests are not adequately protected by the state. Already groups such as the Nogays, Kumyks, and Lezgins in Dagestan and the Circassians and Cossacks are sharpening their organisational capacity and political demands that tend to focus on rehabilitation and justice, state support for native language and culture, development, greater autonomy and access to land. Tensions are beginning to appear where the legal framework is not sufficient to address these, existing laws are not implemented, and police and local administrative capacity are perceived as ethnically biased and corrupt.

Many of these disputes and tensions feed into the Islamist insurgency that causes most of today's violence. Parts of the younger generation that twenty years ago would have joined nationalist movements to address their grievances have become disenchanted with those movements and choose to join the Islamist insurgency instead. It increasingly operates across the entire region, attracting youth of all ethnicities, and attacking not only federal forces and local police, but also civil servants and elites who disagree with its fundamentalist interpretation of Islam.

A day rarely goes by without an attack on a Russian security official or the killing of an alleged insurgent in a counter-terrorist operation. Some 750 people were killed in 2011, and with over 500 hundred deaths in the first eight months of 2012, there appears to be little chance of a let-up in violence that has spread to parts of the North Caucasus that were peaceful only a few years ago. The threat of jihadi groups is not unique to Russia or the North Caucasus, of course, and many governments are looking for effective means to cope with it. Russia's counter-terrorism policies have primarily focused on eradicating insurgents through heavy-handed law enforcement measures, but the need for a more comprehensive approach is becoming evident in Moscow and among local leaders.

The North Caucasus is also wracked by corrupt institutions, ineffective governance, poor rule of law and uneven economic development in a combination that leaves a vacuum some dissatisfied youth seek to fill by joining groups that appear to have resolute aims. The weakness of the institutional and economic system further undermines Moscow's efforts to implement policies to better integrate the region and combat extremism. These systemic problems will also need to be addressed for any conflict resolution effort to succeed.

This first report of Crisis Group's North Caucasus project outlines the region's ethnic and national groups, their grievances and conflicts. The simultaneously published second report analyses the Islamic factor in detail: the growth of fundamentalist Islam (mainly Salafism); radicalisation of parts of the community; the insurgency; and the state's counter-insurgency effort, which mainly aims to eradicate extremism via hard-security methods but is beginning to also use softer means, including dialogue with and rehabilitation of ex-fighters. A subsequent report will elaborate on the quality of regional governance, the rule of law, the economy and Moscow's regional policies and offer policy recommendations for all three parts of the series.

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

## THE NORTH CAUCASUS: THE CHALLENGES OF INTEGRATION (I), ETHNICITY AND CONFLICT

### I. INTRODUCTION

Russia's North Caucasus region is the scene of Europe's deadliest conflicts. In 2011 there were at least 1,378 casualties, including 750 deaths, among security forces, civilians and insurgents; from January to 1 September 2012, 516 people were killed and 397 wounded. In the year's single deadliest incident, a brother-sister pair blew themselves up in Makhachkala, the capital of Dagestan, on 3 May, killing thirteen and injuring over 100.<sup>1</sup> The region has been extremely volatile since the break-up of the Soviet Union two decades ago. Violence was worst in Chechnya, a republic that suffered two all-out wars and where the official counter-terrorist operation ended only in 2009. But conflict has been expanding and deepening across the region, spreading to parts that until recently were relatively peaceful. While the Islamist insurgency is the most visible expression of instability, it feeds on unresolved tensions and disputes between multiple ethnic groups, social prob-

lems and the difficulty the Russian state has historically had to integrate the region.

Even today many living in other parts of the Russian Federation consider the North Caucasus an inner abroad: different, destabilising and insufficiently loyal. Many residents of the region feel alienated, due to discrimination and xenophobia. Conflicts, instability and unemployment cause significant migration into the neighbouring Stavropol Krai, Krasnodar Krai, and Rostov region (oblast) and Russia's big cities, increasing ethnic tensions, nationalist rhetoric and violence. Anti-Caucasian sentiment became prominent in the 2010 Manezhnaya Square riot and the 2011 Russian Duma election campaign. That same year the Russian Academy of Sciences published a finding that 65 per cent of ethnic Russians support granting the right of secession "to those peoples who do not want to live peacefully together".<sup>2</sup>

Lack of integration is also a problem within the North Caucasus. A host of ethnic and national groups with their own identities, grievances and aspirations live there. Ethnic differences led to deadly conflict in the early post-Soviet years but now mainly manifest themselves in mass protest rallies, brawls, attacks on individuals, spontaneous takeovers of land, political confrontation and exclusionary, threatening rhetoric. Ethnicity is the central building block of local identities, influencing political and social status. Groups such as the Balkars, Chechens, Circassians, Ingush, Kabardins, Karachays, Ossetians, Russians and the peoples of Dagestan are often settled compactly and have a clear concept of their ethnic homeland, a list of historical grievances and current disputes with neighbours that predispose them to strong, often exclusionary, identity politics. Elites sometimes instrumentalise and try to capitalise on ethnic claims, but if ignored, the disputes risk contributing to instability or becoming their own source of violence.

<sup>1</sup> "В ходе вооруженного конфликта на Северном Кавказе в 2011 году погибли и были ранены 1378 человек" ["1,378 persons killed and injured during the armed conflict in the North Caucasus in 2011"], Caucasian Knot, www.kavkaz-uzel.ru, 12 January 2012. "Жертвами вооруженного конфликта на Северном Кавказе в первом квартале 2012 года стали 258 человек" ["258 persons killed and injured during the armed conflict in the North Caucasus in the first quarter of 2012"], *ibid*, 12 April 2012. "Жертвами вооруженного конфликта на Северном Кавказе во втором квартале 2012 года стали 355 человек" ["355 persons killed and injured during the armed conflict in the North Caucasus in the second quarter of 2012"], *ibid*, 11 July 2012. "Жертвами вооруженного конфликта на Северном Кавказе в июле стали 118 человек" ["118 persons killed and injured during the armed conflict in the North Caucasus in July"], *ibid*, 4 August 2012. "В августе жертвами вооруженного конфликта на Северном Кавказе стали 182 человека" ["In August 182 persons were killed and injured during the armed conflict in the North Caucasus"], *ibid*, 5 September 2012. "НАК: уничтожен организатор майского теракта в Махачкале" ["NAC: the organizer of the May terrorist attack in Makhachkala has been killed"], RIA Novosti, 16 May 2012. Caucasian Knot is one of several, sometimes conflicting sources of statistics on casualties in the North Caucasus. Crisis Group use its data in this report, since it applies a consistent methodology.

<sup>2</sup> Disorders in Manezhnaya Square in Moscow in December 2010 brought together thousands of youths, mainly football fans and nationalists, in protest against the killing of a Russian football fan by a man of Caucasian origin. It resulted in ethnically motivated violence in Moscow and other Russian cities. Ivan Sukhov, "Боевая готовность" ["Combat readiness"], Moskovskie Novosti (online), 23 June 2011.

Unsettled conflicts between ethnic groups – for example, in the Prigorodny district of North Ossetia<sup>3</sup> and the Kazbekovsky district of Dagestan, in Kabardino-Balkaria and in Stavropol Krai – are not causing many deaths today. But the parties are frustrated by how land has been distributed or territorial issues resolved; and some strive to change the administrative borders of existing republics, though not to secede from the Russian Federation. National movements experiencing a revival over the past few years seek redress from the state and justice system, which are often ill equipped to address their demands and grievances, especially land disputes. Thus, some turn to Islamic law (Sharia), further eroding the legitimacy of the secular state and its law, which in the minds of a fair number of North Caucasians compete with alternative concepts of Islamic statehood.

The Islamist insurgency feeds on ethnic disputes and tensions. Insurgents have targeted areas where ethnic tensions exist to exacerbate them further, as in North Ossetia, where terrorist attacks aim to fuel Ingush-Ossetian clashes. Radical websites appeal to affected populations and use Islamist rhetoric to transform old ethnic grievances and persuade youth to join the fight (jihad) against the state and secular system. Young people are vulnerable in part because they feel that neither national leaders nor legal mechanisms have adequately addressed their ethnic claims.

Salafi Islam has existed throughout the region since before the break-up of the Soviet Union, but elements radicalised over the past decade, became experienced in use of violence and focused on fighting the state and its representatives to create an Islamic Caliphate. The spread of the insurgency from Chechnya throughout the North Caucasus was largely completed by 2005. In the last three years, violence has dramatically increased in Dagestan, with almost daily attacks and explosions. Increase of incidents in the western part of the region suggests the insurgency may be planning to act on its threat to hit the 2014 Sochi Olympics.

Russia's national counter-insurgency concept argues that terrorism is caused by existing "inter-ethnic, inter-confessional and other social cleavages",<sup>4</sup> but its implementation has mostly been heavy-handed, further fuelling conflict. Some leaders agree better integration of the region within the Federation is essential for security. In November 2011, then-President Medvedev acknowledged the dramatic deterioration of ethnic relations in Russia and hinted at reestablishment of the nationalities ministry responsible for eth-

nicity issues in 1994-2001.<sup>5</sup> He and other senior officials have spoken of unemployment, corruption, and poor economic development as causes of the violence.<sup>6</sup> In June 2010 Russia's Council of Europe delegation voted for a report on human rights in the region that critically described violence, excessive force by security services and disappearances.<sup>7</sup> Since then, more inclusive religious policies and new mechanisms for giving insurgents a chance to return to peaceful life have been attempted and vigorous efforts to facilitate social and economic development undertaken or planned.

Crisis Group's North Caucasus project will produce analytical reports and, ultimately, detailed recommendations to advance peaceful and sustainable resolution of the region's ethnic, sectarian and insurgency-related conflicts. The initial three-part series will describe the challenges of integrating the North Caucasus within the broader Russian Federation and integrating its local societies. The ethnic clashes and tensions affect comparatively small groups (all except the Chechens are under one million), but the cleavages they produce cut deep, and their consequences can be ruinous. The first two, background, parts of the series are being published simultaneously. This initial report focuses on ethno-cultural diversity; the tangled relations between ethnic and national groups; and the revival of national movements and their claims in reaction to investment, border agreements and land distribution.

The second report analyses the Islamic factor, the growth of Salafism and radicalisation of parts of the community; the insurgency, its terrorist activity and methods; and the government's counter-insurgency operations, including its two main approaches: the one applied mainly in Chechnya aimed at eliminating fighters and eradicating Salafism, the other in Dagestan, which along with law-enforcement measures, seeks to transform the enemy by rehabilitating fighters, providing greater religious freedoms and dialogue with moderate Salafi communities. The third report, to be published in early 2013, will examine the region's political and economic situation, including an analysis of the government's response to the region's conflict challenges.

<sup>3</sup> Officially North Ossetia is the Republic of North Ossetia-Alania.

<sup>4</sup> "The concept of countering terrorism in the Russian Federation" (approved by the president, 5 October 2009), National Anti-terrorist Committee, [nak.fsb.ru/nac/documents/cjconcept.htm](http://nak.fsb.ru/nac/documents/cjconcept.htm).

<sup>5</sup> Instead, a President Council for Nationalities was established in June 2012, an advisory body to the federation president. "Создан Совет по делам национальностей" ["The Council for Nationalities has been established"], OPRF (Public chamber of the Russian Federation), 7 June 2012.

<sup>6</sup> "Медведев призвал уделять особое внимание безработице на Кавказе" ["Medvedev call to pay special attention to unemployment in the Caucasus"], RIA Novosti, 13 September 2011.

<sup>7</sup> "Дело закрыто. Российская делегация в ПАСЕ впервые поддержала резолюцию по Северному Кавказу" ["The case is closed. Russian delegation to PACE for the first time ever supported the resolution on North Caucasus"], Vremya Novosti (online), 23 June 2010. PACE is the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe.

Each part of the series focuses on a specific field – ethnicity, religious extremism, local institutions – and how it feeds into conflict. Together, they aim to analyse and disentangle the knots of complex disputes and assist the federal centre, regional authorities and non-state actors develop and apply more effective legislation, policies (including counter-insurgency measures) and practices. Specific recommendations relevant to the entire series will be published in the third report.

## **II. THE BASIC FRAMEWORK**

Ethno-cultural and religious diversity is often used to explain the violence in the North Caucasus. The region has a small population and land mass compared to other Russian Federal Districts but is very distinct, with its intricate system of numerous strong cultures, each with its own idea of historical homeland, identifiable hierarchy of ethno-cultural values, traditional institutions and practices, legal culture and religious awareness. Yet, in many instances, these characteristics have helped its people avoid conflict, cope with tensions and resolve them. Understanding the social dynamics in this pluralist setting is a prerequisite for a successful conflict resolution and integration policy.

The region is generally considered to coincide with the seven republics of the North Caucasus Federal District (NCFD).<sup>8</sup> However, the neighbouring regions of Adygea and Krasnodar Krai are often linked to it and suffer from similar, though less pronounced violence, so are included in Crisis Group analysis.

### **A. ETHNO-CULTURAL DIVERSITY**

#### **1. Ethnicity**

A region of high mountains, lowlands and steppes, the North Caucasus has a small, diverse population of 9.86 million. The most numerous of its dozens of national and ethnic groups are Russians (3,178,128), Chechens (1,335,183) and Avars (863,884).<sup>9</sup> The main indigenous ethnic groups are Adyghe, Avars, Balkars, Chechens, Circassians, Dargins, Ingush, Kabardins, Karachays, Kumyks, Laks, Lezgins, Nogays, Ossetians, Russians, Tats and Shapsugs. The most homogeneous republics are Chechnya and Ingushetia, the most diverse region is Dagestan, with over 30 distinct ethnic groups.<sup>10</sup>

Russian is the official state language, but republics also have their own state vernaculars, some of which belong to Nakh-Dagestani (North East Caucasus) and the Abkhaz-Adyghe (North West Caucasus) groups. Others speak Tur-

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<sup>8</sup> Chechnya, Ingushetia, Dagestan, Kabardino-Balkaria, Karachay-Cherkessia, North Ossetia and Stavropol Krai.

<sup>9</sup> These figures include Adygea. All-Russian population census of 2010, [www.perepis-2010.ru](http://www.perepis-2010.ru). This report uses data from the 2002 and 2010 censuses in the North Caucasus even though, in some of the regions and among some ethnic groups, the results were strongly inflated and modified by regional and ethnic elites.

<sup>10</sup> For a fuller listing of ethnic groups in the North Caucasus and their populations, see Appendix B below. 94 per cent of the population in Ingushetia is ethnic Ingush; in Chechnya 95.3 are ethnic Chechens. In Dagestan fourteen ethnic groups are recognised as indigenous people; fourteen more sub-ethnicities are included in the Avar group.

tic languages (Nogays, Kumyks, Karachays, Balkars), while Ossetian and Tat belong to the Iranian group of Indo-European languages. All use the Cyrillic alphabet.<sup>11</sup> The command of Russian is declining, especially in ethnically homogeneous republics, but it serves as the lingua franca. In multi-ethnic republics, the command of indigenous languages also tends to be decreasing. Linguistic rights are extensive, with republic languages used in schools, media and state institutions (such as courts). Some activists in local national movements have recently been urging more intensive and higher quality native language instruction in schools.

## 2. Religion

Islam, the majority's religion in five republics, is more prominent in the north east than the west but is becoming more omnipresent overall. Most follow the Hanafi and Shafi'i Sunni *madhhabs* (Muslim school of law and jurisprudence).<sup>12</sup> Sufism is widespread in Chechnya, Ingushetia and Dagestan; and Salafi religious groups are becoming more visible, especially in Dagestan.<sup>13</sup> Conversion occurred at different times, and religious practices are often interwoven with ethnic traditions and pagan beliefs.<sup>14</sup> During the Soviet period, clergy was prosecuted or physically exterminated, but Islam survived, best of all in Dagestan, as well as in Chechnya and Ingushetia.<sup>15</sup>

Ramadan-bayram and Kurban-bayram are official holidays, mosques have grown more than a hundred-fold since the 1980s, and prayer rooms abound at workplaces, gasoline stations and on university campuses.<sup>16</sup> Islamic education is developed and supported by the state, Islamic universities exist in every republic, and thousands perform the *hajj* to Mecca every year. North Caucasus leaders, especially in the east, often emphasise their religiosity, attend religious events and fast during Ramadan.

The Ossetians and Russians are the main groups that are predominantly Christian Orthodox.<sup>17</sup> The Russian Orthodox Church is influential among the region's Christians, but attempts to impose the classical Orthodox dogma have at times clashed with the spiritual needs of local believers. In November 2011, the local archbishop (Zosima) and an Ossetian parish came into conflict when the latter, with the support of North Ossetia's head,<sup>18</sup> successfully protested the relocation of their abbot (Archimandrite Anthony), a supporter of the Ossetian religious interpretation.<sup>19</sup>

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tains to the more secularised plains, but by the 1980s this resulted in the vigorous advance of Sufi *virids* to the plains rather than secularisation of people living in the mountains. Crisis Group interviews, experts, Dagestan, Chechnya, Ingushetia, December 2011. Shamil Shikhaliev, "The Development of Sufism and the Transmission of Islamic Learning in the Context of the Resettlement Policy in Dagestan (1950s-1980s)", presentation at conference, "From Kolkhoz to Jamaat: The politisation of Islam in rural communities in the former USSR", Humboldt University, Berlin, 27 January 2012.

<sup>16</sup> In Dagestan alone in 2011 there were 1,276 Sunni Juma mosques, 827 neighbourhood mosques, 243 prayer houses, thirteen Islamic universities, 76 madrasas, two Islamic cultural centres, a union of Islamic youth and nineteen Shia associations. 8,872 people were studying Islam in institutions of higher education, madrasas and *maktabs* (basic courses on Islam functioning in the mosques). "Ислам" ["Islam"], national politics, religious issues and external relations ministry of Dagestan, www.minnaz.ru, 15 January 2012.

<sup>17</sup> The republics with significant Christian populations are Stavropol Krai (majority), North Ossetia (80 per cent), Adygea (c. 70 per cent), Karachay-Cherkessia and Kabardino-Balkaria (some one third). Dagestan, Chechnya and Ingushetia have small Christian populations. Most are Orthodox; there are also small Armenian Apostolic, Lutheran and Roman Catholic churches.

<sup>18</sup> In 2010, on Ramzan Kadyrov's proposal supported by other North Caucasus presidents, the chief executive title was changed to "head". "Медведев пообещал губернаторам новые отставки, а президентов республик согласился переименовать" ["Medvedev promises new layoffs to governors and agrees to rename republican presidents"], Newrsu.com, 31 August 2010.

<sup>19</sup> The decision to transfer Archimandrite Anthony, dean of the Alania Holy Dormition Men's Monastery, to Dagestan mobilised North Ossetia's Orthodox community. 1,500 blocked the road to the monastery to prevent his leaving. He is the most authoritative religious figure in North Ossetia, and while the Patriarchate wants to encourage classical Orthodox Christianity,

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<sup>11</sup> Before centralised conversion of native languages to Cyrillic in 1936, North Caucasus people used Arabic or Latin alphabets.

<sup>12</sup> The Hanafi *madhhab* is followed by the Muslims of the Western Caucasus (Kabardians, Balkars, Karachais, Circassians, Adyghe and Shapsugs), in North Ossetia and among the Nogay of Dagestan. The Shafi'i *madhhab* is predominant in most of Dagestan and among Chechens and Ingush. Dagestan also has a small Shia community.

<sup>13</sup> The Sufi Naqshbandia and Kadyria orders (*tariqa*) are present in Chechnya and in Shadhiliyya mainly among Dagestani Avars. Chechnya also has some 30 small religious fraternities, known as *virids*.

<sup>14</sup> In the east, Lezgins, Tabasarans, and Rutuls converted to Islam in the seventh to tenth centuries, Laks and Aguls in the eleventh to thirteenth, Kumyks and Avars in the fifteenth, Chechens in the sixteenth and Ingush in the nineteenth. By the sixteenth century, Ossetian elites and most Adyghe were Islamised, though many Kabardians converted to Christianity. Aleksei Malashenko, *Исламские ориентиры Северного Кавказа [Guide to the Islamic North Caucasus]* (Moscow, 2001), p. 14.

<sup>15</sup> In Chechnya 300 religious leaders, almost everyone who could read the Quran, was executed during the 1930s; Vahid Akaev, "Сталинско-Бериевская депортация чеченцев: факты, идеологемы, интерпретации" ["The Stalin-Beria deportation of the Chechens: Facts, ideology, interpretations"], The Spiritual Board of the Muslim Chechen Republic, www.dum.today.info. Some Soviet efforts were clearly counterproductive. In Dagestan large campaigns were organised in the 1950s-1980s to resettle the very religious Avars and Dargins from the moun-



### 3. Social institutions, practices and customs

Each Caucasian nation has its own history of colonisation and integration; relations with neighbours and the Russian state; collective memories; religiosity; demographic tendencies and characteristics of economic development. These factors have had a strong impact on social institutions and practices, including how they regulate and resolve conflict. The people from the west (North Ossetia, Kabardino-Balkaria, Karachay-Cherkessia, Adygea) tend to be better integrated with the rest of Russia and their traditional institutions and religious practices to play a less prominent role than those from the east (Ingushetia, Chechnya, Dagestan).

Kinship ties, legal pluralism and attachment to local cultural forms are important throughout the region. Patrilineal kinship (clan, lineage) still plays a role in social relations, particularly in the east, but during the process of Soviet modernisation, it generally lost its political-economic functions.<sup>20</sup> In Dagestan, patrilineal lineages (*tukhum*), made up of living groups of males, usually up to third cousins, are socially prominent entities.<sup>21</sup> In Chechnya, clans – called *teips* – have become so large and fragmented that they are no longer influential social units, though for some they may still constitute a meaningful identity. In Ingushetia *teips* are divided into patrilineal sub-lineages known as *familias* (literally surnames) that are better integrated and more socially relevant than Chechen *teips*. In North Ossetia, Kabardino-Balkaria and Karachay-Cherkessia, the role of *familias* is mostly limited to match-making and ritual.<sup>22</sup>

Nonetheless, there is a widespread perception that North Caucasian society is conflict-prone because it is traditional and clan-based. Former President Medvedev on a number of occasions spoke about clanship in the North Caucasus as a key challenge to good governance;<sup>23</sup> in 2008, jury trials were banned mainly for crimes related to insurgency and

terrorism under the premise that clans made it impossible to assemble impartial panels in the region.

A few local leaders have attempted to use communal structures to address social conflict. In 2009, Yunus-Bek Yevkurov, the incumbent head of Ingushetia, created a Council of Elders of the *Teips*, which meets under his auspices.<sup>24</sup> Presidential Envoy Alexander Khloponin created a similar council in the North Caucasus Federal District and was criticised for trying to revive obsolete medieval traditions.<sup>25</sup> Traditional respect of the elders persists in the Caucasus, mainly due to tradition and etiquette. Governments, politicians and activists seek support from the elders to enhance their legitimacy. Sometimes the elders are involved in resolution of land disputes.

Conflicts are regulated by one of three laws: federal (Russian), *adat* (local customary) and Sharia. *Adat* was orally transmitted and today is an informal legal system implemented by knowledgeable elders. It blended with Sharia and is increasingly being replaced by it. In Chechnya and Ingushetia, family and property disputes are normally resolved by Sharia, but *adat* is generally used when they have a criminal aspect. *Adat* also regulates disputes arising from abductions of brides, insults, public humiliation, and adultery. The lack of a uniform legal environment is an important factor when analysing mediation, conflict resolution and post-conflict reconciliation in the region.

The most controversial form of *adat* – blood feuds – has tended to prolong conflicts for years, sometimes decades, especially in Chechnya and Ingushetia and more rarely amongst Avars, Kumyks and other peoples of Dagestan. According to *adat*, the victim's patrilineal kin can carry out the punishment only against the murderer or an immediate male relative. It also stipulates honour killings of adulterous women, and these are increasing, particularly in Chechnya, Dagestan and Ingushetia. The legal system tends to close its eyes to crimes committed in *adat*'s name.<sup>26</sup>

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he is very tolerant of local pre-Christian beliefs. He said that though he was allowed to stay in North Ossetia, he was demoted to common monk status, a development not widely covered in the press. Crisis Group interview, Anthony Fiagdon, North Ossetia, December 2011.

<sup>20</sup> In the 1990s, historical clans were romanticised as elements of national cultures suppressed by the Soviets. Activists worked in archives to restore family genealogies and tried to revive clans as living social and political organisations but generally failed.

<sup>21</sup> Crisis Group interview, Sapiyat Magomedova, legal expert, Khasavyurt, Dagestan, December 2011.

<sup>22</sup> Crisis Group interviews, Professor Khasan Dzutsev, North Ossetian Centre for Social Research, Institute of Social and Political Studies, Russian Academy of Sciences, North Ossetia, Vladikavkaz; Professor Svetlana Akkueva, deputy head, social and political studies department, Institute of Humanitarian Research, Republic of Kabardino-Balkaria, Nalchik, December 2011.

<sup>23</sup> “Медведев о Северном Кавказе: коррупция, кланы, бедность” [“Medvedev on the North Caucasus: corruption, clans, poverty”], RIA Novosti (online), 12 November 2009.

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<sup>24</sup> His adviser, Azamat Nalgiev, said the head attends most meetings. Crisis Group interview, Nazran, Ingushetia, December 2011. *Teips* are clans, patrilineal kinship groups.

<sup>25</sup> Despite its traditional name, it includes members of civil society, including liberal Russian civil society leaders from Moscow. “Совет Старейшин поможет Хлопонину работать по заветам предков” [“The Council of Elders will help Khloponin work on the ancestors' precepts”], *Svobodnaya Pressa* (online), 4 February 2011.

<sup>26</sup> Crisis group observations; Crisis Group interview, Svetlana Gannushkina, chair of the Civic Assistance Committee, Moscow, September 2012. For more on honour killings and gender-based violence in the North Caucasus, see “Гендерный взгляд на безопасность женщин на Северном Кавказе”, Материалы семинара-совещания [“Gender perspective on the safety of women in the North Caucasus, conference materials”], “Zhen-schiny Dona”, 15 July 2012; “ECRE Guidelines of The Treat-

At the same time, both *adat* and Sharia stipulate vigorous procedures for reconciliation (*maslyat*) that involve religious leaders and other respected people and resolve the vast majority of unintentional killings (such as in car accidents).

The two Chechen wars in the 1990s created hundreds of new feuds; many families are awaiting a chance to avenge crimes against dear ones. In recent years, a number of cases were documented, especially in Chechnya, of security services abusing their credentials to carry out vendettas for their killed relatives or comrades.<sup>27</sup> Commissions for reconciliation of blood feuds (*komissii po primireniyu krovnikov*) have been set up in Chechnya and Ingushetia. By August 2012, the latter had reconciled over 150 blood feud cases.<sup>28</sup>

## B. COLONISATION AND INTEGRATION INTO THE RUSSIAN STATE

Integration of the North Caucasus has always been a challenge for the Russian state. Since the sixteenth century, the region has been fought over by great powers: the Ottoman Empire, Persia and Russia. This has influenced people's concept of their identity, national struggle and ties to central state authority. The capture of Astrakhan by the armies of Tsar Ivan IV in 1556 first brought the North Caucasus into Russia's orbit, and vast territories finally fell under its influence after a series of wars with Persia and the Ottomans in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.<sup>29</sup>

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ment of Chechen IDPs, Asylum Seekers and Refugees in Europe", European Council of Refugees and Exiles, 8 March 2011, p. 52; Svetlana Gannushkina, "Право быть человеком" ["Right to be human"], *Ezhednevny zhurnal*, 9 December 2008; "Девушку убили из-за SMS-сообщения и телефонного звонка" ["Young woman killed for SMS and a phone-call"], Memorial, 9 December 2011.

<sup>27</sup> In many cases, the security personnel are reported to have misinterpreted *adat* to their benefit, killing relatives of alleged combatants rather than the combatants, or killing those who were accomplices or sheltered combatants. See cases of Said-Salekh Ibragimov and Abdul-Yazit Askhabov. "The System of Impunity in the North Caucasus (2009-2010) – How Does it Function?", Memorial, 2010.

<sup>28</sup> "В Ингушетии за два года более 150 семей отказались от кровной вражды" [In Ingushetia in two years more than 150 families reconciled blood feuds], *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, 17 August 2012.

<sup>29</sup> Victor Shnirelman, *Быть Аланами. Интеллектуалы и политика на Северном Кавказе в XX веке* [Being Alans. Intellectuals and politics in the North Caucasus in the 20th century] (Moscow, 2006), p. 264. The treaty between the Russian and Persian Empires established the current border with Azerbaijan. The 1783 Treaty of Georgievsk, signed by the Russian Czar and the Georgian king of Kartli-Kakhetia, established a Russian protectorate over eastern Georgia. For a history of Russian expansion, see Ya. Akhmadov, *История Чечни с древнейших*

Cossacks, the first Russian settlers in the region, were prominent bearers of Russian policy and leaders of the frontier protection forces, especially after the defeat of the Ottomans in 1774.<sup>30</sup> Expropriation of land caused the first major anti-colonial uprisings at the end of that century. Between 1817 and 1864, during the Caucasus War, the Russian military launched a series of violent campaigns to bring the region under full control. The commander of the Caucasus Corps, Alexei Yermolov, who led one such campaign, acknowledged that protesting villages were ravaged and burnt, orchards and vineyards eradicated; if a village assisted a fighter, it was destroyed, and women and children were slaughtered.<sup>31</sup> This period is still prominent in the Caucasian peoples' sense of identity and their attitudes to the Russian state.

Two figures from the Caucasus War have shaped the popular historical narrative. The Russian military and governmental power tends to be exemplified by Yermolov, a highly decorated officer from the Napoleonic Wars. Tasked with subduing the region, he applied "military-economic" means of control, and brutal punitive measures against settlements suspected of supporting the resistance. His successors as commanders of the Caucasus Corps, continued his very

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*времен до конца 18 века* [History of Chechnya from Ancient Times till the end of the 18th Century] (Moscow, 2001); A. Zelkina, *In quest for God and Freedom: The Sufi Response to the Russian Advance in the North Caucasus* (London, 2000); P. Zubov, *Подвиги русских воинов в странах Кавказских с 1800-1834* [Feats of the Russian Warriors in the Caucasian Lands 1800-1834] (Saint Petersburg, 1835); Michael Khodarkovsky, *Russia's Steppe Frontier: The Making of a Colonial Empire, 1500-1800* (Bloomington, 2002).

<sup>30</sup> Cossack settlements were first established during the second half of the sixteenth century. By the eighteenth century, most lowland societies were more oriented toward Russia and had concluded agreements pledging allegiance to the state (eg, 1758, 1771, Ingush; 1774, Ossetians; 1781, Chechens). Some of the agreements were intended to get Russia's support in local wars, often against the powerful Kabardins. The agreements established protectorates but could be broken at any moment, or even made simultaneously with competing powers. After 1774, Russia intensified its colonisation efforts. For more on the Cossacks, see Section V.E below and Victor Shnirelman, op. cit., p. 269.

<sup>31</sup> The first uprising was led by a self-proclaimed Chechen sheikh, Mansur Ushurma, who was supported by Chechen, Adyghe, and Dagestani highlanders and later by Turkey during the Russo-Turkish War (1787-1792). John B. Dunlop, *Russia Confronts Chechnya: Roots of a Separatist Conflict* (Cambridge, 1998); Anna Zelkina, "Islam and society in Chechnya: From the late eighteenth to the mid-nineteenth century", *Journal of Islamic Studies*, vol. 7, issue 2 (1996), pp. 240-264. Russian campaigns were often halted due to more serious conflicts, like the Crimean War, and resumed when resources were available. A.P. Yermolov, *Записки* [Notes] (Moscow, 1868).

violent methods of colonisation.<sup>32</sup> This caused fierce resistance, mainly among those living in present-day Chechnya and Dagestan, who since the late 1820s have fought under the banners of *gazavat* (holy war).

The second character is the archetype of resistance, Imam Shamil, who led the fight against Russian forces for 25 years. He was the first to undertake a serious, systemic attempt to create an indigenous Islamic state, the Imamate, in present-day Chechnya and Dagestan, 1834-1859.<sup>33</sup> He attempted to submerge traditional local institutions into the state, wipe out customary laws, enforce Sharia and build a government superstructure over loose, local entities of self-government. However, his despotic governing style and strict interpretation of Islam eventually made him unpopular; after his capture in 1859, the Imamate ceased to exist.

The full subjugation of the North Caucasus was completed in 1864, when the Russian government initiated the *mukhajirstvo* (resettlement) of Circassian highlanders to the Ottoman Empire. The process, which lasted until 1867, depopulated whole areas in the north west, resulted in mass fatalities and acute human suffering, had major repercussions on relations between nations and the state and remains a source of conflict today. The trip over the Black Sea, during which many died, created a sizeable diaspora in Turkey (an estimated 1.5-2 million Circassians), Jordan (estimated 170,000) and Syria (estimated 100,000). Some Circassian activist groups, many outside Russia, are seeking recognition of this as genocide, especially before the 2014 Sochi Winter Olympics, which are to be held on the site of the tragic events.<sup>34</sup>

After annexation, Russia left local social structures relatively intact; the level of social integration and imperial interference in community life was very limited. Nonetheless, the Russian administration appointed village foremen and introduced local courts that adjudicated on the basis of Sharia and *adat*, though after 1858 the application of the former was limited to issues of faith and conscience.<sup>35</sup> A short period of liberalisation that followed the war encouraged some socio-economic integration, especially as investments in regional urban centres encouraged migration of people from the mountains to the plains and their acquisition of new skills, languages and social habits.

The Mountainous Republic of the Northern Caucasus, a confederation formed in 1917 after the Russian Empire's disintegration and outbreak of the civil war, was the only serious attempt to unite all Caucasus people in a common independent polity. After the establishment of Soviet rule, another attempt at administrative consolidation was undertaken, but the Gorskaya (Mountain) Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic part of the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic (RSFSR) was abolished in 1924, and there have been few if any subsequent efforts to revive a common North Caucasus political unit.<sup>36</sup>

The Bolsheviks began the first large regional economic and political integrative project in 1923 and promoted the primacy of Soviet law.<sup>37</sup> All recognised ethnic groups received the status of historical nations; since some had no written history, these were often prepared by Soviet historians. Ethnic group members were trained and promoted to leadership positions in schools, enterprises and administration of the newly-formed territories. Ethnic identity was further institutionalised by promotion of local languages, cultural

<sup>32</sup> In May 1818 he sent Russian Emperor Alexander I a campaign plan for a "military economic siege", including a line of forts to cut off pastures and arable land from indigenous settlements, so as to starve rebellious people into submission. Moshe Gammer Shamil, *Мусульманское сопротивление царизму. Завоевание Чечни и Дагестана [Muslim resistance to the tsar. The conquest of Chechnya and Dagestan]* (Moscow 1998), p. 58. In 1817-1819, he built Cossack settlements and military outposts on local communities' land. M. Bliyev and V. Digoyev, *Кавказская война [The Caucasian War]* (Moscow, 1994), pp. 152, 174.

<sup>33</sup> The Imamate was founded by Imam Ghazi-Magomed in 1829 but turned into a functioning polity under Shamil. Shamil was an Avar from the Dagestani village of Gimry and a Naqshbandi Sufi Sheikh. His Imamate (1840-1859) was divided into provinces (*naibstvo*), each governed by a *naib* (deputy), who collected taxes, implemented Sharia court decisions and monitored compliance with Shamil's orders and recommendations. Moshe Gammer Shamil, op. cit., p. 306; M. Bliyev and V. Digoyev, op. cit., p. 384.

<sup>34</sup> 21 May is mourned in the transnational Circassian community as Circassian Genocide Day. Unbiased writing on this topic is hard to find but one source is Walter Richmond, *The North-*

*west Caucasus: Past, Present, and Future* (London, 2008). See also Section V.D below.

<sup>35</sup> A. Berge, *Чечня и чеченцы [Chechnya and the Chechens]* (Tiflis, 1859), p. 82.

<sup>36</sup> The Bolsheviks promised self-determination, land redistribution, local self-governance and religious autonomy to appeal to local leaders, but the Soviet Union implemented few of the promises. For more on the 1917-1918 turmoil and the Mountainous Republic see T. Muzaev, *Союз горцев. Русская революция и народы Северного Кавказа 1917-март 1918 [The Union of Mountaineers. The Russian Revolution and the Peoples of the North Caucasus 1917-March 1918]* (Moscow, 2007).

<sup>37</sup> In the early years, the Soviet government made impressive progress through modernisation, education and development. In the 1920s-1930s, public health care, mechanised agriculture and secular education based on national languages was introduced. Use of those languages in classrooms had a pronounced effect and created demand for teachers speaking them. As part of a "korenisation" (rootinisation) policy, locals were educated and recruited as judges, and special educational programs at workplaces promoted the new legal system. I. Babich, *Правовой плюрализм на Северо-Западном Кавказе [Legal Pluralism in the Northwest Caucasus]* (Moscow, 2000), p. 36.

development in them and ethnic origin indications in passports. Though these steps encouraged integration, many of today's conflicts have roots in a nationality policy that granted some ethnic groups ("titular nationalities") limited statehood but ignored others.<sup>38</sup>

New administrative divisions were created based on the ethno-territorial principle. The 1936 constitution established a list of autonomous republics, and in many cases ethnic homelands were created according to political expediency or Soviet ideologues' preconceptions about local ethnic identities. In a society where class identity virtually disappeared, ethnic groups, with their unequal statuses fixed by the asymmetric administrative structure, gained great prominence – a continuing source of instability. The borders were imperfect and often arbitrarily drawn, and the problems were exacerbated, first when a wave of deportations occurred in 1943-1944, then when the post-1956 return caused abolishment, then reestablishment of several republics and autonomous oblasts.<sup>39</sup>

Though the scale of affirmative action for minorities in the Soviet Union's early years was unprecedented, the subsequent repression largely undermined the achievements and positive attitudes initially engendered toward the Soviet state. In the 1930s, traditional elites and representatives of the new Soviet leadership were systematically eliminated. In the 1940s, the entire populations of Chechens, Ingush, Kalmyk, Karachay and Balkars were deported, mainly to Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, ostensibly for collaboration with Nazi forces. They died *en masse* on the two-week trip in unheated trains to Central Asia and, upon arrival, from famine, poor living conditions and lack of health care.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> Inter-war Soviet policy was a main driver of the resistance. Peasants fiercely opposed collectivisation across the North Caucasus. Alexander Statiyev, "The Nature of Anti-Soviet Armed Resistance, 1942-44. The North Caucasus, the Kalmyk Autonomous Republic, and Crimea", *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* vol. 6, no. 2 (2005), pp. 281-314.

<sup>39</sup> In March 1944, the Chechen-Ingush republic, the Karachai Autonomous District of Stavropol Krai and the Balkar entity of the Kabardino-Balkarian Autonomous Republic were abolished (their inhabitants expelled) and divided between the surrounding North Ossetian ASSR, Georgian SSR, Dagestani ASSR and the newly created Grozny district. In January 1957, all national entities of the deported North Caucasian peoples were re-established. Regions transferred in 1944 from Russia to Georgia were returned, 1955-1957. Due to the return of the deported in January 1957, the Grozny district was abolished and the Chechen-Ingush ASSR was reestablished.

<sup>40</sup> Thousands of the deported fought at the front; many displayed great courage (especially at the battle of Brest), were killed or injured. Between 1945-1950, mortality rates among the deported far exceeded birth-rates. The exact death toll is unknown, but estimates range from one half to one third of the exiled, most perishing during the first four years. After Stalin's death in 1953, when the most severe restrictions on movement were lifted, the

The deported groups view the Stalinist exile as a genocidal experience, and it has a significant effect on current inter-ethnic relations, conflicts over territory and perception of the state's legitimacy.

When the deported returned in 1956-1957, they faced new problems whose consequences still cause tensions today. Their homes and lands had been redistributed; with the best-paid economic sectors occupied, jobs were scarce; and social infrastructure, including schools, was insufficient to accommodate all. There were acute tensions between the exiled and the ethnic groups that had often been forcefully resettled in their houses; and return to some regions was prohibited or restricted, producing yet more still unresolved disputes (see below).<sup>41</sup> The Soviet regime suppressed many of the tensions, though ethnic clashes occasionally surfaced (Grozny 1958, 1973, Vladikavkaz 1981). For three decades, the deported people remained subject to discrimination, often treated as "traitors, pardoned but not forgiven". The deportations were a taboo topic until *perestroika*, but detailed accounts kept in collective memory delegitimised the regime and contributed to social alienation until *glasnost* gave way to numerous public discussions, publications and protests.<sup>42</sup>

### C. LEGAL AND SOCIAL CHALLENGES TO CO-EXISTENCE

In reaction to these debates, on 26 April 1991, the Supreme Soviet of the Russian SSR, under Boris Yeltsin's chairmanship, passed the Law on the Rehabilitation of the Repressed Peoples which aimed to remedy historical injustices and set the stage for democratisation in inter-ethnic relations.<sup>43</sup> It denounced repressive Soviet acts towards certain nations as "policies of defamation and genocide" and declared them "illegal and criminal". It also defined "repressed people"; abolished all provisions and legal

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deported did relatively well and became active in the economic life of the host republics. Valery Tishkov, *О нации и национализме [On nations and nationalism]* (Moscow, 1996), p. 8.

<sup>41</sup> After the deportation, return of Ingush to the Prigorodny district was restricted; in 1982 the Council of Ministers of the USSR issued edict 183 "On limitations of registration of citizens in Prigorodny district of North Ossetian ASSR". Nonetheless, the Ingush returned to their villages and bought back the houses that had belonged to them before deportation from Ossetians or Russians, lived there without registration or bribed officials into registering them. A similar situation existed in the former Aukh district of Dagestan.

<sup>42</sup> In 1988-1990, informal organisations mushroomed in and around the region and organised public deliberation on previously taboo pages of national history; some later formed the nuclei of national movements and ethno-political parties.

<sup>43</sup> "Law on the Rehabilitation of the Repressed Peoples", RSFSR, no. 1107-1, 26 April 1991.

acts, including those issued by local governments that discriminated against the victims; and recognised the state's responsibility for restitution and outlined specific measures to this end.

Two provisions stipulating the right to "territorial rehabilitation" for those who had been deported legitimised and strengthened demands to change the territorial status quo.<sup>44</sup> However, the law provided that rehabilitation should not infringe on the rights of current residents and stipulated no mechanisms to ensure smooth territorial transfer, and confrontation between the communities involved spiralled. Instead of reconciliation and equality, it thus accelerated victims' ethnic mobilisation and defensive nationalism among other affected parties.

More recent laws have continued to exacerbate tensions. Those on distant pastures are a source of numerous clashes over land. Distant pasture cattle breeding is based on the seasonal movements of herds between mountains and lowlands.<sup>45</sup> In Soviet times, most mountain farms in Dagestan were also allocated significant lowland, and seasonal housing and other infrastructure were built for shepherds and their families that turned into temporary settlements (*kutans*). In Dagestan, more than 100 *kutans* have grown into permanent villages but remain unregistered; their residents are subjects of their mountain municipalities, and lowland authorities have little or no leverage over them. This causes a host of administrative challenges, immense pressure on social infrastructure and tensions between inhabitants of *kutans* and residents of nearby villages, who are often of a different ethnicity, that have flared into clashes at times involving hundreds of people. In Kabardino-Balkaria, lowland farms were given pastures in the mountains, which later became a main issue of dispute.

Despite the diversity, ethnic groups are mostly compactly settled in rural areas, with land still largely perceived as ethnically owned. Thus, control over territory often means dictating the rules of the game, and territorial control is a chief conflict issue. Where ethnic groups live in overlapping settlements, such demands are a particular challenge, and power sharing and better representation in government are often the most common demand.

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<sup>44</sup> Article 3 of the law states that rehabilitation confirms the right of the repressed peoples to reestablish the integrity of their territory as it existed before the unconstitutional violent border changes and their right to compensation for state-inflicted damages. Article 6 says the state should act to restore the earlier national-territorial borders, based on the will of the repressed peoples.

<sup>45</sup> On distant pastures, see Konstantin Kazenin, "Перспективы и риски многонациональных районов равнинного Дагестана" ["Prospects and risks of the multinational regions in the plains of Dagestan"], *Regnum*, 8 October 2011. In winter the cattle stay on the plain; in summer they are taken up to the mountains.

### III. THE CHECHEN CONFLICT

Chechen separatism is the most prominent case of mobilisation based on memories of grievances, suppressed by the Soviet regime and channelled by nationalist leaders into demands for full independence. The resulting conflict has had a profound effect on the entire North Caucasus, particularly on Ingushetia and Dagestan where there was a direct spillover of displaced persons, combat and security operations. The secessionist conflict has now largely been superseded by an Islamist insurgency that continues in Chechnya and has spread to its neighbours.

In 1991 mass rallies that followed the failure of the August putsch against Gorbachev in Moscow swept away the communist government of Chechen-Ingushetia and declared Dzhokhar Dudayev, the leader of the National Congress, the president of the "sovereign and independent Chechen Republic Nokhchi-cho".<sup>46</sup> The first war, officially referred to as the "Operation for restoration of the constitutional order", broke out in 1994 when the Russian government sent troops to recover the breakaway republic. The Chechen national movement gradually radicalised, as fighters adopted Salafi rhetoric and ideology and jihadi tactics. After an incursion of Chechen insurgents into Dagestan and a spate of terrorist violence, Moscow launched in August 1999 what was called a "counter-terrorist operation" (but was in fact another full-fledged war) that only officially ended in 2009.

#### A. ETHNIC SEPARATISM AND THE FIRST WAR

From 1991 until 1994, Chechnya was de facto independent and struggled to build a functioning ethnocratic state, but by 1993 the economic, education and welfare systems had virtually collapsed, and over 90,000 Russians and Russian speakers had left. Chechnya became a free economic zone zealously exploited by corrupt civic and military circles, Chechen and Russian alike.<sup>47</sup> In 1993, Dudayev was chal-

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<sup>46</sup> Dudayev's status was confirmed in the 27 October 1991 Chechen parliamentary and presidential elections, which, independent observers said, were marked by serious violations. Most Russians and Ingush residents did not participate, so his 85 per cent were mainly Chechen votes. Dunlop, *Russia Confronts Chechnya*, op. cit.; Dzhabraïl Gakayev, *Чеченский кризис: истоки, итоги, перспективы* [*The Chechen crisis: origins, results, outlooks*] (Moscow, 1999); Valery Tishkov, *Общество в вооруженном конфликте* [*Society in armed conflict*] (Moscow, 2001).

<sup>47</sup> G. Sharafutdinova, "Chechnya versus Tatarstan", *Problems of Post-Communism*, March/April 2000, p. 16. Dunlop, *Russia Confronts Chechnya*, op. cit., p. 132. According to the Russian bureau of statistics (Goskomstat), industrial decline in the Chechen and Ingush Republics was 32 per cent in 1992 (18.8 per cent Russia-wide), and 61.4 per cent in 1993 (16.2 per cent

lenged by a strong opposition that organised mass rallies, demanding a functioning state and an agreement with Russia, but he disbanded the parliament and closed critical newspapers. It would have been feasible at that time to reach a negotiated settlement granting Chechnya broad autonomy, but Dudayev insisted in vain that Yeltsin met him personally to discuss the status issue. After the Russian Duma elections of December 1993, in which nationalist parties and communists out-pollled democrats, hawkish positions prevailed in Yeltsin's entourage, and it was decided that a "small victorious war" might boost the position of his ruling party. Russian troops entered Chechnya on 11 December 1994.<sup>48</sup>

Statistics for the year and a half of fighting are disputed. A reasonable estimate is that up to 50,000 civilians died, and several hundred thousand were displaced.<sup>49</sup> The Fed-

eral Migration Services of Russia gave 150,000 people the status of "forced migrants" in 1991-1996, but human rights organisations estimate that at least a half million fled Chechnya during the war. 80 per cent of the economy was destroyed, along with the social infrastructure.<sup>50</sup>

Both sides committed atrocities, but communication between the military and the population and between Russian politicians and Chechen separatist leaders and activists did not cease, and trust was not entirely broken. Russian troops' morale was low, while the motivation of Chechen fighters was extremely high. The war ended inconclusively with the August 1996 Khasavyurt Accords and the withdrawal of Russian troops.<sup>51</sup> A final decision on Chechnya's political status was postponed until the end of 2001. The Russian government recognised the damages, and the Accords were accompanied by measures to finance reconstruction, pensions and salaries that were mostly not implemented.

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Russia-wide average). Valery Tishkov, "Чеченский кризис" ["The Chechen Crisis"], *Russia in the Third Millennium*, Moscow, 1996, p. 23

<sup>48</sup> "A small victorious war" is a phrase used in Russian since the early twentieth century to indicate a small war launched to distract attention of the population from internal problems. Anatol Lieven, *Chechnya. Tombstone of Russian Power* (New Haven, 1998) p. 79. For more on Russia's first military campaign in Chechnya, see A. Malashenko, D. Trenin, *Russia's Restless Frontier. The Chechnya Factor in Post-Soviet Russia* (Washington DC, 2004); Carlotta Gall and Thomas de Waal, *Chechnya: Calamity in the Caucasus* (New York, 1999); O. Orlov, A. Cherkasov, *Россия – Чечня: цепь ошибок и преступлений, 1994-1996* [*Russia – Chechnya: a chain of errors and crimes, 1994-1996*] (Memorial, 2010), S. Smith, *Allah's Mountains: Politics and War in the Russian Caucasus* (London, 1998); J. Russell, *Chechnya – Russia's 'War on Terror'* (Abingdon, 2007); Lawrence Scott Sheets, *Eight Pieces of Empire* (New York, 2011), pp. 151-203.

<sup>49</sup> There are no official statistics for civilian casualties. The main sources of data are human rights organisations, which estimate that between 1994-1996 up to 50,000 were killed, including 25,000-29,000 during the storming of Grozny in winter 1994-1995. Alexandr Cherkasov, "Книга чисел. Книга утрат. Книга страшного суда" ["The book of numbers. The book of losses. The book of the Last Judgment"], Polit.ru, 19 February 2004. Figures for military and insurgent casualties are even more disparate. 5,334 servicemen were killed or went missing, and 19,794 were injured according to a comparative analysis of data compiled by security services, journalists, and human rights defenders. Olga Trusevich and Aleksandr Cherkasov, "Неизвестный солдат Кавказской войны" ["The Unknown Soldier of the Caucasus War"], Memorial, 1997. Chechen separatist sources say up to 80,000 soldiers were killed. Kavkaz Centre, 16 August 2005. The union of soldiers' mothers say around 14,000 were killed. Alla Tuchkova, "Солдатские матери проголосуют за мир" ["Soldiers' mothers vote for peace"], *Rossiskaya gazeta*, 23 March 2000. Federal forces say 17,391 Chechen fighters died. "Потери российских войск" ["Russian military casualties"], RIA Novosti, 17 April 2011. Separatists claim their losses were 2,870; Vladlem Maksimov, "В Чечне надо выи-

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грать мир, а не войну" ["In Chechnya, it's necessary to win the peace, not the war"], *Novye Izvestia*, 10 December 2004. Experts from the Centre for Ethnopolitical and Regional Research estimate that 2,500-2,700 insurgents were killed. G. Krivosheyn, *Россия и СССР в войнах 20 века. Потери вооруженных сил* [*Russia and the USSR in the wars of the 20th century: Loss of the armed forces*] (Moscow, 2001), pp. 584-608.

<sup>50</sup> According to an authoritative study, 121,760 houses and apartments, all central republican medical clinics and over 400 educational institutions were fully or partially destroyed by air raids. Valery Tishkov, "Геополитика чеченской войны" ["The Geopolitics of the Chechen war"], *Svobodnaya mysl*, 1997, p. 74. "An Uncertain Future: The Challenges of Return and Reintegration for Internally Displaced Persons in the North Caucasus", Memorial, Norwegian Refugee Council, The Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, 1 October 2006, p. 10. The Russian legal system does not have the notion of internally displaced persons (IDPs); such persons are categorised as "forced migrants". The migration services were generally reluctant to grant this status to Chechens during both wars. Crisis Group interview, Svetlana Gannushkina, chair, Civic Assistance Committee, Moscow, September 2012.

<sup>51</sup> The army and security services committed grave human rights violations, while radical Chechen elements committed crimes against captured soldiers and terrorist acts outside Chechnya. See Crisis Group Europe Report N°221, *The North Caucasus: The Challenges of Integration (II), Islam, the Insurgency and Counter-Insurgency*, 19 October 2012. The accords were signed by Aslan Maskhadov and General Alexander Lebed on behalf of Chechen President Zelimkhan Yandarbiyev, who succeeded Dudayev, and Yeltsin respectively. It stipulated the end of the military conflict; withdrawal of Russian troops; mutual commitments on non-use of force; and peaceful resolution of disputes based on international law.

## B. FROM SEPARATISM TO ISLAMISM

Initially the Chechen fight was driven by secular political nationalism, but by 1995 Islamisation was already very prominent, and that year the separatist *mufiti*, Akhmad Kadyrov, declared jihad on Russia. After Russian security services killed Dudayev in April 1996, the insurgency increasingly adopted Islamist ideology, although nationalism still resonates among Chechen insurgents.<sup>52</sup>

Aslan Maskhadov, seen by the majority as a symbol of reasonable and secular authority, won the 1997 presidential elections in the presence of numerous international observers, with 59.3 per cent of the vote. The radical Shamil Basayev came in second with 23.5 per cent. Although pro-Moscow candidates had not been allowed to stand, and many IDPs could not vote, Moscow recognised Maskhadov as the legitimate leader of Chechnya.<sup>53</sup>

Maskhadov's effort at state-building faced many obstacles. The war had shattered society and left cities and villages, the economy, infrastructure and social services devastated. His support among field commanders was crumbling quickly. Paramilitary leaders were disinclined to respect the rules of the political game; numerous challengers used Islam to justify their claims to power. By 1999 the opposition to him was almost fully merged with religious radicals over whom he had little control. He tried to retain field commanders' allegiance with concessions and government positions, but ultimately this contributed to the state's collapse. Paramilitary and criminal groups destroyed the oil industry (the main revenue source), while services, infrastructure and transport continued to break down. The government was likewise unable to end abductions for ransom, some of which were fatal, including to foreigners.<sup>54</sup>

Radicalisation of the political elite was a result of internal power struggles and lack of resources. Shamil Basayev, as a military strategist, was one of the first to realise the organisational benefits of Islamist structures, their mobilisation appeal and capacity to generate funds from Islamist donors. In 1996, he helped the foreign jihadis Ibn al-Khattab and Abu Fatqh found a training camp near the village of Serzhen-Yurt that offered courses in jihadi ideology and guerrilla warfare until almost the beginning of the second war.<sup>55</sup> Several thousand from around the North Caucasus reportedly took part, later returning home to become Islamist or militant leaders. A Dagestani fundamentalist, Bahhaudin Magomedov (aka Kebedov), reportedly was prominent in the Chechen leadership's radicalisation after forming a fundamentalist enclave in the Chechen town Urus-Martan in 1997. By February 1999, Maskhadov was trying to appropriate his opponents' slogans, proclaiming the introduction of "full Sharia rule".

## C. THE SECOND WAR

By summer 1999 skirmishes between federal and Chechen forces were occurring regularly at the administrative border of Chechnya and Dagestan. Then, reportedly at the invitation of local Islamist groups, Basayev and Khattab led a group of armed radicals into the Botlikhsky and Novolaksky regions of Dagestan, on 7 August and 5 September respectively, to support their "Muslim brothers" in "freeing ... Dagestani Muslims from occupation by the infidels".<sup>56</sup> They encountered fierce resistance, first from the local police and Avar and Lak militias, then from federal forces.

Though Maskhadov condemned the attack on Dagestan, it gave revanchist groups within the Russian military and political establishment the upper hand.<sup>57</sup> On 30 September

<sup>52</sup> Dudayev was killed by a radio-guided rocket while on his satellite phone with Russian Duma member Konstantin Borovoy.

<sup>53</sup> Ballot boxes were organised at the borders of Chechnya and in neighbouring republics, but not beyond. Crisis Group interview, Alexander Cherkasov, Moscow, October 2012. On 12 May 1997, Maskhadov and Yeltsin signed an agreement on "peace and principles of interrelations between the Russian Federation and the Chechen Republic of Ichkeria". There is a consensus among independent observers that the voting process was honest. Alexey Malashenko, *Рамзан Кадыров: Российский политик кавказской национальности* [*Ramzan Kadyrov: A Russian politician of Caucasian nationality*] (Moscow, 2009), p. 53; "Чечня: политический процесс в зазеркалье" ["Chechnya: The political process through the looking glass"], Moscow Helsinki Group, Moscow, 2004. Oleg Lukin, "Президентские и парламентские выборы 1997 г. в Чечне" ["The 1997 Presidential and Parliamentary elections in Chechnya"], Prague Watchdog, January 2007.

<sup>54</sup> S. Ryazantsev, *Демографический и миграционный портрет Северного Кавказа* ["Demographic and migration portrait of the North Caucasus"] (Stavropol, 2003), pp. 26-77.

<sup>55</sup> Khattab, a Saudi citizen, fought the USSR in Afghanistan then joined Islamist groups in Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. In January 1995, he arrived in Grozny with a group of Arab supporters and financially supported by international jihadis. During the first Chechen war, he carried out several successful operations against the military that secured his authority. J. Hughes, *Chechnya: From Nationalism to Jihad (National and Ethnic Conflict in the 21st Century)* (Philadelphia, 2007).

<sup>56</sup> "Битва за Дагестан (Чечня) 1999 год" ["Fight for Dagestan (Chechnya) 1999"], *Военная хроника*.

<sup>57</sup> The attack on Dagestan and subsequent terrorist explosions in Bujnaxsk, Moscow and Volgogradsk (4-16 September 1999) were blamed on Chechens and consolidated public opinion. The bombings killed 307 and injured 1,700. Later investigations found that the explosions were prepared by terrorists from Karachay-Cherkessia and Dagestan. There are numerous opposing theories, such as those voiced by opposition figures, former Federal Security Service (FSB) officers and others, that blame the FSB itself, based in significant part on later events in the town of Ryazan, where men were intercepted while placing bags of what was suspected to be explosives in the basement of an

1999, federal troops entered Chechnya, in what was officially referred to as a “counter-terrorist operation”. This second war was widely supported by the public, media and virtually all political forces in Russia, becoming the main issue before the December Duma election and helping Vladimir Putin’s ascendance to the presidency.

Among the Chechen insurgents, a more moderate group committed to retaining the national-liberation agenda and aiming at military but not civilian targets in and outside Chechnya continued to function. However, a radical wing has committed major acts of terror, including over 40 in the rest of Russia, since 1999, many attributed to groups commanded by Basayev. An ethnic Chechen pro-federal side led by Akhmad Kadyrov, who as a Sufi leader was strongly against the republic’s slide toward radical Islamism (Salafism), and later his son, Ramzan Kadyrov, also rose to prominence, breaking with Basayev and welcoming Moscow’s military backing.<sup>58</sup>

## 1. The security strategy

The level of brutality in the second war was much worse than in the first, as the insurgents used terrorism extensively, and Moscow applied massive force indiscriminately. The army, better trained than in 1994-1996 but still mostly unreformed technologically and methodologically, fought with weapons designed for large-scale conflict. Planes and artillery used to eliminate small groups of combatants often destroyed entire neighbourhoods and settlements.<sup>59</sup> Successful advance in the west was ensured by General Troshchev’s ability to reach agreements with local leaders, while in the east General Shamanov advanced through the Sunzha range to Grozny, where the quick control he managed over one district (Staropromyslovsky) was followed by two months of fierce fighting. At the end of January 2000, the Chechen units left Grozny and it was occupied by federal forces.<sup>60</sup>

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apartment building. The FSB said it was part of an anti-terrorist drill. “Рязань, сентябрь 1999: учения или теракт?” [“Ryazan, September 1999: drill or terrorist attack?”], Politcom.ru, 11 September 2002.

<sup>58</sup> Alexey Malashenko, *Ramzan Kadyrov*, op. cit., p. 22. For more on the second war see V. Tishkov, M. S. Gorbachev (Foreword) *Chechnya: Life in a War-Torn Society* (Los Angeles, 2004). A. Politkovskaya, *A Small Corner of Hell: Dispatches from Chechnya* (Chicago, 2003).

<sup>59</sup> Eg, the village of Yarysh-Marty, Groznensky-selsky district of Chechnya.

<sup>60</sup> Crisis Group interview, Alexander Cherkasov, Human Rights Center Memorial, Chair, Moscow, October 2012. Also see Robert W. Schaefer, *The Insurgency in Chechnya and the North Caucasus: From Gazavat to Jihad* (Santa Barbara, 2012), pp. 191-193.

During the initial stage of the campaign, indiscriminate bombardments, especially of Grozny and including “targeted attacks” against crowded markets, hospitals and even maternity houses, caused a massive civilian death toll.<sup>61</sup> No reliable figures are available on the human losses during the second war.<sup>62</sup> The number of internally displaced is also disputed. In September 1999, Ingush President Ruslan Aushev defied an order to close the border and let almost 300,000 Chechens flee into Ingushetia. Through the end of 2001, 12,500 (mostly non-ethnic Chechens) who fled Chechnya were given the status of forced migrants; another 600,000 from Chechnya were registered under a lesser status as “having fled an emergency situation” (provided with “Form-7”), and half settled in Ingushetia.<sup>63</sup>

The storming of Grozny and pursuit of fighters on the plain culminated in the battle of Komsomolskoye in March 2000, and by spring the army controlled most of the republic.<sup>64</sup> The Chechen fighters responded with a guerrilla war of ambushes, terrorism, mined roads and booby traps. The army and security services employed a new tactic of *zachistki* (mop-ups), involving the isolation of settlements and detention of “suspicious” people. Human rights organisations reported numerous enforced disappearances and summary executions during *zachistki*, which created fruitful soil for more resistance. From late 2002, this tactic was gradually replaced by “targeted” operations, in which small units detained specific people.<sup>65</sup> Nevertheless, 3,000-5,000

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<sup>61</sup> For a chronicle of the November-December 1999 indiscriminate bombing, see “Point strokes. The non-selective use of force by the federal troops in the course of the armed conflict in Chechnya in September-October 1999”, Memorial, October 1999.

<sup>62</sup> Human rights organisations’ work during the war was restricted. For example Memorial’s monitoring covered 25-30 per cent of Chechen territory and concluded that 15,000-25,000 civilians died, and 3,000-5,000 went missing. In a population of about one million, the losses during the two wars were comparable in relative terms than those of the Soviet Union during the Second World War. Alexandr Cherkasov, “The book of numbers”, op. cit.

<sup>63</sup> Only 89 of those who fled to Ingushetia received the status of forced migrants.

<sup>64</sup> Some militants who fled Grozny later left for the mountains and then entered the village of Komsomolskoye. During the storming of Komsomolskoye, 5-20 March 2000, officials said, up to 1,000 were killed. Field commander Ruslan Gelayev and some militants escaped to the Pankisi Gorge (Georgia). “В Комсомольском оборону держали около 1500 боевиков” [“About 1,500 militants held the fort in Komsomolskoye”], Lenta.ru, 7 April 2000. Alexandr Cherkasov, “Бойня в селе Комсомольское. Победа или преступление?” [“The massacre in the village of Komsomolskoye. Victory or crime?”], Rekonstruktsiya Chechni, 25 April 2005.

<sup>65</sup> During a massacre in Novye Aldy, at least 56 civilians were killed. “Зачистка” [“Mop up”], Memorial, July 2000. “Массовые ‘зачистки’ в Чечне заменяются адресными спецмероприятиями” [“Massive ‘clearings’ in Chechnya are replaced by targeted special operations”], Memorial, July 2000.



disappeared without a trace in 1999-2003, and hundreds were found dead with unmistakable marks of torture – large numbers in a population of around one million. The killings, disappearances and torture then began to decrease, but not before fostering a strong desire for revenge that still fuels the Chechen insurgency.<sup>66</sup>

By August 2004 all tent camps for the displaced in Ingushetia were closed. The authorities used pressure, threats and promises of compensation for destroyed housing and other benefits to encourage the Chechens to return. However, only some returnees were able to secure accommodation in 32 temporary residence centres and fifteen compact settlements (*mesta kompaktnogo prozhivaniya*, MKP).<sup>67</sup> A small number of IDPs remain in Ingushetia MKPs.

## 2. Chechenisation of the conflict

The Chechenisation process – the transfer of significant political, administrative and military functions to ethnic Chechens – began in 2003. Most law enforcement was handed over to local security forces. They used an array of methods, new and old, to combat insurgents, including taking relatives hostage and punitive house-burning. With a mandate that largely frees them from control, they have been responsible since 2004 for most violence against civilians, according to human rights groups.<sup>68</sup>

The local security services were initially mainly paramilitary and to a great extent manned by former separatist fighters whose leaders had changed sides and created strong pro-federal paramilitary groups, each controlling a part of the republic. They were gradually legalised within the official security services, while retaining their original command and control structures. Thus, Akhmad Kadyrov's group was mostly integrated into the internal affairs ministry (MVD); the "Vostok" (East) battalion of Sulim Yamada-

yev and the "Zapad" (West) battalion of Said-Magomed Kakiev became part of the defence ministry; and a small combat group, "Gorets" (lit. mountaineer), led by Movladi Baysarov was affiliated with the Federal Security Service (FSB). From 2006 to 2008, through agreements and clashes with the Chechen leadership, these latter three groups were disbanded or further merged into the local services. Hundreds more ex-insurgents were persuaded or forced to change sides, often allegedly with personal guarantees first from Kadyrov senior and later his son.<sup>69</sup>

Chechenisation was not only the transfer of security-related tasks, but also a process, by which ethnic Chechens were given control of political institutions. Though allegedly a democratic process, this occurred under conditions of armed conflict, in a climate of fear, while grave human rights abuses by state agents continued. According to independent observers, voter turnout was manipulated and election results rigged.<sup>70</sup>

On 23 March 2003 a referendum approved a republic constitution that placed Chechnya in the Russian Federation. Akhmad Kadyrov was subsequently elected "the republic's first president" but remained in office only seven months before being assassinated on 9 May 2004. Alu Alkhanov became the new president in August 2005, but resigned in

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приятными" ["Mass 'mor-ups' replaced by targeted special operations in Chechnya"], NEWSru.com, 16 January 2002.

<sup>66</sup> "Чечня, 2004 год. Похищения и исчезновения людей" ["Chechnya, 2004. Abductions and disappearances"] Memorial, February 2005. E. Gilligan, *Terror in Chechnya: Russia and the Tragedy of Civilians in War (Human Rights and Crimes Against Humanity)* (Princeton, 2009).

<sup>67</sup> "On the Situation of residents of Chechnya in the Russian Federation, June 2003-May 2004", Memorial, 2004. Returnees were promised priority compensation for their destroyed housing, a promise not kept. Crisis Group interview, Svetlana Gannushkina, chair, Civic Assistance Committee, Moscow, 5 September 2012.

<sup>68</sup> "What Your Children Do Will Touch Upon You", Human Rights Watch, July 2009; "Chechnya 2004: New methods of anti-terror. Hostage-taking and repressive measures against relatives of alleged combatants", Memorial digest, March 2005; "The Chechen Republic: Consequences of 'Chechenisation' of the conflict", Memorial, March 2006.

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<sup>69</sup> The Security Service of Akhmad Kadyrov, "SB", was commonly known as "kadyrovtsy" [literally "Kadyrov's people"]. The "Vostok" or "Yamadayeivtsy" Battalion was part of the 42nd motor-rifle division of the Russian defence ministry, with up to 470 men responsible for the mountainous Vedensky and Nozaj-Yurtovsky districts and parts of the adjacent plain. After a conflict with Ramzan Kadyrov, Yamadayeiv was killed in Dubai on 28 March 2009 and the battalion disbanded. His brother, Ruslan Yamadayeiv, a Duma member, was killed in Moscow on 24 September 2008. The "Zapad" Battalion, the "kakiyevtsy" (literally Kakiev's people), part of the same division, reportedly numbered 400 and controlled the Staropromyslovsky district of Grozny, mountainous Shatoi and Itum-Kalinsky districts and the adjacent part of lowland Chechnya. The group of Movladi Baysarov, commonly referred to as the "Gorets" (literally mountaineer) numbered over 100, based in the village Pobedinskoye. Soon after publicly criticising Ramzan Kadyrov, Baysarov was shot dead during his arrest in Moscow on 18 November, Pobedinskoye was besieged and his group disbanded. Kadyrov has denied any involvement in these killings. Once incorporated into a pro-federal group, former fighters are allegedly often sent on an operation likely to involve violence so they will be "tied with blood" to their new group and lose any chance to return to the insurgents. "In a Climate of Fear. 'Political Process' and Parliamentary Elections in Chechnya", joint publication of Memorial, "Demos" Centre, International Helsinki Federation for Human Rights (IHF), the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH) and the Norwegian Helsinki Committee, January 2006.

<sup>70</sup> On the 2003-2004 presidential and parliamentary elections, *ibid.*

April 2007, when Akhmad Kadyrov's son, Ramzan, reached the constitutional age of 30 to be appointed his successor. All seats in the parliament elected in November 2005 had already been filled by people loyal to or dependent on Ramzan, who since March 2006 has chaired the republican government and de facto been the strongest man in Chechnya.<sup>71</sup>

Particularly after Aslan Maskhadov was killed on 8 March 2005, the prospects for negotiations between the Federal government and the Chechen separatist leadership plummeted. Chechenisation allowed the federal authorities to declare the pro-federal Chechen side "the legitimate authority", label insurgents as "terrorists" and "bandits" and proceed to a political settlement without negotiating with the main antagonist. The policy minimised contacts between Russian troops and the population, reducing Russian casualties, but most importantly it created indigenous Chechen security services that possessed far better local intelligence to eliminate insurgent networks. Now they, not federal forces, were responsible for rights abuses and their consequences. The conflict itself was reoriented from Russian-Chechen to intra-Chechen.

### 3. Contemporary Chechnya

Even though the insurgency has not been eradicated from Chechnya,<sup>72</sup> the republic's transformation has been radical, and it now appears better off than its neighbours. A large reconstruction effort launched in 2006 rebuilt in less than four years the infrastructure, roads, social objects and buildings destroyed during two wars. Grozny acquired conspicuous new architecture: the largest mosque in Europe, a huge sports stadium and the "Grozny City" complex of skyscrapers, unique in the North Caucasus. In winter 2012, in just one district of the city, 54 streets were simultaneously under reconstruction, together with the buildings of the National Library, National Museum and a Russian drama theatre. But financing has often been non-transparent; workers have not always been paid; and allegations of corruption have been numerous.<sup>73</sup> Clearing of ruins and maintenance

of streets, parks and cemeteries, planting of trees and painting is often done by state-employees who are required to participate in numerous *subbotniks* (weekend volunteer community work).

Housing is still a big issue. Residents whose housing and property were fully destroyed were entitled to compensation of 350,000 rubles (approximately \$11,500). Reportedly to get this, however, 30-50 per cent of the sum had to be paid as a bribe. Those whose housing was destroyed partially were not eligible for any compensation. Since 2005, compensation payments have virtually stopped. 45,447 families have received them, and the 15.9 billion rubles (\$510 million) the federal budget allocated have been spent.<sup>74</sup>

For several years Ramzan Kadyrov had led a campaign to close temporary residence centres for displaced persons, stating they have a degrading influence on Chechen culture and are "the nests of criminality, drug addiction and prostitution".<sup>75</sup> The 57,349 persons registered as "forced migrants", the Russian equivalent of IDPs, were deregistered in January 2007, and most humanitarian assistance was cut off. Seven centres still function, but the authorities keep trying to close them, most recently in July-August 2012.<sup>76</sup> The responsibility for solving the housing problem was transferred to local governments that have insufficient resources or capacity to deal with it.<sup>77</sup> In bigger cities, blocks of flats have been restored and returned to their owners. Some families received flats from the municipality

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ни не окупаются" ["Audit Chamber: Investments in Chechen budget are not repaid"], Infox.ru, 1 December 2009.

<sup>74</sup> Resolution of the Russian government, 4 July 2003. Compensation for partially destroyed housing was not stipulated. Report by Alvaro Gil-Robles, Commissioner for Human Rights, on his visits to Russia, 15-30 July 2004, 19-29 September 2004, to the Committee of Ministers and the Parliamentary Assembly, Council of Europe, 20 April 2005, p. 305. "An Uncertain Future", op. cit.

<sup>75</sup> "Положение основных групп вынужденных мигрантов и помощь им со стороны" ["The situation of the main groups of forced migrants and external assistance to them], Presidential Council for Human Rights and Civil Society, (no date).

<sup>76</sup> Crisis Group interview, humanitarian workers, August 2012. See also: "The situation of IDPs and returnees in the North Caucasus Region" (PACE), 5 March 2012.

<sup>77</sup> "Р. Кадиров намерен, навести порядок в ПВР" ["Kadyrov intends to get the PVRs under control"], head and government, Chechen Republic, 19 April 2006. Ruling 387, 17 October 2007, of the Chechen government liquidated most temporary residence centres and transferred the buildings to itself. They were then converted to family hostels. "On the situation of residents of Chechnya in the Russian Federation, October 2007-April 2009", Memorial, 2009. Most remaining residents have received court orders to vacate. Crisis Group interview, Memorial staff, July 2012.

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<sup>71</sup> Alexey Malashenko, *Ramzan Kadyrov*, op. cit., p. 57.

<sup>72</sup> 146 people were killed in Chechnya in 2011 and the first six months of 2012, including 48 from the security services and 86 suspected militants. Caucasian Knot, 8 January 2012, 12 April 2012, 10 July 2012.

<sup>73</sup> Official site of the Chechen government and head, chechnya.gov.ru, 18 January 2012; www.ramzan-kadyrov.ru, 20 January 2012, 6 February 2012, 14 February 2012. "В Грозном продолжились акции протеста строителей турецких фирм" ["The protest of construction workers of Turkish firms continued in Grozny"], Caucasian Knot, 17 February 2012; "On the situation of Chechnya residents in the Russian Federation, August 2006-October 2007", "Memorial", Migration Rights Network, 2007. Vladimir Silaev, "СП: вложения в бюджет Чеч-

or plots of land in their villages. However, thousands have been deprived of any state housing assistance.<sup>78</sup>

Power in contemporary Chechnya is concentrated in the hands of Ramzan Kadyrov, the only regional leader who controls the security services on his territory and personally supervises anti-terrorist operations. The intensity of armed confrontations and casualties among the security services has significantly decreased, though the insurgency is still capable of large-scale attacks, such as a suicide bombing in Grozny on 6 August 2012 that killed three servicemen and injured three. Human rights groups also say rule-of-law problems remain very acute, though human rights abuses remain largely unreported due to a climate of fear.<sup>79</sup> A 2010 Council of Europe report noted that “successive disappearances of the government’s opponents and human rights defenders still remain widely unpunished and are not elucidated with due diligence”. Kadyrov critics and political rivals have died violently.<sup>80</sup>

Kadyrov has developed his own Islamic-nationalist state ideology. He strongly supports Chechen culture, arts and sport, promotes Chechen customs and lifestyle and organises commissions for regulating family disputes as well as campaigns against drug addiction. He actively uses Sufi Islam as a state ideology, enforces Islamic dress-code for women and encourages polygamy.<sup>81</sup> A significant part of

republican TV broadcasting time is dedicated to religious issues, female TV hosts are covered and Sufi holy places (*ziyarat*s) have been restored. There are twenty madrasas, two Islamic higher education institutions, three Hafiz schools for Koran readers and over 700 mosques. Mosques, religious life and education are under strict control, and Kadyrov says he will eradicate anything related to Salafism.<sup>82</sup> The Orthodox Church in Grozny has been restored, and the return of ethnic Russians is encouraged. Before Orthodox Easter in 2012, all Christian cemeteries were cleaned, and transportation provided for former Russian residents to visit their family graves.<sup>83</sup>

If the rights of Chechens are violated outside the republic, Kadyrov often speaks up for them. He and his ombudsman, Nurdi Nukhadzhiev, strongly criticised actions of federal troops during the first years of the second war, accusing them of grave human rights violations, including enforced disappearances. He has repeatedly tried to extend his influence, particularly to Ingushetia and Dagestan, where clashes of local security services with Chechen police were recurrent until 2008. In July and August 2012, the leaders of Chechnya and Ingushetia clashed verbally over territory and counter-insurgency methods.<sup>84</sup>

Kadyrov enjoys much more authority than other regional leaders, partly due to close relations with Russian President Vladimir Putin. He often comments on international politics, particularly in the Middle East, and has direct contacts with leaders of several Islamic countries. On 15 May

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<sup>78</sup> “The situation of IDPs and returnees in the North Caucasus Region”, op. cit.; “Чечня: прокуратура рапортует о благополучии, а беженцы просят помощи. Жилищная проблема ВПЛ в ЧР не решена и не решается” [“Chechnya: Chechnya: Prosecutor’s office reports about their well-being, but refugees are asking for help. The housing problem of IDPs in the Chechen Republic has not been solved and is not being solved”], Memorial, 17 October 2011.

<sup>79</sup> Crisis Group interview, Tatyana Lokshina, deputy director, Human Rights Watch office in Russia, Moscow, September 2012.

<sup>80</sup> “Legal remedies for human rights violations in the North-Caucasus Region”, PACE report, rapporteur: Dick Marty, 4 June 2010, p. 1. “В Грозном уничтожили двух боевиков, посланных Умаровым для совершения теракта против Каддырова” [“Two militants sent by Umarov to kill Kadyrov, were killed in Grozny”], official site of the Chechen head and government, chechnya.gov.ru, 15 June 2012. Kadyrov has denied involvement in alleged killings of critics and rivals. C. J. Chivers, “Slain exile detailed cruelty of the ruler of Chechnya”, *The New York Times* (online), 31 January 2009; Lyubov Chizhova, “Противники Каддырова долго не живут” [“Kadyrov’s opponents do not live long”], Radio Liberty, 28 April 2010; Andrew Osborn, “Chechen warlord enjoys a ‘quiet’ birthday”, *The Daily Telegraph* (online) 5 October 2011. C.J. Chivers, “A fearless activist in a land of thugs”, *The New York Times* (online), 17 July 2009.

<sup>81</sup> “Рамзан Каддыров встретился с представителями духовенства” [“Ramzan Kadyrov met with representatives of the clergy”], Grozny Inform, grozny-inform.ru, 27 March 2012;

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“‘You Dress According to Their Rules’, Enforcement of an Islamic Dress Code for Women in Chechnya”, Human Rights Watch, March 2011; Alexey Malashenko, *Ramzan Kadyrov*, op. cit., p. 114.

<sup>82</sup> A Hafiz is a reader who knows the Quran by heart. The construction of the fourth Hafiz school in Urus-Martan started in June 2012. “В Чечне намечено строительство четвертой в республике школы хафизов” [“Construction of the fourth Hafiz school is planned in Chechnya”], Caucasian Knot, 18 June 2012. There are 700 mosques in Chechnya today, 400 of them recently constructed. “Муфтий Чечни не согласен с позицией ЦДУМ” [“Chechen mufti doesn’t agree with a position of Central Spiritual Board of Muslims”], *IslamNews*, 23 May 2011. “Разработкой учебно-методического пособия по предметам религии в школах займется специально созданный Координационно-экспертный совет” [“A specially created coordination and advisory council will develop the teaching manuals on religious issues in schools”], Grozny Inform, 6 April 2012. “Рамзан Каддыров: ‘Мы истребили ваххабизм в корне’” [“Ramzan Kadyrov: ‘We destroyed the roots of Wahhabism’”], *Islam and Society*, islamio.ru, 5 May 2012.

<sup>83</sup> “В Чеченской Республике готовятся к празднованию Пасхи” [The Chechen Republic prepares for Easter celebration], Grozny Inform, 6 April 2012.

<sup>84</sup> Sergey Markedonov, “Каддыров демонстрирует, что одной Чечни ему маловато” [Kadyrov shows that Chechnya alone is not enough for him], *Moskovskie novosti*, 13 September 2012.

2012 a major contest of singers of Islamic songs (*nasheeds*) in Grozny featured the famous Sheikh Mishary bin Rashid Alafasy from Kuwait. Two weeks later prominent religious leaders, Islamic scholars and officials from Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and representatives of international Islamic organisations visited, after attending a conference on “Islamic doctrine against radicalism” in Moscow.<sup>85</sup> Western celebrities also frequent Chechnya.<sup>86</sup> Some nationalists who changed sides and are now in the government say he has achieved more freedom than Dudayev could dream of, while Russians pay the bill.<sup>87</sup>

A serious effort to introduce rule of law, open government, and political pluralism would improve Chechnya’s international image. Increased transparency and accountability in government economic investments and aid, the reconstruction effort and social payments could contribute to social peace and stability and better integration with the rest of Russia.

#### IV. OTHER ETHNIC CONFLICTS AND TENSIONS

While much focus over the past decade and a half has been on Chechnya, where the loss of life has been highest, other North Caucasus republics have also seen ethnic strife. Most ethnic groups have territorial claims or land disputes with their neighbours. Some conflicts are new, produced by forced and labour migration, especially in Stavropol Krai. Some old disputes have not yet been resolved, reinforcing the parties’ resentments, mutual negative images and hopes to recoup their losses should the political context permit. The issue of internal administrative borders is still acute. Moscow is not interested in changing them, but such laws as that on Rehabilitation of the Repressed Peoples give grounds for some modifications. Moscow’s recognition of South Ossetia and Abkhazia (Georgia) suggested to some in the region that changing the status quo and redrawing regional borders might be feasible.

Ethnic claims are almost always justified as attempts to remedy historical injustice and the demands of nationalist leaders grounded in ethnocentric narratives of past glory and sufferings.<sup>88</sup> The deported peoples emphasise their mass death toll and suffering during Stalinist exile, as well as expropriation of all property; to balance their claims to preferential treatment, neighbours refer to earlier episodes of persecution, mass extermination and suffering during involuntary resettlements, as well as to improvements they made to the deportees’ property allocated to them by the state.<sup>89</sup> Russia is an asymmetric federation in which comparable size ethnic groups have qualitatively different status, some with an own administrative unit, others without. An administrative unit guarantees greater representation for the dominant ethnic group in local government and police and better access to resources. Those without say they want equal status.

The main ethnic cleavages are between Ossetians and Ingush; between Kabardins and Balkars; around the Aukhovskiy district of Dagestan; and among groups in Stavropol Krai. Most disputes were fuelled by the 1991 Law on the Rehabilitation of the Repressed Peoples. The unresolved tensions are already causing hate crimes and clashes and could lead to further ethnic mobilisation or violence, especially if they are not addressed and if there are any changes in regional or countrywide power balances. Moreover, the North Caucasus insurgency, which proposes to right injustices via jihad, uses unresolved ethnic conflicts to recruit.

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<sup>85</sup> “Представитель МИДа Кувейта: ‘ваххабиты своими преступными действиями оскорбляют чувства мусульман’” [“The representative of the Kuwait MFA: ‘The Wahhabis by their criminal actions offend the feelings of Muslims’”], Newsru.com, 28 May 2012.

<sup>86</sup> “In October 2011, for example, Grozny was visited by movie stars Jean-Claude Van Damme and Hilary Swank, violinist Vanessa Mae, a German ballet ensemble and a number of Russian actors. Human Rights Watch and the European Center for Constitutional and Human Rights appealed to the celebrities to turn down the invitations, reminding them of the human rights violations in Chechnya. Hilary Swank later said she regretted attending. Ekaterina Savina, “День города Рамзана Кадырова” [“Day of Ramzan Kadyrov Town”], Gazeta.ru, 6 October 2011.

<sup>87</sup> “Андрей Бабицкий: ‘Кадыров – это успешный Дудаев сегодня’” [“Andrey Babitsky: ‘Kadyrov is today’s successful Dudayev’”], Radio Liberty, 17 May 2008.

<sup>88</sup> Victor Shnirelman, op. cit.

<sup>89</sup> The Circassians allude to their exile in Turkey, the Avars to near extermination during the Caucasian War (1817-1864).

## A. THE INGUSH-OSSETIAN CONFLICT

As the Chechen conflict was first and foremost separatist, the only armed ethnic conflict in post-Soviet Russia was fought between Ossetians and Ingush in the Prigorodny district of North Ossetia. The Ingush were victims of a Stalinist deportation in 1944; their national movement was born in exile in Kazakhstan and became a political force during the late 1980s, when activists could openly call for the return of Prigorodny – which had belonged to them before the deportation – and restoration of Ingush autonomy.<sup>90</sup> Though their return to the Prigorodny area was restricted, many made it back anyway. By the 1980s, most had integrated well, but prejudices against them remained, according to an Ossetian historian: “The mark of citizens unreliable to the state was fully preserved in respect of the Ingush after 1956 – due to the activities of the ideological machine and the factual daily stereotypes”.<sup>91</sup>

The 1991 Law on the Rehabilitation of the Repressed Peoples gave a legal basis to Ingush territorial claims on Prigorodny, encouraging ethnic mobilisation on both sides as armed clashes flared in Prigorodny.<sup>92</sup> In June 1992 the In-

gush obtained a national republic based on the Law on Establishing the Ingush Republic, as part of the Russian Federation, but without the Prigorodny district. Free access to weapons and the absence of an effective conflict resolution mechanism quickened the spiral to full-scale violence that ravaged the area between 31 October and 6 November 1992. The Ingush in Prigorodny were supported by their ethnic kin in Ingushetia; North Ossetian forces were joined by South Ossetian paramilitaries from Georgia.

The fighting in Vladikavkaz and the Prigorodny district left 583 dead, 939 injured and 261 missing; 66 peacekeepers were killed and 130 wounded. After the federal troops separated the parties, they sided with the Ossetians and together with North and South Ossetian militias contributed to the displacement of 30,000 to 60,000 Ingush from the Prigorodny district. Over 3,000 Ingush houses were destroyed or burned, and most of their inhabitants fled to Ingushetia or Chechnya.<sup>93</sup> Prigorodny remained part of North Ossetia.

The republican and federal governments have been trying to return and reintegrate displaced Ingush since 1994. Cycles of protracted negotiations and breakdowns, security problems, fatalities and provocations have marked the effort. The conflicting statistics on numbers eligible to return have been a major stumbling block.<sup>94</sup>

Ossetians and Ingush agree that return has virtually stopped. The former say the overwhelming majority of displaced have already gone to their original villages. According to the 2010 Russia census, 28,300 Ingush reside in North Ossetia, of whom roughly 5,000 remained during the conflict. The Ossetians say all who wanted to return have done so, but the Ingush argue that return to several major settlements is fully banned, and to four others partially so. Some returns to these villages have been blocked ostensibly for environmental reasons, others, the North Ossetian authorities say, because the “moral-psychological climate in these

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<sup>90</sup> Demands to return the Prigorodny district were made publicly for the first time in 1973, during the protest of Ingush intelligentsia in Grozny. Previously the Ingush regions were part of the Chechen-Ingush ASSR. In 1988-1989 Ingush representatives filed appeals to the USSR Supreme Soviet and the Soviet government signed by over 50,000 asking for return of Ingush territories in the Prigorodny district and restoration of Ingush autonomy. In September 1989, a Congress of the Ingush People in Grozny had the same issues on the agenda. Soon after, the national movement split into the more moderate People's Council of Ingushetia, led by Professor Sejnarioev and comprised of the intellectual elite, mainly establishment and nomenklatura, and the more radical “Nijskho” party, led by the Soviet dissident poet Issa Kodzoev and supported by the rural Ingush. The schism and radicalisation contributed to the slide to war.

<sup>91</sup> In 1982 the USSR Council of Ministers issued an edict (183) “On limitations of registration of citizens in the Prigorodny district of North Ossetian ASSR”. The Ingush bought back houses that had belonged to their families from Ossetians or Russians, lived illegally or bribed officials to register them. Artur Tsutsiev, *Осетино-ингушский конфликт (1992-...): его предыстория и факторы развития [The Ossetian-Ingush conflict (1992-...): its background and factors of development]*, (Moscow, 1998). For more on the conflict see A. G. Zdravomyslov, *Осетино-ингушский конфликт: перспективы выхода из тупиковой ситуации [Ossetian-Ingush Conflict: Prospects of overcoming the deadlock.]* (Moscow, 1998).

<sup>92</sup> On 23-24 March 1991, Boris Yeltsin became the first Moscow leader to visit Ingushetia. He greeted a rally of thousands with the traditional “As-salaam-alejkum, Ingushi” and publicly acknowledged Stalin's injustices against the Ingush. That year the Ingush cast 94 per cent of their votes for him in the presidential election, his best result in the entire country. A year and a half later, after he sent tanks to help remove them from Prigo-

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rodny, his greeting was recalled bitterly and fed into the Ingush “betrayed nation” myth-complex.

<sup>93</sup> A number of Ingush joined Chechen combatant groups in 1994 and formed an Ingush battalion that played a key role in a number of battles, eg, those of the notorious Bamut campaign (10 March 1995-24 May 1996).

<sup>94</sup> In 1992-1993, the Ingushetia migration service asserted that 61,000 Ingush fled North Ossetia during the conflict. On 10 November 1992, the chair of the North Ossetian Supreme Soviet, Askharbek Galazov, announced that 32,782 Ingush residents of North Ossetia have been displaced. The office of the Russian president's special representative for the Ingush-Ossetian conflict, a federal institution established to coordinate return and reconciliation, said 31,224 persons (5,515 families) were eligible for assistance. The Ingush find these statistics discriminatory and misleading, claiming they are based on official registration documents, but up to half the Ingush lived in North Ossetia unregistered.

settlements is not ripe” and memories of conflict too vivid.<sup>95</sup> Ingush authorities call these excuses.<sup>96</sup> The Ossetian authorities respond: “if it had not been for the authorities of North Ossetia, no return would happen. Time proves that our approach was right. Time passes, and people get used to living together. We don’t want to press too much on the population, because this is counterproductive”.<sup>97</sup>

Recently, relations in the Prigorodny district have significantly improved. Residents say the situation is calm and emphasise economic rather than security concerns, a radical change from a few years ago, when clashes were frequent. In ethnically mixed villages such as Kurtat and Dongaron, some hostilities and mistrust remains, but reconciliation is on track, except where, as in Chermen and Tarskoye, Ingush and Ossetians live in ethnic enclaves, communication is difficult and education segregated. Distrust is greatest in villages where no return has taken place. Overall clashes have significantly decreased, though they still happen.<sup>98</sup>

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<sup>95</sup> The public and external affairs minister of North Ossetia, Murat Tkhostov, said the conflict has left the Ossetian residents with grave psychological trauma, and good-neighbourly conditions for returnees could not be guaranteed. Crisis Group interview, Vladikavkaz, December 2012. Ingush families can return to thirteen settlements where they lived before the conflict. On 25 July 1996, the government of North Ossetia issued a statute (186) establishing a “zone of sanitary protection of sources of drinking water” on the land where several settlements with an 80 per cent Ingush majority were located. Most residents of these villages were given land and state support for new houses in Novyy, at the Ingushetia-North Ossetia border.

<sup>96</sup> There was no fighting in Tarskoye village, but the Ossetian side still claims that “the climate in its central part is not ripe”; while in the Kartsa village, active street fights took place, and most Ingush were able to return there. Crisis Group interview, Ingush external relations, national policy, press and information minister, Yakub Patiyeu, Ingushetia, December 2011.

<sup>97</sup> Crisis Group interview, Murat Tkhostov, Vladikavkaz, December 2011.

<sup>98</sup> A brawl between Ingush and Ossetians involving Ossetian police in Vladikavkaz on 5 November 2011 left six injured. Two were injured in a brawl in the village of Chermen five days later. On 11 September 2010, one day after the terrorist attack on the Vladikavkaz market that killed seventeen, there was an anti-Ingush rally in Vladikavkaz. A subsequent rally on 13 October threatened to turn into a pogrom against the closest Ingush village, Kartsa. Military and police blocked the road, stopping a few hundred young Ossetians. Eight were injured in July 2009 in a brawl in the village of Dachnoe. Up to 30 people participated in a brawl between Ingush and Ossetians in the village of Kurtat, Prigorodny district, in August 2008; three persons were injured. Ivanna Nikolskaya, “В массовой драке в Северной Осетии ранены двое” [“Two people injured in a brawl in North Ossetia”], Life News, www.lifenews.ru, 10 November 2011. “В Северной Осетии милиция предотвратила погром села Карца” [“In North Ossetia, the police prevented a

Ingush Minister Yakub Patiyeu cites lack of economic development and inadequate representation in government as major impediments to return, integration and post-conflict reconstruction. Ingush returnees in North Ossetia, he says, are economically oriented towards Ingushetia. Apart from two or three construction teams that work in Vladikavkaz, Ingush have no jobs in North Ossetia, and though the third most numerous group are not represented in its government: only one head of administration is Ingush in the fully Ingush village of Majskoye.<sup>99</sup> Ossetian Minister Murat Tkhostov also links sustainable peace to development: “Integration can only happen through social interaction in the communities, [in] workplaces, schools. We encourage development programs, and we hope that gradually ethnically mixed education will be reintroduced in all schools, starting from primary”.<sup>100</sup>

The situation is complicated by shortages of state funds and the arrival of Ossetian refugees from Georgia in the early 1990s, some of whom moved into Ingush homes. Between 10,000 and 20,000 Ossetians from Georgia remain in North Ossetia, and 3,588 families await state-funded housing. This has also exacerbated tensions between Ossetians and Ingush returnees. The North Ossetian authorities stress that lasting peace and reconciliation in the Prigorodny district is dependent on identifying permanent solutions also for the Ossetian refugees.<sup>101</sup>

While many displaced Ingush have integrated well in Ingushetia, 385 families still live a precarious existence in collective centres. At the end of February 2011, the head of Ingushetia, Yunus-bek Yevkurov, ordered that all displaced should be resettled before 15 April 2011, and temporary

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massacre of the village Kartsa”], Caucasian Knot, 14 September 2010. “Драка в Пригородном районе Северной Осетии носила бытового характер” [“Fight in the Prigorodny district had the character of an everyday event”], Magas.ru, 31 July 2009. Musa Muradov, Zaur Farniev, “Драка на почве благочестия” [“Fighting on the basis of piety”], *Kommersant* (online) 16 August 2008.

<sup>99</sup> Crisis Group interview, Ingushetia, December 2011.

<sup>100</sup> Crisis Group interview, Vladikavkaz, December 2011.

<sup>101</sup> According to different estimates, the Prigorodny district accepted from 7,500 to 26,000 Ossetian refugees who fled Georgia during and after the 1991-1992 Georgian-Ossetian conflict. 9,652 people were registered as forced migrants from Georgia with the Federal Migration Services, as of 1 January 2012. As in the Ingush case, official statistics miss many who failed to get or extend proper registration, and/or lost their status as forced migrants. Some officials put the actual number at closer to 20,000. Crisis Group interview, Soslan Khadikov, deputy minister, national issues, Republic of North Ossetia, Vladikavkaz, December 2011. Georgia has made efforts to return Ossetian refugees, but only about 2,000 have gone back. Crisis Group Europe Briefing N°38, *Georgia-South Ossetia: Refugee Return the Path to Peace*, 19 April 2005.

residence centres should be closed before summer 2011.<sup>102</sup> This caused significant concern amongst the displaced, who complained that even though the government gives housing stipends, they cannot find affordable rentals. They seek a legal status to secure continual government support. Illegal pressure, including threats, has reportedly been exerted on the displaced to leave, but the temporary centres have not yet been closed.<sup>103</sup>

Disputes over the status of the Prigorodny district retain potential to cause a return to violence. Although the region is part of North Ossetia, the Law on the Rehabilitation of the Repressed Peoples remains in force, and the Ingush retain hopes for a change of status. To reduce the risks, all remaining Ingush displaced wanting to return to the Prigorodny district should be allowed to do so. Returnees should be granted access to ethnically-mixed schools (starting in kindergarten), equal access to jobs and representation in state structures. Civil society organisations working on micro-economic development and tolerance projects should be supported so as to reduce prejudices and increase Ossetian-Ingush cooperation.

## **B. DAGESTAN: CHALLENGE OF RESTORING HISTORICAL JUSTICE**

Four of the Dagestan's ethnic groups were affected by the Law on the Rehabilitation of the Repressed Peoples: Avars, Laks, Dagestani Chechens (Akkin-Chechens) and Kumyks. In 1944, along with their co-ethnics in the Chechen-Ingush Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic (ASSR), the Akkin-Chechens (14,901 people) were deported to Central Asia; the autonomous region of the Aukhovsky district where they had resided was abolished and their villages renamed. Mountain Laks were resettled in their place, often forcibly and with many victims, and the new Novolak district was created. Three big Chechen villages were trans-

ferred to the neighbouring Avar-populated Kazbekovsky district.<sup>104</sup>

Though the Chechens came back to the North Caucasus in 1957, return to Kazbekovsky was severely restricted.<sup>105</sup> Starting in the late 1980s, the Akkin-Chechens actively advocated for the restoration of their ethnic Aukhovsky region, and in 1991, following the rehabilitation law, the third Congress of the People of Dagestan agreed to that, as well as to the return of housing to Chechen families in Novolak and Kazbekovsky. Dagestan and Russian Federation officials agreed with the Lak community leaders that they would resettle to parts of the Kumtorkalinsky district around the republican capital, Makhachkala; Avars who refused to move agreed to live with the Akkin-Chechens. Between 1992 and 2010, 5,378 Laks were resettled, and communications, schools, and a hospital were built. But today at least another 5,000 are entitled to resettlement, and neither restoration of the Aukhovsky district nor the Lak resettlement are completed, though the government says they will be by 2013. Delay and disbursement of funds has been a chronic problem.<sup>106</sup>

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<sup>104</sup> The Laks were resettled from the mountainous Kulinsky and Laksy regions. According to Lak leaders, their mountain villages were heavily overpopulated in the 1940s, and the Soviet government decided to allocate them additional land on the plain. But the resettlement was carried out in a brutal manner. One cart was allocated to carry four families' belongings; resettled families had to walk 150km in the freezing cold, including children, the ill and elderly. Many died on the way, or soon after arrival. Return to their houses in the villages of origin was prohibited. Crisis Group interviews, Musa Sulejmanov, Ilyas Kayayev, Talgat Ismailov, Shamil Akayev, Lak leaders, December 2011, Makhachkala. The big Chechen villages were Aktash-aikh, Yurt-aikh and Bursum.

<sup>105</sup> Those who returned to villages were denied registration for ten to fifteen years and had limited access to jobs, services and schooling.

<sup>106</sup> Between 1992-2010, 2.9 billion rubles (\$93.5 million) were allocated by the federal government to the program; 8.9 billion rubles (about \$300 million) should be allocated for 2011-2013; in 2011, 2.8 billion rubles (\$93 million) were allocated for housing, and 73.3 million (\$2.5 million) for schools. Construction of 1,119 houses was begun in 2011, but as of December only 653 million (\$21.7 million) rubles had been transferred from the federal budget for housing and nothing for school construction. "Информация о ходе строительства жилья, объектов соцкультбыта и инженерной инфраструктуры по мероприятиям переселения лакского населения Новолакского района на новое место жительства в 2011 году" ["Information on construction of housing, community facilities and engineering infrastructure for the resettlement of the Lak population of Novolaksky district to their new place of residence in 2011"], Dagestan government, 8 December 2011; "Республиканская целевая программа 'Переселение Лакского населения Новолакского района на новое место жительства', 2011-2013" ["Republican targeted program 'Relocation of Lak population

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<sup>102</sup> In total, there are 989 IDP families (4,141 persons) still in the temporary residence centres; the remainder are from Chechnya. "Ингушетия: куда пойдут переселенцы после ликвидации МКП?" ["Ingushetia: where shall the displaced people go after the elimination of temporary settlements?"], Memorial, 23 September 2011. According to Ingush Minister Yakub Patiyeu, 42 million rubles (\$1,400,000) have been allocated from the republican budget for temporary resettlement of the displaced. Each family is to receive 5,000 rubles (\$165) per month to rent housing until the state provides a permanent solution. Crisis Group interview, Ingushetia, December 2011.

<sup>103</sup> Crisis Group interview, Tamerlan Akiyev, head of Memorial office in Ingushetia, December 2011. "Ingushetia: where shall the displaced people go", Memorial, op. cit.

Some Laks now regret having accepted resettlement. They have moved to lands that are historically claimed by the Kumyks, creating new tensions. They complain that these lands are poor quality and the compensation for their lost property inadequate. Some leaders feel that though they are traditionally loyal to Moscow, they are never appreciated and warn they will mobilise as a national movement if conditions do not improve by 2013.<sup>107</sup> Others are more sanguine and feel that moving away from the Chechens was essential to preserve their ethnic identity.<sup>108</sup> Those who have moved into new homes are the most satisfied; their main concerns are infrastructure, not security. Security concerns and tensions exist in the remaining areas of mixed settlement with the Chechens.<sup>109</sup>

Conflicts are possible during the restoration of the Chechen Aukhovskiy district, planned after Lak resettlement is complete in 2013, especially in Leninaul and Kalinaul, two big ethnically mixed Chechen-Avar villages.<sup>110</sup> Leaders of both communities describe relations there as “extremely

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of Novolak district to the new place of residence’, 2011-2013”], *ibid*, 8 February 2011.

<sup>107</sup> Crisis Group interviews, residents of new Lak villages, Makhachkala, Novolakskoye, Novochurtakh, Dagestan, February 2012; Lak leaders, Dagestan, December 2011. “We do not have an organised national movement right now, but if it is necessary, and we have the opportunity, the Lak national movement will revive in five minutes”. Crisis Group interview, Lak national leader, Makhachkala, Dagestan, December 2011. Indeed, on 28 September 2012 in Makhachkala, the Congress of Lak People was held and established “The Lak National Council” to solve issues related to resettlement. “Представители трех районов Дагестана создали ‘Лакский национальный совет’” [“Representatives of the three Lak’s districts of Dagestan created ‘The Lak National Council’”], *Caucasian Knot*, 29 September 2012.

<sup>108</sup> Sulejman Musayev, reporter on the Lak desk, State Broadcasting Company RGVK Dagestan, and professor at Dagestan’s State Institute of People’s Economy, fears Laks will lose their ethnic identity if they live with others. Shamil Akayev, deputy head, resettlement and rehabilitation of the repressed people department, Dagestan government, is sure the resettlement fear is exaggerated. There is an agreement with the Kumyks, he says, who will never have serious claims on this land, but common residence with Chechens is unacceptable for security reasons. Crisis Group interviews, Makhachkala, Dagestan, December 2011.

<sup>109</sup> “Each family has a new house, the quality of housing is quite good; very good schools and a very well equipped new hospital have been built. We have learned to deal with poor soil – people make fillings of slate, buy soil and plant trees. Some already have new orchards”. However, fully functioning electricity, sewage, drainage, local transport and kindergartens are still lacking. Crisis Group interview, Izdag Mamayeva, new settler, Makhachkala, Dagestan, December 2011.

<sup>110</sup> The former Chechen settlements of Yurt-Aukh and Aktash-Aush were renamed. Leninaul has about 7,000 residents (Chechens and Avars almost equally), Kalinaul about 5,000, 70 per cent of whom are Avars.

tense”. “When we raise the question of Leninaul and Kalinaul, government officials get terrified”, Chechen representatives say.<sup>111</sup> On 27-29 August 2007, eight persons were critically injured during a fight, involving several thousands.<sup>112</sup> The most recent clash was on 3 November 2011.

Chechens and Avars live parallel lives: children study together but adults visit separate mosques. Youth is ethnically polarised, with very limited communication after school and frequent fights. Tensions are exacerbated by economic hardship. Unemployment and birth-rates are both high.<sup>113</sup> “A small conflict between kids can take an ethnic dimension and involve large groups of residents; episodes of violence are recurrent”, a local resident said.<sup>114</sup>

Neither Chechens nor Avars feel secure. The Chechens feel discriminated against and unprotected by the police during clashes. The Avars (Dagestan’s biggest ethnic group) dominate local security services, administration and state institutions. Local Avar leaders refuse to change settlement names to Chechen originals as stipulated by the rehabilitation law. Chechens fear the unstable security situation in Dagestan might be used as a pretext to change the status quo. A Chechen lawyer said he built a house in Chechnya for his older son and sent him there to study, because if “anything happens in Dagestan, the Avars will use the opportunity to cleanse Chechens from here. I don’t feel it’s safe for the kids anymore”.<sup>115</sup>

Avars informally admit they will do everything to preserve the status quo and their security. They fear that if the district becomes Chechen, it will be their turn to suffer discrimination. Their leaders say that though many Avars consider Chechens entitled to the territory, and Avars should not make problems for them, “if bloody conflict breaks out, Dagestan’s Avars will definitely support their co-ethnics”. Avars fear that in case of violence, Akkin Chechens would

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<sup>111</sup> Another 800 Chechen families applied to return to the villages, but the local Avar authorities refused to consider them. Crisis Group interviews, Sultan Shavkhalov, head, department for restoration of the Aukhovskiy district, Khasavyurt, Dagestan, December 2011; local residents, Makhachkala, Dagestan; Chechen leaders, Khasavyurt, Dagestan, December 2011.

<sup>112</sup> Local law enforcement took the Avar side; several thousand Chechens from other parts of Dagestan and Chechnya reportedly supported their co-ethnics. Prompt action by the republic security services prevented worse violence. Crisis Group analyst interview in a previous capacity, local residents, Leninaul and Kalinaul, Dagestan, 2007.

<sup>113</sup> Crisis Group interview, local residents, Khasavyurt, Dagestan, July 2012.

<sup>114</sup> Crisis Group interview, local resident, Khasavyurt, Dagestan, July 2012.

<sup>115</sup> Crisis Group interview, Khasavyurt, Dagestan, December 2011.



get support from Chechnya: “If things go wrong here it will be a real mess. We should do everything to prevent it”.<sup>116</sup>

Chechens are the most frustrated with the rehabilitation process, which originally was supposed to end by 1996. Since 1992, 1,761 Lak houses were built, while 264 Chechen families received only dilapidated homes, sometimes just empty plots. The Chechen Public Council claims Laks have been overly compensated, including for houses they never inhabited, due to fraud.<sup>117</sup> Chechens complain they get poor housing, family size is not considered, and compensation for property lost during exile is not comparable to what Lak families get when resettled. They documented cases in 2011 of Lak families receiving new houses, then illegally selling their former Chechen houses. They claim to have filed numerous complaints to no avail: “In Dagestan everyone has forgotten that the Chechens were the ones repressed, not the Laks”.<sup>118</sup>

Chechens blame the government of the previous Dagestan president, Mukhu Aliyev – an ethnic Avar – for freezing their return and abolishing republican legal acts related to rehabilitation. The Chechen Public Council met the current head, Magomedsalam Magomedov (an ethnic Dargin) in July 2010 and told him: “We don’t care if you squeeze money out of the federal centre. If Moscow has lots of extra money to give you, we don’t care. Just return to Chechens, what belongs to them!”<sup>119</sup> Magomedov allegedly promised to meet his legal obligations, but Chechen leaders say they see no change.<sup>120</sup>

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<sup>116</sup> Crisis Group interviews, Sulejman Uladiyev, Avar leader, and another Avar leader, Makhachkala, Dagestan, February 2012.

<sup>117</sup> “Officially 524 houses and 102 vacant land slots have been returned to Chechens, but this does not reflect reality; often documents for return of houses to Chechens are signed solely to receive state compensation. The department for restoration of the Aukhovskiy district has inspected returned houses door-to-door”. Crisis Group interview, Sultan Shavkhalov, head of that department, Khasavyurt, Dagestan, December 2011. Common frauds are said to be getting housing for children twice, first as dependents who live in their parents’ home, then a few years later as members of new families; registering fake divorces to get two houses; and putting people who never lived in Novolak district on the compensation list. Crisis Group interviews, Chechens and Laks, Khasavyurt, Makhachkala, Chapayev, Dagestan, December 2011 and March 2012.

<sup>118</sup> The reconstruction or sale of houses that should be returned to Chechens is banned (Dagestan regulation 123, 31 May 1999), but local agencies have been found to ignore this and register the sales. Crisis Group interview, Laks in the new villages, Novolakskoe and Novochurtakh, Dagestan, February 2012. “Brief information”, press release, Chechen Public Council, 16 December 2011.

<sup>119</sup> Crisis Group interview, Ruslan Umaev and Sultan Shavkhalov, Khasavyurt, Dagestan, 17 December 2011.

<sup>120</sup> Crisis Group interview, Sultan Shavkhalov, Khasavyurt, Dagestan, 17 December 2011.

In a further complication, residents of three Kumyk villages set up a permanent camp in 2012 to protest Lak resettlement and creation of a Lak (Novolakskiy) district on what they consider their historical lands. They demand a Kumyk Tarkinsky district where Laks were resettled.<sup>121</sup> In late April, the republican authorities created a commission to consider the issue. In October, the director of the Federal Accounting Chamber, Sergey Stepashin, asked Prime Minister Medvedev to allocate an additional 6.6 billion rubles (\$200 million) to complete the Lak resettlement program, saying delay might lead to new ethnic conflicts in the region.<sup>122</sup>

A multi-ethnic republican-level commission should be set up to identify ways to overcome the tensions around the restoration of Aukhovskiy district, such as doing more to ensure equal access to government jobs, especially law-enforcement, promote a culture of tolerance and overcome the concept of “ethnic ownership” of territory. More effort should likewise go to ensuring that rehabilitation funds are used appropriately, not corruptly siphoned off. The interests of all ethnic groups involved need to be balanced and the rehabilitation program fully implemented to avoid violence.

### C. KABARDINO-BALKARIA: STRUGGLE OVER LAND

Kabardins and Balkars are also in conflict over land.<sup>123</sup> On 28 June 2011, the parliament of the Republic of Kabardino-Balkaria (KBR) passed a law on distant pastures, making large pasture lands in the Balkar regions (212,800 hectares) republic property that can only be rented, not privatised. This aimed to settle a long territorial dispute between the communities, but Balkar leaders see it as a defeat and consider that it violates their right to land and economic self-sufficiency and a number of federal laws, including the “Law on General Principles of Local Self-Government in the Russian Federation” (no. 131), which gave them rights over lands adjacent to their settlements in mountain areas.<sup>124</sup>

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<sup>121</sup> The villages are Tarki, Kyahulay and Alburikent. “К материалам о проблемах пригородных поселков г. Махачкалы” [“To the materials of the problems of suburban Makhachkala”], *Kumytsky Mir*, 12 May 2012.

<sup>122</sup> The money is needed to build 788 new homes and to construct infrastructure. “Дагестану нужно 6 млрд, чтобы предотвратить потенциальный конфликт” [“Dagestan needs 6 billion to prevent potential conflict”], *Izvestia* (online), 10 October 2012.

<sup>123</sup> The Balkars were deported in 1944 and returned in 1957.

<sup>124</sup> “The Balkar people are surviving due to their gardens and cattle-breeding. There’s not a single industrial enterprise on the territory of Balkaria. Now, under the pretext of distant pastures, they are depriving us of 80 per cent of our territories”, Crisis Group interview, Ismail Sabanchiyev, chair, Council of Elders of the Balkar People, Nalchik, Kabardino-Balkaria, December 2011. According to the heads of the administrations of Balkar

They appealed to President Medvedev to reverse the legislation.

The Balkars say this is not the first attempt to take away land they consider their ethnic territory. In 2005, new republican legislation attributed a significant part of Balkar property to “inter-settlement lands”, which would have put it under republican jurisdiction; and two large Balkar rural settlements, populated by some 15,000, were transferred to the capital, Nalchik. Balkars reversed both decisions in the Constitutional Court in 2007.<sup>125</sup>

Kabardins claim that the Balkars exaggerate their claims to high-altitude pasturages, as over 60 per cent now live in the plains (the total population of Balkars is 108,000, less than a quarter of the republic). If the remaining 40 per cent get the pasturages, this small population would control almost half its territory, where most natural resources are concentrated.<sup>126</sup> Lowland settlements are already densely populated compared to the mountain villages, so Kabardins argue that the Balkars seek to gain as much mountain property as possible, in order to create their own ethnic

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villages in Kabardino-Balkaria, Balkars when deported held 503,064 hectares, over half in the mountains. The state appropriated glaciers and other highland territory for the Elbrus national park, the Kabardino-Balkaria highland sanctuary, state forest and a hunting preserve near the Georgian border. Only 222,000 hectares remain for agricultural use. Another three quarters is “land for distant pastures”, ie, state property. This puts their villages on the edge of survival, leads to extremist moods and contradicts federal policy for economic development. Law no. 64, Republic of Kabardino-Balkaria (KBR), 13 July 2011, “On the Demarcation of Territory and Use of Land for Cattle Grazing”. Zolsky, Chegemy, Chereksy and Baksansky, “Парламент Кабардино-Балкарии принял закон об отгонных пастбищах” [“Parliament of Kabardino-Balkaria enacts law on distant pastures”], Caucasian Knot, 28 June 2011. The demarcation of lands is scheduled to be completed by 1 January 2014. “Первый шаг в решении земельного вопроса” [“The first step to solve the land issue”], KBR parliament, www.parlament-kbr.ru, 28 June 2011.

<sup>125</sup> Laws no. 13-R3 [13-P3], “On the status and borders of municipal units in Kabardino-Balkaria”, and no. 12-R3 [12-P3], “On administrative-territorial organisation of Kabardino-Balkaria”. The Constitutional Court ruled that these laws contradicted Federal Law no. 131, “On General Principles of Local Self-Government in the Russian Federation”. Regions with a high population density should not have inter-settlement lands, it concluded, so pastures should belong to the local (Balkar) municipalities, while borders of municipalities (like Khasan’ya and Belaya Rechka) could be changed only with consent of their population.

<sup>126</sup> Kabardin social scientists argue that Balkars already own six times more land per capita than the Kabardins. Moreover, Kabardin historians claim, much “inter-village” land that Balkars consider theirs was taken from the Kabardins during colonisation, and later by the Soviet government. Crisis Group interviews, Kabardin leaders, Nalchik, KBR, December 2011.

territory and secede from the KBR, as they attempted in November 1991.<sup>127</sup> Thus, Kabardins want to keep the land public so that they can continue to use it independently of the Balkar municipalities. The republican government is close to agreeing, some say because since 1992 its head has been a Kabardin.<sup>128</sup>

Due to the acute differences, the 2007 Constitutional Court decision was not implemented; instead a conciliatory commission was set up, which failed to reach an agreement. Any concession the government makes to one side results in immediate protest and mobilisation from the other. Inter-ethnic relations are deteriorating and national movements strengthening since 2008. Leading activists in both movements have been violently attacked and their premises targeted.<sup>129</sup> Senior federal authorities are aware matters can quickly escalate. In 2010, Presidential Envoy Alexander Khloponin, called the Kabardino-Balkaria land dispute “an issue that resonates deeply”; in 2011 President Medvedev brought civil society and human rights organisation representatives together in Nalchik to stress tolerance and friendship; and an inter-ethnic conference pleaded to stop the dispute from turning violent.<sup>130</sup>

Conflicts based on republic laws on distant pastures are also developing in Dagestan and Stavropol Krai.<sup>131</sup> A federal

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<sup>127</sup> Crisis Group interview, Kabardin activist, Nalchik, KBR, December 2011. The Congress of the Balkar People has announced several times since 1991 that the Balkars were separating from the KBR to create their own republic (with the Karachai), within the federation. Kabardins have also wanted autonomy.

<sup>128</sup> Ivan Sukhov, “Не кыпорт” [“Not a resort”], *Moskovskie Novosti*, 11 July 2012.

<sup>129</sup> In the second half of 2010, Balkar activists carried out hunger strikes near the Duma in Moscow and in the centre of Essentuki, while Kabardin activists organised protests in Nalchik. In 2011, Kabardin activist and leader of the group “Khase”, Ibrahim Yaganov, was beaten up twice. Several Balkar leaders were targeted: journalist Ruslan Buduyev was attacked twice; the cars of the Balkar leaders Baydayev and Rakhayev were burned; Tamara Gereyeva, a member of the Council of Elders of the Balkar People was illegally arrested and her arm broken. The Council of Elders office was burned and the organisation closed by decision of the Supreme Court of Kabardino-Balkaria in May 2010 (overturned by the Federal Supreme Court in July).

<sup>130</sup> “Хлопонин обсудил с жителями Кабардино-Балкарии земельную проблему” [“Khloponin discussed the land-issue with residents of Kabardino-Balkaria”], Caucasian Knot, 23 July 2010; “Земельный вопрос в Кабардино-Балкарии не надо переводить в межнациональную плоскость, считают участники ‘Гражданского форума’” [“The land issue in Kabardino-Balkaria should not influence inter-ethnic relations, thought participants of Civic Forum”], *ibid*, 1 August 2011.

<sup>131</sup> The Dagestan dispute involves Babayurtovsky, Karabudakhtsky, Kumtorkalisky and Kayakentsky villages. In Stavro-

commission on land reform is needed to analyse and develop measures for resolving all such land disputes, taking into consideration existing laws, Constitutional Court decisions and the interests of all parties.

#### D. CLASHES IN STAVROPOL KRAI

Stavropol Krai is the only region in the North Caucasus Federal District with a high population of ethnic Russians (81 per cent, 2,232,153 people), but they are moving to other parts of the country, while migrants from neighbouring republics are shifting the demographic balance. The inclusion of Stavropol Krai in the North Caucasus Federal District produced strong protests from local Russians.

Russians were encouraged to settle in the North Caucasus in the 1940-1950s to replace groups that had been deported. There were 3,874,153 in the region in 1970, 58 per cent of the population;<sup>132</sup> today less than 3.2 million, 32 per cent of the total, remain, including in Adygea. The outflow started in the late 1950s and 1960s, reached its peak in the 1990s and continues to this day, mainly due to security and socio-economic concerns. It has been most dramatic in Chechnya, where over 300,000 have left since 1989. Russians, 25 per cent in the Chechen-Ingush ASSR as recently as 1989, are now 1.9 per cent in Chechnya and 0.8 per cent in Ingushetia. They are 3.6 per cent in Dagestan, down from 10 per cent.<sup>133</sup> Many who moved settled in Stavropol Krai, but migration of other ethnic groups into the area and the higher demographic growth of the new arrivals create existential fears among the Russians there, who traditionally

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pol Krai, a dispute over 57,000 hectares of pasture has caused physical violence, mass disorder and inter-ethnic tension. During the Soviet era, the Bakres area was open to Dagestan shepherds, but in 1994 Stavropol Krai transferred it to the Neftekumsk district, limiting Dagestani access. President Magomedov appealed to Medvedev, and the case, which Dagestanis have even claimed amounts to ethnic cleansing, was sent to the arbitration court. They cite Article 1 of the Civil Code – “[the] perpetual right to use the land may be restricted only in accordance with federal law” – and argue regional governments have no authority to alter the regime established by federal law by unilaterally terminating this right and defining a mode of land use. “Бакресская зона конфликта” [“Bakres conflict zone”], *Novoe Delo*, 24 June 2011.

<sup>132</sup> All-Union population census 1979, www.demoscope.ru.

<sup>133</sup> V. Belozerov, *Этническая карта Северного Кавказа [Ethnic map of the North Caucasus]* (Moscow, 2005). This decline is also partly due to the demographic increase of mountain peoples – Dagestan’s population rose by 1.1 million in 21 years; the Russian population fell by 40 per cent; migration from other regions decreased from 32 per cent to 20 per cent in North Ossetia and 34 per cent to 23 per cent in KBR. Ibid, 1989; all-Russia population census 2010, www.perepis-2010.ru.

have perceived themselves as contributing to a strategically important buffer between the heartland and the Caucasus.<sup>134</sup>

Tensions occur mainly in the region’s eastern districts (bordering Dagestan and Chechnya), where local authorities try to contain the migration from neighbouring republics, and in the urban centres of Mineralnye Vody and Stavropol. Those towns have the largest concentration of students from other North Caucasian republics, while businessmen from the neighbouring republics purchase much real estate and invest in local enterprise. Since 2007-2008, routine squabbles have escalated with almost monthly regularity into large inter-ethnic fights, generally among youths. Due to frequent clashes, several discos in the student town of Pyatigorsk are now ethnically segregated.<sup>135</sup> Many of these conflicts in the east are between local Nogays and Dargins, the latter of whom tend to take the place of the Russians who have left.<sup>136</sup>

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<sup>134</sup> Crisis Group interview, expert Denis Sokolov, Moscow, April 2012. V. Belozerov, *Ethnic map*, op. cit.

<sup>135</sup> Пуга Варabanov, “Казачьи фильтры” [“Cossacks filters”], *Kommersant*, 17 September 2012. Dmitry Evstifeev, “На Ставрополье чабаны грозят восстанием” [“Shepherds threaten to revolt in Stavropol Krai”], *Izvestia*, 2 April 2012. Crisis Group interview, Igor Dulayev, associate professor, North Ossetian State University, Moscow, April 2012. Other instances of violence include: in May 2009 in Georgiyevsk neo-Nazis attacked and injured two Russians and an Armenian on the main street; in August 2009, in the village Pelagiada, a brawl between Russians and Dargins left a Dargin dead; between June-July 2010 in the cities of Kavminvody region, unidentified people burned dozens of cars with North Caucasian registration plates; in March 2010 in the village of Bolshaya Dzhalka, Russians and Dargins fought; several brawls broke out between Russian and Caucasian youth in Stavropol, September 2010; in November 2010, a Russian-Chechen brawl in Zelenokumsk injured nine; in December 2010 in the village of Stepnoye, a Cossack-Dargin brawl injured two; on 1 January 2011 in the village of Novo-Blagodarnoye, Predgorniy district, dozens of anti-Russian flyers were disseminated; in September 2011, in a Russian-Caucasian youth brawl in Divnoye, a villager died allegedly because he was wearing a T-shirt saying “I’m Russian”. On 16 November 2011, a brawl broke out between Cossacks and Greeks in the village of Suvorovskaya because, because some were wearing a similar t-shirt. “Бьют по лицу и по паспорту” [“Beaten in the face and for the passport”], *Otkrytaya Gazeta*, 3-10 August 2011, “Список материалов, признанных российскими судами экстремистскими. Часть 3” [“List of materials deemed extremist by Russian courts, Part 3”], Sova Centre, 22 August 2011; “Драка на Ставрополье” [“Fight in Stavropol”], *ibid*, 6 September 2011; “Конфликт между козаками и греческой общиной в Ставропольском крае” [“Conflict between Cossacks and the Greek community in Stavropol Krai”], *ibid*, 18 November 2011.

<sup>136</sup> Unlike Russians, Nogays do not easily resettle outside the region (if they leave, it is for temporary labour migration to the North of Russia). According to an expert, Denis Sokolov, who

In Stavropol youths often fight over symbols, to control public space and to set the rules of social life. Several incidents started when Russians reacted to dancing of the Caucasian *lezginka* in public places, most recently on 1 January 2012. The regional authorities tried to ban that dance in public in 2010-2011, and twelve men were detained for ten days for doing it in Stavropol in October 2010. That same month, two were wounded when shots were fired at young people loudly performing Caucasian dances in Pyatigorsk. Five students from Chechnya were expelled from the Pyatigorsk technical university for loud dancing of *lezginka* that month. Russians also try to assert themselves with symbols: they erected monuments to General Yermolov in Mineralnye Vody and Pyatigorsk in 2008 and 2010 respectively. The former was desecrated on 22 October 2011.<sup>137</sup>

Similar clashes between Russians and other ethnic groups have occurred in other republics with large Russian populations, especially Kabardino-Balkaria and North Ossetia. In the former, Russians feel crimes against them go unpunished, as Kabardins dominate the security services and judicial system.<sup>138</sup> Neither side trusts the security services, preferring to turn to ethnic kin and fight rather than use formal legal mechanisms to resolve disputes. Often law-enforcement agencies take sides, undermining perceptions of their objectivity. More efficient, ethnically-balanced police and administration are needed to avoid escalation. Officials should also be careful not to stir ethnic tensions. In August 2012, Alexander Tkachev, governor of Krasnodar Krai, stated that neighbouring Stavropol Krai could no longer be a “filter” between the Caucasus and his region, and ethnic conflict would eventually start. He called on the

Cossacks of Krasnodar to prevent migration from the North Caucasus and ensure the existing balance is not shifted in favour of Caucasians who, he said, “violate laws and customs and behave arrogantly”.<sup>139</sup>

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has done extensive fieldwork in the region, tensions are very high. Crisis group interview, Moscow, October 2012.

<sup>137</sup> *Lezginka* is a dance popular among all peoples of the Caucasus. Thought to originate in Dagestan (from the Lezgins), it is a beautiful, energetic exercise engaging participants and observers. It requires minimal instruments and is often danced only with participants and observers clapping the rhythm. “Хлопонин узаконил лезгинку на Ставрополье” [“Khloponin legalises *lezginka* in Stavropol Krai”], Russky Obozrevatel, www.rus-obr.ru, 11 July 2011. “Власти Пятигорска просят прекратить уличную лезгинку ради безопасности” [“Pyatigorsk’s authorities demand an end to *lezginka* street dancing for security reasons”], RIA Novosti, 26 October 2010. Yermolov is prominently associated with the brutal methods of the Russian conquest of the region. See Section II.B “На Ставрополье осквернен памятник генералу Ермолову” [“The monument to General Yermolov was vandalised in Stavropol Krai”], Sova Centre, 24 October 2011.

<sup>138</sup> On 30 April 2011 in Mozdok, North Ossetia, a brawl between Russians from Stavropol and local Ossetians left a Russian dead. “Beaten in the face”, op. cit. Crisis Group interviews, residents of Prokhladny town. Prokhladny, KBR, March 2012; Nikolay Samokhvalov, Cossack activist, Nalchik, KBR, December 2011.

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<sup>139</sup> “Ткачев собирается защитить Кубань от кавказцев: создаются отряды казаков” [“Tkachev is going to protect the Kuban from Caucasians: Cossacks units are being created”], NEWSru.com, 3 August 2012.

## V. NATIONAL MOVEMENTS REVIVED

The peak of ethnic upsurge throughout Russia occurred in the late 1980s and early 1990s. National movements aiming to articulate their ethnic communities' grievances asserted claims for greater rights, privileges, and constitutional recognition.<sup>140</sup> Two – the Chechen and Ingush – eventually contributed to bloody conflicts and as a result ceased to exist. The Chechen example especially made other national elites more cautious about provoking deadly confrontation and the authorities more determined to contain national movements.

Political freedoms were curbed at the federal level during the first Putin presidency. The 2001 law on political parties closed many of the national movements' legal channels, outlawing regional parties and making registration much more difficult. National movements that had acted freely as political associations, some even calling themselves parties, were limited to NGO activity;<sup>141</sup> 2006 amendments to the NGO legislation created additional bureaucratic hurdles for them.

Some republic governments integrated or marginalised national leaders, others were killed during conflicts. In Dagestan, for example, many leaders of former national movements became powerful members of the establishment.<sup>142</sup> This produced disillusionment, as it was widely believed they had traded national interests for self-interest.<sup>143</sup> Some

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<sup>140</sup> The national movements included "Sadval", "Tenglik", "Birlik", "Khazi-Kumykh" and the Movement of Imam Shamil in Dagestan; the National Congress of the Chechen People in Chechnya; "People's union" and "Nijskho" in Ingushetia; the National Council of the Balkar People and League for Resurrection of Balkaria; and Adyghe Khase in Kabardino-Balkaria.

<sup>141</sup> Federal Law no. 95-F3, "On political parties", 11 July 2001. The 1990 Soviet law no. 1708-1, "On public associations", had included political parties, but the 1995 federal law no. 82-F3, "On public associations", and its 1998 amendment mentioned neither political associations nor parties. The unregistered Vajnakh democratic party in Chechnya and the Tatar national party of independence "Ittifak" were serious republic players. Crisis Group interview, Vladimir Pribylovsky, head, NGO "Panorama", Moscow, April 2012.

<sup>142</sup> This includes Said Amirov (mayor of Makhachkala, Dargin national movement); Sagidpasha Umakhanov (mayor of Khasavyurt, Avar national movement); Gadzi Makhachev (Dagestan representative to the federation president, Avar national movement); and Imam Yaraliyev (mayor of Derbent, Lezgin national movement).

<sup>143</sup> Adallo Aliyev, a prominent Avar poet, and in the 1990s chair of the Avar society "Jamaat" and vice president of the Confederation of Mountain Peoples of the Caucasus, said bitterly national movements withered away in Dagestan. "People are disappointed with the national leaders, many of whom failed to meet expectations, and betrayed their national interests. The

leaders who adopted Islamist ideology are in the informal Islamist opposition, others were killed.<sup>144</sup> Ingushetia President Aushev kept nationalists out of politics after the 1992 conflict without repression. Kabardino-Balkaria and Karachay-Cherkessia national movements preserved continuity of leadership and organisational structure but adjusted their agendas to new political realities.

Since 2008, however, many North Caucasus national organisations have begun to resurrect themselves. It is difficult to measure their support, but they are increasingly visible local political actors. The 2012 federal law on political parties is likely to provide new opportunities for national associations.<sup>145</sup> Though parties based on national or religious identities are prohibited in Russia, small parties will probably be more sensitive to national agendas and be infiltrated by nationalist leaders. The broadly discussed political reform will bring back the system of elected regional leaders and is likely to facilitate ethnic mobilisation. A big ethnic group in Dagestan, for example, has apparently started internal consultations about potential candidates for republican chief executive.<sup>146</sup>

Large investment projects coming into the region are conducive to increased ethnic mobilisation and competition. Some, like the Kabardino-Balkaria tourist complex and a Nogay district sugar factory, are planned in ethnically homogeneous territories, where ethnic groups are likely to mobilise and bargain for their interests. The Circassians are mobilising in response to the Sochi Olympics; Cossacks are responding to growing nationalism throughout Russia. The agendas of contemporary ethnic associations are focused on autonomy, irredentism, elite power-sharing, rehabilitation and support of language and culture.

### A. AUTONOMY: NOGAY CLAIMS FOR AN ADMINISTRATIVE UNIT

Together with the oldest Nogay organization "Birlik" (Unity), created in 1989, the National Council of the Nogay People called at its May 2011 congress for self-determination and their own administrative unit. The ethnic admin-

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authorities resorted to threats and temptations, offering them titles and access to resources". Crisis Group interview, Makhachkala, Dagestan, December 2011.

<sup>144</sup> Former nationalists in the Islamic opposition include the Khachillayev brothers (Lak national movement), Adallo Aliyev (Avar national movement) and Anzor Astemirov (Kabardin national movement).

<sup>145</sup> Registration requirements are significantly simplified; only 500 members in half the Russian regions are necessary to register a party, which is expected to enlarge the political space. Russia's first Russian nationalist party, the Russian Nationwide Union, was registered by the justice ministry in June 2012.

<sup>146</sup> Crisis Group interview, Makhachkala, February 2012.

istrative unit they seek would be a separate subject of the federation or a federative unit within an existing region, preferably Stavropol Krai, not Dagestan where most Nogay reside.<sup>147</sup> Leaders say: “Nogay are not mountaineers; we don’t feel Dagestani; very few of us live in ... Makhachkala; we are economically and culturally oriented to other regions”. Yet, their political capital is Terekli-Mekteb, the administrative centre of the Nogay district of Dagestan, mono-ethnic and geographically the republic’s largest and least densely populated.<sup>148</sup>

The Nogay are particularly sensitive to any perceived encroachment on their land or way of life by people from Dagestan’s mountain regions. When construction of a sugar factory in the Nogay district was announced in 2011, the locals – already alarmed that administrative offices were transferred to the neighbouring Tarumovsky district – quickly mobilised against it, fearing possible loss not only of their land, but most importantly also of their ethnic control due to the likely arrival of many workers of other ethnicities.<sup>149</sup> Local activists state: “If the process of resettlement of mountaineers begins, the people will take up

arms here” As the Nogay organised numerous protests and the May 2011 congress strongly opposed the factory, the Dagestan head moved the project to Tarumovsky district.<sup>150</sup>

The Nogay movement demands implementation of Federal Law on Local Self Government (no. 131) and the distant pastures amendment. Most land in the Nogay district is used as distant pasture by other ethnic groups, and conflicts have emerged over how profits from pastures should be disbursed, as well as lack of respect for ancient Nogay burials. Nogay leaders also seek return to the direct election of district leaders, revival and support of their culture, traditions and literary heritage, arguing that state-sponsored repression and discrimination continues since the eighteenth century.<sup>151</sup>

These grievances and demands have revived the 1990s call for autonomy. Some activists say the state tries to intimidate them and they warn that while they have asked their youth to give a chance to exhaust legal remedies, administrative pressure and exclusion from political processes will radicalise young people: “The authorities are not interested in our problems, because we are doing everything according to law. Maybe we should act like the Chechens, and then they will pay attention to us?”<sup>152</sup> Radical Islam has also spread among Nogay in Stavropol Krai and in the Nogay district of Dagestan. The Vilayat “Nogay

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<sup>147</sup> The Nogay, a Turkic people numbering slightly over 100,000 with a rich history back to the fourteenth century (Khan Nogay of the Golden Horde), became a separate nation in 1957. Traditionally nomadic cattle breeders, they lost their state in 1783 and survived displacements, dispersals, involuntary resettlement to the Ottoman Empire and a forced end to their nomadic lifestyle. For an overview of their history, see “Памятные Даты Ногайской Истории” [“Important dates in Nogay history”], [www.nogaici.ru](http://www.nogaici.ru). “Съезд ногайского народа состоялся вопреки воле властей” [“The Congress of the Nogay People stood up against the will of the authorities”], *Мой Dagestan* (online), 29 May 2011. In Russia, the Nogay mainly reside in Dagestan, Chechnya, Stavropol Krai, Astrakhan oblast and Karachay-Cherkessia. “Birlik” activists also appealed to Stavropol Krai and Dagestan to raise the Nogay district’s status. Crisis Group interview, Zelimkhan Kocherov, first deputy, National Council of the Nogay People, Terekli-Mekteb, Dagestan, February 2012.

<sup>148</sup> The district comprises 18 per cent of the republic’s territory. Its population density is 2.5 per sq km, compared to the average in Dagestan of 59.2. Nogay are 80 per cent of its 40,000 population. Elsewhere in Dagestan the Nogays reside in Tarumovsky, Kizlyarsky and Babayurtovsky districts. All-Russia census 2010, [www.perepis-2010.ru](http://www.perepis-2010.ru).

<sup>149</sup> The investigative committee and tax inspection were moved. Crisis Group interview, Nogay activist, Terekli-Mekteb, Dagestan, February 2012. The factory is a joint project with a U.S. company, Amity Technology LLC; 85 per cent of the financing came from the U.S. Export-Import Bank. 100,000 hectares of arable land were allocated for it. “Сахарный проект” [“Sugar project”], *Novoye Delo* (online), 8 April 2011; “Жители Ногайского района в Дагестане готовят общеногайский митинг” [“The residents of Nogay district are preparing for the all-Nogay rally”], [nogaici.ru](http://nogaici.ru), 27 May 2011. While the factory will create 15,000 jobs, the Nogay district could only supply one third.

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<sup>150</sup> Crisis Group interview, Nogay activist, Terekli-Mekteb, Dagestan, February 2012. “Строительство сахарного завода в Ногайском районе Дагестана отменено из-за протестов местных жителей” [“The construction of the sugar factory in the Nogay district of Dagestan cancelled due to protests from local residents”], *Caucasian Knot*, 16 June 2011.

<sup>151</sup> Due to misuse of soil, ancient graves have come to the surface. The cattle breeders’ failure to rebury them created a wave of indignation among Nogay youth, whose older leaders stopped them from retaliation. *Ibid*. “Birlik” was able to introduce Nogay language in Astrakhan schools and radio and television. In Karachay-Cherkessia, the Nogay are one of five main ethnic groups, which led to creation of the Nogay district in 2007. Crisis Group interview, Nogay activist, Terekli-Mekteb, Dagestan, February 2012.

<sup>152</sup> Zelimkhan Kocherov, first deputy, National Council of the Nogay People, said he was pressured by law enforcement agencies on the eve of the May 2011 congress. The stadium that hosted it was blocked by trucks, and there was a massive police presence. A criminal case (later dropped) was brought against Kocherov for insulting a police officer. On 31 January 2012, on the eve of a meeting to discuss the coming municipal elections, his house was set on fire. Crisis Group interview, Terekli-Mekteb, Dagestan, February 2012. After the local court upheld amendments to the district charter curbing participation of local residents in those elections, a young activist reportedly exclaimed, “it’s a shame we are in the steppe; there are no hills or forests here, otherwise I would have joined the hills! (ie, the combatants)”. *Ibid*.

Steppe” is part of the current insurgency, while the so-called “Nogay Battalion” fought in Chechnya’s wars.<sup>153</sup>

## B. POWER SHARING: KUMYK CLAIMS TO ETHNIC REPRESENTATION

The Kumyks, Dagestan’s third biggest group (460,000), have been mobilising around nationalist aims since 1989, when they established the “Tenglik” (Equality) movement. A major player in political life, it demanded the republic’s federalisation and Kumyk autonomy. It vigorously defended Kumyk interests, including access to government positions, using academic conferences and media but also strikes, the blocking of railroads, highways and the airport, and tent camps with hundreds of protestors. In 2008 ethno-political activity resumed with an appeal to the Russian president reiterating demands for equal access to senior posts and restoration of rights to historical lands.<sup>154</sup>

Although Kumyks historically inhabited most of Dagestan’s lowlands, after mass, often involuntary migration of other ethnic groups from the mountains to the plains and their own forcible relocation to the lands of deported Chechens, they found themselves divided, dispersed and a minority on territories they consider their ethnic homeland. They perceive this as part of a state-sponsored policy of “inner colonisation” and “ethno-demographic aggression” and demand return of their historical lands. Residents of three Kumyk settlements – Tarki, Alburikent and Kyakhulay – are currently protesting because they want to be compensated for more than 8,000 hectares of land. From 1992 to 2003, fourteen mostly Kumyk villages were merged with Makhachkala, allegedly without residents’ consent, and lands around them sold, which is another major frustration.<sup>155</sup>

A significant part of the “Kumyk Plain” is now classified as distant pastures. In the last two decades, Kumyks have

been on the edge of large-scale ethnic conflict with Avars and Chechens in Khasavyurt, Dargins in Kostek and Laks in the Kumtorkalinsky region. Mass brawls are frequent.<sup>156</sup>

In the current political environment when demands for autonomy or federalisation have very slim chances to be considered positively, Kumyks seek due representation at the senior level in republican ministries and state institutions. Their leaders believe it is discriminatory that Dagestan’s two most numerous nations, the Avars and Dargins, generally monopolise government posts.<sup>157</sup> They also demand that the state develop programs for preservation of their language and culture. In 2010, just six days after President Magomedov took office in Dagestan, several thousand Kumyks held a mass protest calling for a Kumyk prime minister.<sup>158</sup>

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<sup>156</sup> In 1926-1970 the share of Kumyks in their lands fell from 60 per cent to 26.9 per cent; in 1979, it was 24.6 per cent and in the 1980s, 23.9 per cent. “Dagestan: the Kumyk ethnos”, op. cit., pp. 17, 18. “Kumyk Plain is how Kumyks call their historical homeland. The Kumyks’ greatest frustration was produced by the 1991 decision to resettle the Laks from Novolaksky district to the historic village of Tarki. In May 2009, a large brawl broke out between the villages of Gerga and Utamysh-Kayakent, Kayakent district. 1,500 participated in what began as a disagreement over a wrestling match, and one died. In May 2010, 400-500 villagers of Kurush and Batayurt, Khasavyurt district, clashed due to road accidents. In December 2010, in the Lvovsky-1, Babayurtovsky district, 200 Kumyks and Avars fought over land use and arson. Alexandr Sidorov, “Драка с продолжением” [“A fight with consequences”], *Мой Дagestan* (online), 2 August 2010. “Вторая за сутки массовая драка в Дагестане: 200 человек устроили битву за пастбище” [“The second mass brawl of the day: 200 people fight over pasture”], NEWSru.com, 14 December 2010.

<sup>157</sup> “Kumyks constitute only 6 per cent of the Prosecutor’s office, 6 per cent of judges, 5 per cent of police officers, 5 per cent of health care workers. Of the 53 heads of the city’s districts courts and the heads of the city’s districts and chiefs of city district police only four are Kumyks, and of the prosecutors five. There are only two Kumyks serving as heads of tax services, and only four serve as treasurers. In the inter-district sections of office of Civil Defence and in the inter-district sections of economic crimes and tax crimes, there are no Kumyks. Only one Kumyk serves as head of drug control. Among the 70 chief doctors of the city and in the republic hospitals, clinics and centres, there are only six Kumyks. But Kumyks constitute 14 per cent of the Dagestan population!” “The catastrophic situation of Kumyk people. Appeal to Russian President Dmitry Medvedev”, Kumukia.ru, 13 July 2008. Traditionally in Dagestan the positions of chief executive and vice premier are divided between representatives of the two most numerous ethnic groups – Avars or Dargins – while the Kumyks get the position of parliament chair.

<sup>158</sup> Until the early twentieth century, Kumyk, a Turkic language, was widely used for inter-ethnic communication in the North Caucasus. In the 1920s and 1930s, similarly to those of other

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<sup>153</sup> Some Nogays fought for Chechen independence because Dudayev promised them autonomy within the Chechen Republic of Ichkeria. Crisis Group interviews, Nogay activists, Makhachkala, Dagestan, February 2012.

<sup>154</sup> “Дагестан: кумыкский этнос” [“Dagestan: the Kumyk ethnos”], Institute of humanitarian-political research, Moscow, 1993, pp. 32-34. The Kumyk activist appeal to the newly-elected President Medvedev, “On the catastrophic situation of the Kumyk people”, had some 16,000 signatures. It claimed present-day Babayurtovsky, Khasavyurtovsky, Kizilyurtovsky, Bujnasky, Kayakentsky and Leninsky regions of Dagestan.

<sup>155</sup> Crisis Group interviews, Kumuk activists, August 2012. Y.Y. Карпов, Е.Л. Карустина, “Горцы после гор. Миграционные процессы в Дагестане в XX – начале XXI века. Их социальные и этно-культурные последствия и перспективы” [Mountaineers after mountains. Migration processes in Dagestan in XX – early XXI century. Their social and ethno-cultural consequences and prospects], (Saint Petersburg, 2012).

Kumyks, a Turkic people, claim that local and federal authorities pressure their movement, at least partially because they deliberately exaggerate the threat of pan-Turkism, the popularity of which is declining among youth:<sup>159</sup> “National frustrations of a father make his son think that he should take another path, a more radical one. Some adopt the radical doctrines of Islam”. As a Kumyk public letter to Medvedev states, the wrong lessons may be being drawn from the Chechen experience: “It is remarkable that the most favourable conditions for national development are being created for the people who have never been loyal to the Russian state. Apparently, their example should be a guide for the Kumyks on how to build up relationships with the Russian state!”<sup>160</sup>

### C. DIVIDED PEOPLES: THE LEZGINS OF DAGESTAN AND AZERBAIJAN

After the collapse of the USSR several ethnic groups (Lezgins, Ossetians, Avars, Tsakhurs) were divided across international borders, feeding ethnic discontent in the North Caucasus. Leaders of national groups in Dagestan have collaborated to develop common approaches and represent the interests of divided people more successfully. In June 2011 a special hearing on divided nations of the North Caucasus was held in the Public Chamber of Russia.<sup>161</sup>

Most recently, the Lezgins (386,000) were divided by the September 2011 Russia-Azerbaijan border agreement. They were frustrated the negotiations were without their involvement or apparent consideration of their interests. Two Lezgin villages (Khrakh-uba and Uryan-Uba), once

part of Dagestan but 40-50km inside Azerbaijan, were put under Baku’s authority. Russia offered no compensation for lost property or resettlement help. Residents said that since 2007 Azerbaijan has pressured them to give up Russian citizenship or sell their property and leave. After the border agreement, they were threatened with deportation if they did not take Azerbaijani citizenship, the local school was closed, and activists were blocked from crossing the border to return to their village.<sup>162</sup> Khrakh-Uba representatives said they want Russia to resettle them as a group near Lezgin areas in south Dagestan. The situation creates discontent in the Lezgin community also because of lack of improvements in border-crossing arrangements and what activists say are Azerbaijan’s systematic attempts to assimilate Lezgins and violate their rights.<sup>163</sup>

Lezgins’ grievances are more readily heard because they have several influential, rich leaders, notably billionaire Sulejman Kerimov, a member of the Russian Federation Council who actively presses their cause.<sup>164</sup> The Federal Lezgin National-Cultural Autonomy (FLNCA), an organisation created in 1999, lobbies government and organises hearings, academic conferences and international symposia together with Russian ministries, the Duma and regional authorities, and runs a professional website and an academic centre that supports research on Lezgin history and culture. It also backs protests in Moscow and the North Caucasus in support of the Lezgin enclave. In July 2011, its leader, Arif Kerimov, a Lezgin from Azerbaijan, raised Lezgin problems directly with Putin. On 18 June 2012, the FLNCA and the Avar National-Cultural Autonomy held a large Moscow conference, the first major joint event of the two largest divided North Caucasus peoples, while Kerimov was invited to join the Presidential Council on Ethnic

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Muslim ethnic groups, it was transcribed from the Arabic alphabet to the Latin, then to Cyrillic. Secondary schools dedicate three hours weekly to it. Even at the University of Dagestan’s Kumyk department, no more than four or five study it each year. Crisis Group interview, Kumyk activist, Makhachkala, Dagestan, February 2012. “Главе Дагестана напомнили политические обычаи” [“The president of Dagestan was reminded of political customs”], *Kommersant* (online), 17 February 2010.<sup>159</sup> The Pan-Turkism movement emerged in 1880s among the Turkic intellectuals of the countries with significant Turkic-speaking populations (mainly the Russian and Ottoman Empires, China and Greece), with the aim of cultural and political unification of Turkic peoples on the basis of linguistic, cultural and spiritual commonalities.

<sup>160</sup> Crisis Group interview, Kumyk activist, Khajbulla Alkhanadjiyev, Makhachkala, Dagestan, February 2012. “On the catastrophic situation of the Kumyk people”, op. cit.

<sup>161</sup> “Сулайман Уладиев о митингах, разделенности народов и аварско-лезгинском сотрудничестве” [“Sulayman Uladiyev on rallies, divided nations and Avar-Lezgin cooperation”], Federal Lezgin National-Cultural Autonomy (FLNCA), flnka.ru, 12 December 2011. “Граница режет по живому” [“The border hurts the living”], Public Chamber of Russia, www.oprf.ru, 22 June 2011.

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<sup>162</sup> Eshref Medzhidov, the principal of the local school, told Crisis Group that since May 2011 he had been denied access to Azerbaijan after telling Elman Aliyev, the head of the migration service, he would not sell his house and land in Khakh-Uba. His family remains in Azerbaijan. Crisis Group interviews, Medzhidov and Fetullaev Nizami, legal representative, residents of Khakh-Uba, Makhachkala, Dagestan, December 2011. “Жители сел Храх-Уба и Урьян-Уба не будут подвергаться насильственной депортации” [“The inhabitants of Khrakh-Uba and Uryan-Uba will not be subjected to a forced deportation”], RIA Dagestan, 24 August 2011.

<sup>163</sup> Crisis Group interview, residents of Khrakh-Uba and Uryan-Uba, Makhachkala, Dagestan, December 2011. “О проблемах разделённых народов России” [“On the problems of the divided peoples of Russia”], FLNCA, 24 June 2011. For an Azerbaijani interpretation of the conflict, see “Embassy of the Russian Federation in Azerbaijan issues statement on agreement about two villages”, Turan News Agency, Baku, 1 May 2012.

<sup>164</sup> In 2011, Sulejman Kerimov was the nineteenth richest Russian businessman. “Сулейман Керимов” [“Sulejman Kerimov”], *Forbes Russia* (online).



Relations.<sup>165</sup> Still, improvement of Lezgins' conditions in Azerbaijan is limited.

#### D. HISTORICAL GRIEVANCES AND REHABILITATION: THE CIRCASSIANS

Circassian (also referred to as "Adyghe") is a common name of the peoples of the Western Caucasus, divided into Kabardins, Circassians, Adyghe and Shapsugs. During the colonial wars of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, they were killed in large numbers, and in 1864, at the end of the Caucasian war, most were forced to leave Russia for the Ottoman Empire. Russia has 722,609 Circassians, most living outside their historical North Caucasus homeland due to old evictions. Even in that region, they are divided among Kabardino-Balkaria, Karachay-Cherkessia, Adyghe, Krasnodar Krai and Stavropol Krai.<sup>166</sup> Circassians are well organised in Russia and in the Turkish diaspora. In May 1991 in Nalchik, they created a cross-border association with branches in several countries.<sup>167</sup> Ethnic self-government entities, the "Adyghe Khase" [Parliament of Adyghe People] exist where there are significant numbers of Circassians. The 1993 Georgian-Abkhaz war was a unifying factor, as North Caucasus Circassians fought with the

Abkhaz. The Circassian movement attracts young people over the internet.<sup>168</sup>

The central Circassian demand is recognition of the Russian Empire's crimes against their forefathers. Some leaders and organisations insist Moscow should acknowledge the mass deportations of Circassians as genocide. Others consider a softer formulation would suffice but insist injustices be publicly acknowledged. The genocide demand was first expressed publicly in 1990, then revived in 2005, when the "Circassian Congress" was created in Adyghe, and appealed to the Russian president and Duma. In 2006 twenty organisations repeated the appeal to the European Parliament and again to the president.<sup>169</sup> The issue gained new prominence in 2007, when Sochi – traditionally inhabited by Circassians before the deportation and the port through which many left – was awarded the 2014 Olympic Winter Games. Krasnaya Polyana, where the opening ceremony will be held, was the 1864 site of the final battle and the military parade that marked the Russian victory in the war. As part of its strategy to build closer ties with the North Caucasus, Georgia in 2011 became the first state to recognise a Circassian genocide.<sup>170</sup>

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<sup>165</sup> "Праздничный фильм о деятельности ФЛНКА" ["A celebratory film about FLNKA's activities"], FLNKA, 24 June 2011. Magomed Saidov, "Лезгины и аварцы требуют прав" ["Lezgins and Avars demand rights"], *Novoye Delo*, 22 June 2012. The joint conference was entitled "On the problems of Lezgin and Avar peoples divided by the state border of the Russian Federation and the Republic Azerbaijan, and the ways of their resolution". "Руководитель ФЛНКА Ариф Керимов избран в Совет при Президенте РФ по межнациональным отношениям" ["The head of FLNKA Arif Kerimov elected to the Presidential Council on Ethnic Relations"], FLNKA, 7 June 2012.

<sup>166</sup> All-Russia census 2010, [www.perepis-2010.ru](http://www.perepis-2010.ru). 1.5-3 million Circassians live in Turkey, 80,000-200 000 in Syria, 100,000 in Jordan. "Türkiye'deki Kürtlerin sayısı!" ["The number of Kurds in Turkey!"], *Milliyet* (online), 6 June 2008. The Circassian peoples are 57.2 per cent of the population in Kabardino-Balkaria, 12 per cent in Karachay-Cherkessia and 25 per cent in Adyghe. Shapsugs live in the Sochi and Tuapse districts of Krasnodar Krai. In Stavropol Krai, the Kabardins constitute the majority of local Circassians. These are the main areas where Circassian are settled compactly.

<sup>167</sup> Its name is the International Circassian Association – International Organisation of Adyghe and Abkhaz-Abaza. The Abaza and Abkhaz are nations closely related to the Circassians, belonging to the linguistic group of Abkhaz-Adyghe people. Most were evicted to Turkey simultaneously with the Circassians. They live in the North Caucasus and in Abkhazia (Georgia).

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<sup>168</sup> For several years Adyghe Khase youth activists have organized Circassian culture festivals, an activity that receives some financial support from Circassian businesses. Crisis Group interviews, Mukhammed Cherkesov, leader of Adyghe Khase in Karachay-Cherkessia, and Anatoly Balkarov, Circassian youth activist, Cherkessk, March 2012. "В Адигее воссоздаются народные черкесские игры среди молодежи" ["Circassian folk games reconstituted among youth in Adyghe"], *Caucasian Knot*, 27 March 2012. For a sample of websites, see: [www.elot.ru](http://www.elot.ru), [adygaabaza.ru](http://adygaabaza.ru), [adigasite.com](http://adigasite.com), [www.adiga.narod.ru](http://www.adiga.narod.ru), [haymarja.narod.ru](http://haymarja.narod.ru), [aheku.org](http://aheku.org), [www.djeguako.ru](http://www.djeguako.ru), [nart.narttv.com](http://nart.narttv.com), [adygabook.com](http://adygabook.com), and [adygi.ru](http://adygi.ru).

<sup>169</sup> Based on findings of a 1990 conference in Nalchik, "The national liberation struggle of the peoples of the North Caucasus and the problem of the muhadjir", the term was applied to Tsarist policies. In 1992, the Kabardino-Balkaria parliament recognised the forced expulsion of Circassians as genocide. In 1994 and 1996 the parliaments and presidents of that republic and Adyghe requested the Russian Duma and president to do likewise. Crisis Group interview, Anzor Etleshev, Circassian activist, Cherkessk, Karachay-Cherkessia, March 2012. For Russian academic denial of genocide, see Andrey Epifantsev, "Кавказская война: геноцид, которого не было" ["The Caucasian War. The Genocide that wasn't"], *Agentstvo politicheskikh novostey*, 7 October 2009; "Адиги добиваются признания своего геноцида" ["The Circassians are striving for the recognition of their genocide"], *Kommersant* (online), 13 October 2006; "Черкесы пожаловались Путину на царя" ["The Circassians complained to Putin about the Tsar"], *Lenta.ru*, 20 November 2006.

<sup>170</sup> Crisis Group Europe Briefing N°65, *Georgia-Russia: Learn to Live Like Neighbours*, 8 August 2011, p. 9.

Other demands are also linked to historical injustices, including a program to repatriate Circassians from the diaspora. A 1999 federal law stipulates that “indigenous peoples of Russia” can obtain citizenship by a simplified procedure.<sup>171</sup> 200 people resettled from Kosovo to Adygea in 1999. Repatriation of Syrian Circassians is under discussion between the Circassian movement and Russian authorities since December 2011. The former says up to 100,000 Circassians and other North Caucasians live in Syria, and about 200 families have expressed desire to leave. On 11 February 2012 around 1,000 activists meeting in Adygea’s capital, Maikop, proposed adjustments to Russian immigration laws to permit fast repatriation. The director of the Federal Migration Service, Konstantin Romanovskiy, said these amendments would not create major legal problems.<sup>172</sup> Some 300 people had moved to Kabardino-Balkaria and 100 to Adygea by August, but so far Syrian Circassians do not seem interested in mass migration.<sup>173</sup>

Some Circassian leaders say they will halt the genocide campaign before the Olympics, especially if more repatriation from Syria is accepted, as this would be a step toward remedying injustice. Another way to satisfy some grievances would be to include strong elements of Circassian culture in the Olympic program. Other leaders consider the issue a way to oblige the state to adopt special programs to support and rehabilitate their nation, including unification in one administrative unit. Circassians were indignant that in 2010 Adygea was not included in the North Caucasus Federal District.<sup>174</sup> The Republic of Kara-

chay-Cherkessia (KChR) essentially remains the centre of their political activity and where they seek a Circassian republic within the borders of their 1930s-1940s autonomy. They feel that since its majority is Karachay and Russian, they are deprived of due representation and equal access to resources. They also want state support for their culture and language, largely lost through repression and assimilation, with more professional language teaching and support of Circassian media.<sup>175</sup>

## E. RECOGNITION AS A DISTINCT ETHNIC GROUP: THE COSSACKS

The Cossacks emerged as a special social group living compactly in several regions of the Russian Empire and serving in their own formations of the army. They have been part of the North Caucasus ethnic landscape since their first settlements along the Terek River in the second half of the sixteenth century.<sup>176</sup> They were prominent in colonisation, involved in military operations against local people and ensured frontier protection. Historically Cossacks and people from the highlands competed over land: in 1774, after defeating the Ottomans, Russia built fortifications, formed 36 new Cossack settlements (*stanitsa*) and distributed land to the Russian nobles, causing the first major anti-colonial uprisings supported by Chechens, Adyghes and peoples of Dagestan. In 1817-1819, as part of his colonisation strategy, Yermolov built Cossack settlements and military redoubts.<sup>177</sup> Cossacks intermarried with local people, absorbed some of their cultural patterns and transferred to them some of their vocational and agricultural skills.

Their troops were disbanded after the Bolshevik Revolution, and during the Civil War Cossacks were subjected to mass repression. In the 1920s at least 45,000 were deported (*Raskazachivanie*, “Decossackisation”). Cossack territories were included in the national republics, lands were transferred mainly to Chechen and Ingush peasants,

national right of Circassian people”], both *Caucasian Knot*, 17 July 2010.

<sup>175</sup> The republic demand was voiced in the early 1990s and revived by the 2010 Circassian Congress in Cherkessk. “Резолюция Чрезвычайного съезда черкесского народа КЧР” [“Resolution of the Extraordinary Congress of Circassian people of the Republic of Karachay-Cherkessia”], *Caucasian Knot*, 5 June 2010. Crisis Group interviews, Mukhammed Cherkesov, Adyghes Khase leader in Karachay-Cherkessia, Cherkessk, March 2012; Anzor Etlishev, Circassian activist, Cherkessk, Karachay-Cherkessia, March 2012.

<sup>176</sup> The first settlers were mostly migrants from Central Russia, some of them peasants escaping from serfdom, others criminals escaping prosecution.

<sup>177</sup> M. Bliyev and V. Digoyev, *Кавказская война* [The Caucasian War] (Moscow, 1994), p. 174.

<sup>171</sup> Federal law no. 99-F3, “On the policy of the Russian Federation in relation to compatriots abroad”, 24 May 1999.

<sup>172</sup> “Участники встречи в Общественной палате РФ предлагают создать ‘дорожную карту’ по переселению соотечественников на родину” [“The participants of the meeting in the Federal Public Chamber propose to create a ‘roadmap’ for the resettlement of compatriots in the homeland”], *Caucasian Knot*, 30 May 2012. “Сирийские черкесы нуждаются в статусе беженца” [“Syrian Circassians need refugee status”], *Gazeta Yuga* (online), 1 March 2012.

<sup>173</sup> “Темой Дня репатрианта в Адъгее, Кабардино-Балкарии и Грузии стали проблемы черкесской общины Сирии” [“The topic for Repatriant’s Day in Adygea, Kabardio-Balkaria and Georgia was the problems of the Circassian community in Syria”], *Caucasian Knot*, 1 August 2012, “В Адъгее для репатриантов откроют курсы русского языка” [“In Adygea courses in Russian language are offered to the repatriants”], *Caucasian Knot*, 6 July 2012.

<sup>174</sup> Crisis Group interview, Circassian activist Anzor Etlishev, Cherkessk, Karachay-Cherkessia, March 2012. “Черкесская молодежь Северного Кавказа предлагает создать новую республику” [“Circassian Youth from the North Caucasus propose to create a new republic”]; “Мурат Берзегов: ‘Единая Черкессия является конституционным правом черкесского народа’” [“Murat Berzegov: ‘A united Circassia is a constitu-

and settlements were renamed. Relations with some groups, especially Chechens, Ingush and Kabardins were complicated throughout the Soviet era, sometimes resulting in large brawls and murders. In 1992, Russian Cossacks who were subjected to state terror during Soviet times were rehabilitated.<sup>178</sup>

The 1990 Congress of Terek Cossacks (Cossack Circle) in Vladikavkaz began the movement's revival.<sup>179</sup> Cossacks demanded permission to carry weapons and sought to unite "historically Cossack" Naursky and Shelkovskoy districts from Chechnya in Stavropol Krai under their control. In autumn 1991 they declared a Terek Cossack Republic and set up a Union of Cossack Republics of the Russian South with its capital in Novocherkassk, which they expected to become a Soviet republic. After the Soviet collapse, they fought in several regional conflicts.<sup>180</sup>

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<sup>178</sup> Cossacks mostly sided with the Whites during the Civil War. As a result, thousands were killed and tens of thousands expelled from their villages. During the Second World War, some Cossacks fought for Germany, resulting in new repression. Russian Supreme Court ruling No. 3321-1, "On the rehabilitation of the Cossacks" 16 July 1992. For more on the repression of Cossacks, see Pavel Polyuan, *He по своей воле: история и география принудительных миграций в СССР* [Not voluntarily: history and geography of forced migration in the USSR] (Moscow, 2001), pp. 53-54.

<sup>179</sup> "Краткая хроника истории казачества в датах" ["A brief chronicle of Cossack history in dates"], Official site of the Terek-Cossacks, Terkv.ru. "It was such a joy to meet again. In the 1920s, following the abolition of Cossack [nationality], we all registered as Russians. The word "Cossack" without adding "red" could not be pronounced for 70 years". Crisis Group interview, Mikhail Klevtsov, former Cossack *ataman*, resident of the village of Kotlyarevskaya, KBR. The all-Russia census of 2002 for the first time registered the ethnic group Cossacks – some 140,028 people. However, according to Cossack activists and some experts, there are seven million Cossacks in Russia; the number enrolled in military Cossack associations alone is more than 700,000. "Медведев подписал ряд указов, упорядочивающих деятельность казачества" ["Medvedev signed a series of decrees, regulating the activities of Cossacks"], Inosmi.ru, 11 February 2010.

<sup>180</sup> The demands were made at the Fourth Congress of the Cossacks in Mineralnye Vody. At the same time, about 700 Cossacks blocked the railroad tracks and the entrance to the passenger terminal building of the airport for several hours. "Хронология Терского казачества современности" ["The chronology of modern Terek Cossack"], Cossack Society of Inozemtsevo, cossackinozemcevo.ru. Chechnya has the highest number of historical Cossack settlements in the North Caucasus, 24 out of the 88. "Возрождение казачества" ["The revival of the Cossacks"], Belgorod Cossack Department, kazak31.ru, 15 January 2011. The Cossacks fought in Transdnestria, Abkhazia, the Ingush-Ossetian conflict and, beside the Russians again, in the Chechen and 2008 Russian-Georgian wars. "Осетино-ингушский конфликт: история и современность" ["Ossetinian-

Today the main Terek Cossack demand is recognition as an indigenous ethnic group, with all rights and privileges, including better access to government posts and state jobs and resolution of their land disputes.<sup>181</sup> They believe they have a special historical role safeguarding Russian national interests in the Caucasus, preventing separatism and facilitating integration. "If we are gone, Russia will lose this region. For example, if it had not been for the Cossacks, Kabardino-Balkaria would have fallen apart. The Russian government should use our contacts and our local social capital to help resolve local tensions and conflicts", an activist said. However, some leaders have very intolerant views of other Caucasian peoples.<sup>182</sup>

Many young Cossacks are leaving the region, due to what they consider lack of opportunities resulting from unfair land distribution and inadequate state support. Traditional Cossack land is said to be often rented to big business, so that Cossacks cannot use their skills to organise advanced agricultural enterprises.

Some want to continue doing military service in their own units, the Cossack Hosts. Others prefer not to join the state's military units at all. In 2009 a special Presidential Council on the Cossacks was created; in 2010, eleven Cossack Hosts were awarded their own flags and emblem, and a special uniform and Cossack ranks were introduced. In January 2012, Cossacks received the right to carry assault weapons and create security companies to protect municipal and state agencies.<sup>183</sup> Additional legal measures ensured their special role in state service. But Cossacks say these are just gestures, and the government does not really support them: "For the last twenty years the federal government is only playing with us; they give us the Standart

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Ingush conflict: past and present"], Politcom.ru, 30 October 2007; "Казаки выбирают между волей и государством" ["Cossacks choose between freedom and the state"], Infox.ru, 27 August 2009.

<sup>181</sup> "For hundreds of years, living among mountaineers, we intermarried with locals and developed a distinct culture, which should be recognised as such". Crisis Group interview, Mikhail Klevtsov, former Cossack *ataman*, Kotlyarevskaya, Kabardino-Balkaria, March 2012. Cossacks also want some preferences as a minority ethnic group, such as special student quotas.

<sup>182</sup> Ibid. In the 1990s, the leadership of the Pyatigorsk department of the Terek Cossack Army (TCA) was associated with the later banned Russian National Unity Party. The *ataman* in Pyatigorsk said they demand protective measures for ethnic Russians in the North Caucasus. Crisis Group interview, Mikhail Inkovtsov, March 2012.

<sup>183</sup> Since 2010 Cossacks have patrolled with Stavropol Krai police. "В Ставропольском крае вводятся совместные патрули милиции и казаков" ["Stavropol Krai introduced joint patrols of police and Cossacks"], Caucasian Knot, 6 December 2010, "Российским казакам разрешили носить оружие" ["Russian Cossacks allowed to carry weapons"], *Pravda*, 26 January 2012.

[banner] of Terek Cossack Hosts in the Kremlin, but don't solve the land issue. The *stanitsa* is a social base for the Cossacks. Turning Cossacks from landowners into cheap labour is a potentially explosive strategy".<sup>184</sup>

But the Cossacks also risk being instrumentalised to increase inter-ethnic tensions. In August 2012, the governor of Krasnodar Krai, Alexander Tkachev, ordered the creation of Cossack paramilitary units, to be funded by the regional government, in order to prevent migration from the neighbouring North Caucasus areas. He urged Cossacks to "squeeze out" the "outsiders" by creating "uncomfortable" living conditions for them. For now Cossacks will be unarmed and will serve together with the local police, but many see this as a very dangerous development.<sup>185</sup> Inter-ethnic brawls already occur in the region, and on 21 July two Caucasians were killed in a clash with Cossacks in southern Stavropol Krai. Adding guns to the equation is likely to exponentially increase the death toll.

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<sup>184</sup> Crisis Group interview, Mikhail Klevtsov, former Cossack ataman, Kotlyarevskaya, Kabardino-Balkaria, March 2012. "Казачи выбирают между волей и государством" ["Cossacks choose between freedom and state"], Infox.ru, 27 August 2009; "Распоряжением Президента создан Совет по делам казачества" ["The president establishes the Council on Cossack affairs by decree"], website of the federation president, state.kremlin.ru, 12 January 2009; "Президент подписал Указ 'Об учреждении гербов и знамен войсковых казачьих обществ, внесённых в государственный реестр казачьих обществ Российской Федерации'" ["The president signed the decree on the establishment of the emblems and flags of Cossack military communities, listed in the State Register of Cossack communities in the Russian Federation"], *ibid*; "Российским казакам разрешили носить оружие" ["Russian Cossacks allowed to carry weapons?"], *Pravda* (online), 26 January 2012. In 1995-1996, decrees on the status of Cossack associations aimed to attract community members to public service and provided some economic benefits. "Казачи" ["The Cossacks"] Litsa Rossii [Faces of Russia"], www.rusnations.ru/etnos/cossack (n.d.).

<sup>185</sup> Ordinance no. 656-г, "On the organisation of the Cossack brigades involved in peacekeeping in Krasnodar Krai", 14 August 2012, Garant.ru. "Ткачев собирается защитить Кубань от кавказцев: создаются отряды казаков" [Tkachev is going to protect the Kuban from Caucasians: the Cossacks unites are created], NEWSru.com, 3 August 2012.

## VI. CONCLUSION

The North Caucasus's authentic integration with the rest of Russia is essential for security and healthy ethnic relations in the country. The spread of violence from Chechnya to neighbouring republics and regions, high losses among civilians, military and the insurgents alike and dramatically deteriorating ethnic relations countrywide indicate that Moscow needs to find new, more effective approaches to deal with the root causes of deadly conflict.

Chechnya, despite strong progress in reconstruction, still has a problem ensuring transparent government, political pluralism, the rule of law and women's rights. Accountability for investment in reconstruction of its cities, infrastructure and economy is crucial to avoid exacerbation of tensions between North Caucasian and Russian nationalists who resent what they see as highly opaque massive commitment to the Chechen economy.

Across the entire North Caucasus, however, unresolved ethnic conflicts and tensions, territorial and land disputes, unanswered old and new ethnic grievances articulated by national movements feed insurgency and provide fruitful soil for religious radicalism. This report briefly analysed the key issues linked to diversity and ethnicity. Addressing them would help eradicate many root causes of the current armed conflict. Thorough, field-based policy research on inter-ethnic disputes is needed to help shape a new nationality policy in the region. The government should closely monitor areas of tension, ensure equal access to local law enforcement and jobs, including government positions, in volatile, ethnically mixed communities.

A companion report published simultaneously provides more background on the development of traditional and fundamentalist Islam in the region, the characteristics of the jihadi inspired insurgency and the government's counter-insurgency effort. It demonstrates that conflict cannot be overcome solely with hard security measures but also how challenging it is to define appropriate alternatives that can win local hearts and minds, especially in an environment where political, legal and economic institutions and practices have been corrupted. Crisis Group will present recommendations to the Russian government and its partners in the third report, which will conclude this introductory series on the North Caucasus in early 2013.

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

## APPENDIX A

### MAP OF THE NORTH CAUCASUS



## **APPENDIX B**

### **GLOSSARY OF ABBREVIATIONS**

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ASSR	Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic
CTO	Counter-Terrorist Operation
FLNKA	Federal Lezgin National-Cultural Autonomy
FSB	Federal Security Service (Federalnaya Sluzhba Bezopasnosti)
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
KBR	Republic of Kabardino-Balkaria
KChR	Republic of Karachay-Cherkessia
MKP	Compact settlement for forced migrants (Mesta kompaktnogo prozhivaniya)
MP	Member of Parliament
MVD	Ministry of Internal Affairs (Ministerstvo Vnutrennykh Del')
NAC	National Antiterrorist Committee
NCFD	North Caucasus Federal District (comprises: Chechnya, Dagestan, Ingushetia, Kabardino-Balkaria, Karachay-Cherkessia, North Ossetia and Stavropol Krai)
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
PACE	Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe
PVR	Temporary residence centre (Punkt vremennogo razmeschenia)
RF	Russian Federation
RSFSR	Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic
SSR	Soviet Socialist Republic
TCA	Terek Cossack Army

## APPENDIX C

### GLOSSARY OF TERMS

#### **Adat**

Indigenous customary law.

#### **Ataman**

Cossack leader, highest rank in a Cossack military unit.

#### **Du'a**

Collective prayers, appeal to Allah.

#### **Familias**

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

#### **Fard**

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

#### **Fatwa**

Judicial opinion issued by learned Islamic scholar(s).

#### **Fiqh**

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

#### **Fitna**

Discord, social disturbance, also split.

#### **Gazavat**

Armed struggle for Islam.

#### **Hajj**

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

#### **Head of Republic**

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

#### **Jamaat**

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

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

#### **Jihad**

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

#### **Krai**

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

#### **Kufr**

Disbelief in the existence and oneness of Allah.

#### **Kutans**

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

#### **Lezginka**

Traditional Caucasian dance.

#### **Madrasa**

Religious college or school.

#### **Majalis**

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

#### **Madhhab**

Muslim school of law and jurisprudence.

#### **Maktab**

Basic courses of Islam or Islamic elementary school.

#### **Maslyat**

Reconciliation.

#### **Mufti**

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

#### **Murid**

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

#### **Murshid**

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

#### **Naibstvo**

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

#### **Nasheed**

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

#### **Pan-Turkism**

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

#### **Qadi**

Islamic judge and official.

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

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

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

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

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

**Shahid**

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

**Sharia**

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

**Shura**

A consultative council or assembly.

**Stanitsa**

Cossack settlement.

**Sufism**

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

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

**Tariqa**

Path to reach God; also Sufi brotherhood.

**Teip**

Clan, patrilineal kinship group (Chechnya, Ingushetia).

**Umma**

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

**Vilayat**

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

**Vird**

Subdivision of a Sufi *tariqa*.

**Wahhabism**

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



## APPENDIX D

### ETHNIC GROUPS IN THE NORTH CAUCASUS AND THEIR POPULATIONS

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Abaza .....	36,919
Adyghe .....	107,048
Armenians .....	20,5856
Avars .....	863,884
Azeris .....	150,782
Balkars .....	108,577
Chechens .....	1,335,183
Circassians .....	61,592
Dargins .....	539,686
Georgians .....	16,621
Ingush .....	415,169
Kabardoy .....	498,446
Karachais .....	209,922
Kumyks .....	460,049
Laks .....	161,276
Lezgins .....	393,140
Nogays .....	81,511
Ossetians .....	479,947
Russians .....	3,178,128
Rutuls .....	27,849
Tabasarans .....	127,455
Tatars .....	18,207
Tats .....	455
Turks .....	29,251

Source: Russia-wide population census of 2010

## APPENDIX E

### ABOUT THE INTERNATIONAL CRISIS GROUP

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

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

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

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

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

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**October 2012**

## APPENDIX F

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- Macedonia's Name: Breaking the Deadlock*, Europe Briefing N°52, 12 January 2009 (also available in Albanian and Macedonian).
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- Cyprus: Six Steps toward a Settlement*, Europe Briefing N°61, 22 February 2011 (also available in Greek and Turkish).
- Aphrodite's Gift: Can Cypriot Gas Power a New Dialogue?*, Europe Report N°216, 2 April 2012.

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