



Chechnya, the Caucasus, & World Justice

Barry Rodrigue & Gary Lawless, Editors
With Helle Degnbol, Associate Editor

(If you obtain a copy of this booklet, would you please send a \$5.00 donation to the Committee for the Defense of Forced Refugees or to the International Committee for the Children of Chechnya. The addresses for both of these organizations are listed in the "Links" section at the back of this publication. Thank you!)

International Students Organization of Lewiston-Auburn (ISOLA)
University of Southern Maine, Lewiston-Auburn College
51 Westminster Street,
Lewiston, Maine 04240 USA

With

Gulf of Maine Books
134 Maine Street
Brunswick, Maine 04011 USA

The Praxis Research & Education Center
Meshersky Pereulok, 2-5
109443 Moscow Box 7 Russian Federation

The Danish Support Committee for Chechnya
Mariehøjvej 42, DK-2850 Nærum, Denmark

June 2008

Introduction

One of the most violent wars in recent history has raged in Chechnya and the Caucasus for the last fifteen years. As much as a quarter of the Chechen population has been killed and tens of thousands wounded: Most are civilians. Thousands of Chechen families have been dislocated as refugees, up to half of Chechnya's people.

In terms of the overall Russian Federation, these casualties would be the equivalent of the population of central Russia, including Moscow, killed and everyone else west of Siberia made homeless; for the United States, the population of New York, Virginia, and the rest of the Middle Atlantic States killed and anyone else left alive east of the Mississippi River homeless; for Europe, almost the entire population of western Europe dead and those alive in northern and southern Europe homeless.

This conflict amounts to an ongoing genocide against the Chechen and other indigenous peoples of the Caucasus. This conflict has been largely ignored by the American media. In an attempt to provide some basic background information for North Americans, we have created this overview.



Children in the ruins of Grozny, 2007.

Apti Bisultanov & Chechen Poetry

Gary Lawless

When I become interested in a place, its cultures, its peoples, I want to hear what the poets of that place, past and present, have to say. I first became interested in Chechnya through the writings of Anna Politkovskaya and Dr. Khassan Baiev. I used the Internet to find poetry by Chechen poets, and—yes—there was quite a bit of poetry, but it was in Chechen or Russian, but not translated into English. I did find an interview with a contemporary Chechen poet, Apti Bisultanov, which had been translated. Bisultanov had fought in the Second Chechen War and now lives in Germany. The article mentioned a collection of poems he had had translated into German. I sent an e-mail to my friend Stefan Hyner, a German poet, who emailed me the book in German. I then contacted Otto Emmersleben at Bowdoin College. Otto is a friend of both Stefan and myself, a German author currently living here in Maine. Otto translated several of Bisultanov's poems into English for us. Then our friend Helle Degnbol in Copenhagen helped us refine the work. Apti Bisultanov, in the interview, said that very little poetry is being read in Chechnya at present:

The beauty of poetry no longer has anything to do with people's everyday lives. People say that poems could no longer be written after Auschwitz. The same now applies to Chechnya.

One of his poems says: "Tell the world, which is sacrificing Chechnya / that for the world, Chechnya is burning." He explained:

The world is revealed in Chechnya. We learn the truth about the Russians' attitude to the Chechens, the Russians' attitude to each other, and the Chechens' attitude to each other. What's more, the rest of the world reveals its true colours in its silence about the war.

I hope that by presenting a few of these poems, from one Chechen's heart, we can come to feel moved to break the silence about this war, about all wars, and listen to the poetry of Chechnya.



Apti Bisultanov was born in 1959 in the village of Goitschu (Chechnya). Apti studied philology and has worked as a university lecturer, editor, publisher, secretary, and partisan. In March 2000, his village of 6,000 people was literally wiped off the face of the earth by the Russian military. All his writings and his library

were destroyed. Since 2003, he has lived in Berlin. Aпти has won praise and awards for his poetry: “Writing in Chaibach” is a poem dedicated to the Chechen sacrifices during their exile under Stalin and won the Chechen National Award in 1992. He participated in the International Literature Festival and shared its Culture Award. In 2003, he won the International Poetry Publishers’ Award in Rotterdam.¹

Heiserer Habicht / Hoarse Hawk

Heiserer Habicht wie bist du mir gleich
Ungehört von Gott
Dein zielloser Schrei
Spreize die Schwingen [1986]
Lass uns schweigen
Ich auf der Erde
Du im Abendrot

Hoarse hawk how much you are like me
Unheard by god
Your aimless cry
Spread the wings
Let us be silent
Me on earth
You in the sunset glow

Eine Dritte Uhr / A Third Clock

In unserem Hause gibt es zwei Uhren
Die eine
Für die Gebete der Mutter
Die andere [1987]
Für die Zeit meiner Reisen
Gäbe es in unserem Hause
Eine dritte
Uhr, sie zeigte die Ruhe

In our house there are two clocks
One for mother’s prayers
The other
for the time of my travels
Would there be a third
clock in our house
It would show quietness

¹ Aпти Bisultanov, *Schatten eines Blitzes*, Klagenfurt, Germany: Kitab Verlag, 2004. Sieglinde Geisel, “Die Wolken über Tschetschenien/Gespräch mit dem Schriftsteller Aпти Bisultanov,” *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, 18/19 September 2004; “Contemporary Chechen Poetry: A Conversation with Author Aпти Bisultanov” in *Qantara.de* (www.qantara.de/webcom/show_article.php/_c-310/_nr-113/i.html).

Eine Stimme / A Voice

Ist das ein Kranich oder ein geflügelter Schakal
Schreit er vor Kälte oder Todesangst

Ich höre nur seine Stimme

Is this a crane or a winged jackal
Does he cry out of fear or because of the cold

I do hear only his voice

[1982]

Im Krieg / In War

Was du nicht wirklich liebst
Was dich nicht wirklich liebt
Streift den Körper, die Seele dir
Verwundet

Nur was dich tödlich liebt
Dringt dir ins Herz
Eine Frau
Eine Kugel

Noch einmal den Namen Gottes aussprechen!

What you don't love for real
What does not love you for real
Touches the body, wounds your soul

Only what loves you deadly
Penetrates your heart
A woman
A bullet

Pronounce the Name of God once more!

[2000]

Erinnerung / Memory

Und der von einem stürzenden Berg übrig gebliebene Felsen
Und die verwilderten Menschen auf Erden
Und der von einem stürzenden Felsen übrig gebliebene Schatten
Und die Wildnis der Gräber im Himmel
Und die Gesichter der Schachiden²
Und das Himmel und Erde bespritzende Blut der Tschetschenen

Und das am Ende der Welt ausgesetzte Kätzchen
Und das Froschtränchen, von welchem das Meer überläuft³
Und die am Himmel ausgesetzte Schildkröte
Und das von einem Schmetterling zerschlagene Fenster
Und dieser Abend
Und Berlin
Und ich
Und die Erinnerungen, Ameisen, die über Seele und Leib mir eilen
Und meine Gebete, die alle enden mit:
Lieber Gott, lass mich in Tschetschenien sterben!

And the rock left standing after a mountain's collapse
And the savaged people on earth
And the shadow left by a toppled rock
And the wilderness of the graves in heaven
And the faces of the Shakhides⁴
And the blood of the Chechens splashing heaven and earth

And the kitten set free at the end of the earth
And frog tears make the ocean run over⁵
And the tortoise set free in the sky
And the window shattered by a butterfly
And this evening
And Berlin
And I
And the memories, ants that hurry all over my soul and
body
And my prayers, all ending this way:
Dear God, let me die in Chechnya!

[2003]

² Gefallene für eine heilige Sache.

³ Tschetschenisches Sprichwort: Ein Froschtränchen bringt das Meer zum Überlaufen.

⁴ The ones killed for a holy cause.

⁵ A Chechen proverb: One little tear of a frog makes the sea run over.

Chechnya and the Caucasus

Barry Rodrigue

The Caucasus Region, between the Black Sea and the Caspian Sea, is a unique crossroads between Europe and Asia. Some of the earliest human remains have been found there, dating from hundreds of thousands of years ago. The secret of iron-making was discovered in the Caucasus 3,000 years ago and then spread to the rest of the world. Mount Elbrus, the highest mountain in Europe, rises in the distance. Almost thirty million



people who speak forty different languages live in the Caucasian hills, valleys and plains. A variety of ancient and modern empires have sought to conquer this land: From Persians and Greeks to Ottomans and Russians. Most residents in the North Caucasus follow a liberal Islamic faith brought into the mountains in the 14th century with the invading armies of the Mongol leader Tamerlane. These

Caucasus Muslims tend to follow Sufism, a moral and poetic religion infused with local traditions of family and community values. Today, the northern Caucasus is part of the Russian Federation.

Chechnya lies on the north slopes of the Caucasus Mountains. It is about the size of Connecticut (5,000 square miles or 13,000 square kilometers) and has a population less than Maine (one million). The Chechens call themselves *Vai Nakh* and call their country *Nokhchi Mokhk*. The relationship between the peoples of Russia and Chechnya is similar to that between the peoples of the United States and Mexico.

The Caucasus and Mexico are resource rich and fertile lands that form an isthmus between two seas. As Russian citizens, Chechens live throughout Russia, just as Hispanic Americans live throughout the United States. Like Hispanics, the Chechens have formed ethnic communities in many towns and are known for their entrepreneurial skills. In many areas of Russia they use their family networks to provide produce from their warm and fertile homelands for public markets.

There is also the widespread Russian image of Chechens as being part of a criminal underworld. This is very similar to the popular U.S. view of Mexicans as being historical bandits (such as Pancho Villa), urban gang members, and managers of drug cartels. The Russian journalist, Anna Politkovskaya, has written on this situation:

Only a madman could envy the Chechens who live in Russia now. In years gone by, their situation was unenviable, but since the *Nord-Ost* siege [2002], the machinery of racially based state retribution has been in overdrive. Racial attacks and purges supervised by police have become commonplace. In a single moment people's lives are ruined, they lose their home, their jobs, any sort of social support, and for just one reason: they are Chechens.⁶

These kinds of stereotypes merged in a dangerous fashion on the Finnish border, when, in early September 2006, a brawl broke out between Russians and Chechens in a restaurant in Kondopoga, a small city in northwestern Russia. As a result, nationalist politicians calling for ethnic cleansing supported rallies to expel "immigrants," despite the fact that Chechens and other people from the Caucasus are Russian citizens. Mobs burned the restaurant and then went on to destroy a street market and businesses owned by merchants from the Caucasus. Kondopoga residents of Caucasus extraction fled the city.⁷ As in the United States and Canada, nationalist politicians use ethnic stereotypes and the politics of immigration to promote their careers and party agendas.

What, one may ask, has led to this kind of racist violence?

Background History

The Russian Empire expanded into the Caucasus Mountains in the 1700s, seeking a southern corridor to the Middle East and Central Asia. They encountered strong opposition as the native peoples resisted colonization, which led to almost a half-century of fighting in the Caucasus War (1817–1864). This was a guerilla war reminiscent of the "Indian wars" in the United States and Canada. Russian General Yermolov believed that the key to regional conquest lay in defeat of the Chechens. In 1818, the Russians established Groznaya Fortress (Fort Terror) on the Sunzha River in Chechen territory.⁸ By the middle of the 19th century, the Caucasus and Chechnya were forced into the Russian Empire and Grozny became a regional center.

With the rise of the Industrial Revolution and petroleum use, the Caucasus became an important part of the modern world.⁹ The first commercial oil wells came on line in the Grozny area in 1893 and expanded to produce almost 20% of Russia's oil by the early 20th century. As with the other parts of Russia, the Caucasus and Chechnya were incorporated into the Soviet Union after 1917. Oil production increased and the Grozny area came to provide 30% of the Soviet Union's total output, peaking in 1932.

⁶ Anna Politkovskaya, *Putin's Russia: Life in a Failing Democracy*, New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2004, p. 211.

⁷ Kondopoga is a city of 35,000 people in the province of Karelia, near the Russian border with Finland. Claire Bigg, "Russia: Kondopoga Violence Continues Unabated," *Radio Free Europe*, 5 September 2006, (<http://www.rferl.org/featuresarticle/2006/09/6cc8626f-be02-4054-957b-d0872dc41157.html>).

⁸ The Crimean War (1854–1856) was a related conflict that involved Great Britain, France, and Turkey in opposition to Russia, which sought an outlet into the ice-free Mediterranean Sea.

⁹ Both the Bible and Marco Polo described petroleum coming from the Caucasus in ancient times.

Nonetheless, the people of the Caucasus never gave up their desire for independence. As a result of minor revolts against Stalinist policies during World War II, the Red Army deported between one and two million ethnic peoples from the Soviet Union's southwestern border region – Tartars from Crimea and old Germanic settlers from the Volga, as well as the Ingush and Chechen peoples from the Caucasus.¹⁰ In late February 1944, the old and infirm were abandoned or killed, while the remaining people were herded into cattle cars and sent to Kazakhstan and Siberia.¹¹ Ironically, the deportees included soldiers of the Red Army who were home on leave, as well as injured veterans. This “Road to Death” is similar to the “Trail of Tears,” in which thousands of Native Americans were forced to move from the Southeast states to Oklahoma by the U.S. military in the 1830s.

In 1957, after a thirteen-year exile and after Stalin's death, Soviet President Nikita Khrushchev gave an amnesty to the exiled peoples and they were allowed to return home. However, upon their return, they found new immigrants had taken over their land and property. No compensation was provided. Nonetheless, they took up new homes and businesses, and re-established themselves with great energy. A fervent love of their homeland is an acknowledged trait of Chechen identity.

Although oil field production had begun to decline in Chechnya after World War II, Grozny had become an important hub for the region's network of pipelines and highways that linked the Caspian Sea to the Black Sea and the Mediterranean, as well as Russia to Central Asia. A huge oil refinery was built in Grozny that produced all of the Soviet Union's paraffin and much of its high-grade aviation fuel. By the 1980s, the surrounding countryside and communities had again become prosperous with bustling stores, cafes, and clinics. Chechnya's abundant natural resources supplied materials to the area's concrete and asphalt plants, wood mills, and brick factories. Local farms supplied flour mills, food-processing plants, and dairies. Residents maintained a dynamic array of schools, daycares, hospitals, libraries, museums, and community centers. Chechens traveled widely throughout the Warsaw Pact nations and were considered to be an educated, multilingual, and cosmopolitan people.

But then, with the collapse of the Communist Party in 1991, as well as the political and economic crisis this brought about, the Caucasus went into an economic decline, along with many other regions throughout the Soviet Union. As the Soviet state economy began to fall apart and people were forced to look out for themselves, tensions over unresolved territory issues began to erupt.

Although Georgia – in the southern Caucasus – obtained its independence from Russia in 1991, its provinces of Abkhazia and South Ossetia in turn revolted against Georgia and

¹⁰ The Soviet allegation was that these small nations had collaborated with the German military during the Nazi invasion of World War II. Although the Germans wanted to seize the oil fields of the eastern Caucasus, the *Wehrmacht* never reached even Ingush or Chechen territory by the time the Battle of Stalingrad (1942–1943) drove them out of the Soviet Union.

¹¹ This Chechen deportation and exile from the Caucasus is commemorated as World Chechnya Day on 23 February of each year.

sought support from Russia. Then conflict took place in the Prigorodny district of North Ossetia – a legacy of the Caucasus deportation, when the Ingush had been exiled and their territory transferred to neighboring Ossetia. After their return, the Muslim Ingush again settled in their old territory, but it remained under Christian Ossetian administration. In 1992, as each province began to concern themselves about control of their resources, approximately 600 Ingush civilians were killed and 60,000 driven out by North Ossetia in a pre-emptive strike of ethnic cleansing.

In 1991, Chechnya declared its sovereignty, as had other Soviet states like Lithuania, Belarus, Ukraine, and Kazakhstan. Although some of the Caucasus nations obtained their independence, like Georgia and Armenia in the southern Caucasus, the new Russian Federation was determined to hold a lid on independence movements in the northern Caucasus, because of this area's strategic importance to Russia's oil industry. There also was a lack of support for Chechen independence from the West, unlike that given to Poland and the Warsaw Pact nations in Eastern Europe.¹² In order to fund their newly proclaimed nation, the Chechens began selling their oil outside of the Russian market. All this contributed to the Russian invasion of Chechnya in 1994.

Political Notes: A “republic” refers to an independent nation-state in North America, but refers to a province or state in Russia. In the case of Chechnya, both meanings are used. Since 1991 two political entities have been fighting for control—the Chechen Republic of Ichkeria seeking independence from Russia and Russia's province of the Chechen Republic.

Although the Chechens and other small nations had suffered in the Soviet Union, the ideal of multi-ethnic equality had somewhat mitigated the problems of ethnic conflict. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russian nationalism emerged more forcefully, as ethnic Russians asserted their dominance, and racism was more forcefully added to the mix of the Russian Federation.

As the Soviet Union crumbled in the early 1990s, many Soviet leaders declared themselves supporters of a “free market.” State-owned industries were transferred to private speculators, who were often cronies of government officials. These “oligarchs” then provided monetary kickbacks to the leaders, who appointed corrupt officials to the courts, the military, and government ministries. In those areas where stronger remedies were required, gangsters were hired to eliminate either honest officials or the competition. This “Russian Mafia” has infiltrated the security forces to such an extent that it is hard to distinguish between official agents and unofficial thugs.

¹² After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the United States and Western Europe became involved with what they considered to be more important priorities such as nuclear disarmament and stability in Eastern Europe.

A co-operative dictatorship exists in Russia between corrupt politicians, corrupt businessmen, and corrupt officials. It is a form of gangster capitalism that does not so much hearken back to the old Soviet dictatorship as to the “Robber Baron” capitalism of the United States in the late 1800s, when politicians, officials, and businessmen worked with gangsters to dominate the American economy. A similar remedy is needed in Russia as began to take place in the United States a century ago: The empowerment of common people by grassroots activism and democratic reform, establishment of an impartial court system, civic oversight and regulation of the economy, and international cooperation, especially in the area of human rights.

First Chechen War

Dzhokhar Dudayev had been a general in the Soviet Air Force and, as commander of a major military base in Estonia, refused to suppress dissidents seeking independence in 1987. This was during the *perestroika* and *glasnost* reform movements under Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev. Dudayev was inspired by the independence activities that he had witnessed in the Baltic Republics. He resigned his commission, returned to Chechnya, and joined its independence movement. The Soviet Union broke apart in 1991 and many of its republics declared independence. Dudayev became the first president of the Chechen-Ingush Republic, which declared its sovereignty in October 1991. The next year, Ingushetia chose to remain a republic in the Russian Federation, while the Chechen Republic of Ichkeria declared full independence in 1993.

Although the Russian Federation opposed this declaration of independence, it took them time to mount a military invasion. Boris Yeltsin had come to power as president of the new Russian Federation on a platform of democracy and free market capitalism in 1991, but his administration soon became mired in corruption and incompetence. The First Chechen War began in 1994. During this two-year conflict, there were over 50,000 people killed, two-thirds of them Chechen civilians, and tens of thousands of refugees displaced from their homes. The Chechen surgeon, Dr. Khassan Baiev, describes what he witnessed in this conflict from his home near Grozny.

In early April 1995 enormous explosions could be heard in the west, sounding like the crack of thunder over the mountains. I guessed that towns were being shelled and I jumped into my car and started towards Samashki to treat the wounded. At the entrance to the town, the Russians turned everyone back. What happened in those three terrible days between 7 April and 9 April 1995 I only learned later when Russian military lifted the blockade and let medical personnel enter the village.

It was a blood bath. Russian attacks on Chechen towns usually started in the same way with the military accusing townspeople of harbouring fighters. However, in most cases—and Samashki was no exception—the town elders had already negotiated with the Chechen field commander to leave the village. In Samashki, the Russians then demanded the elders hand over sixty-

four rifles. The elders explained they did not have the rifles. This became the excuse the Russians needed to start a punishment raid, moving their armour and shooting everyone in their path, including elders, women and children. If the townspeople had had rifles, they would have opened fire, but there was no resistance and the soldiers reached the centre of town quickly.

People hid in their basements and the soldiers lobbed grenades in after them, then torched the houses. Bombs rained down. The rampage lasted several hours. When complete, the soldiers loaded their lorries with video recorders, television sets, carpets and furniture looted from the houses left standing.

When the Russian military authorities opened up the town two days later, I went in with Red Cross workers. I hesitate to write about the atrocities we saw because I fear that people will think I am exaggerating. I saw dozens of charred corpses of women and children lying in the courtyard of the mosque, which had been destroyed. The first thing my eye fell on was the burned body of a baby, lying in the foetal position. The flesh had burned off the arms and you could see the white of the finger bones. I could not tell if it was a girl or a boy. I saw a wild-eyed woman emerge from a burned-out house holding a dead baby. Lorries with bodies piled in the back rolled through the streets on the way to the cemetery.

While treating the wounded, I heard stories of young men—gagged and trussed up—dragged with chains behind personnel carriers. I heard of Russian aviators who threw Chechen prisoners, screaming, out of their helicopters. There were rapes, but how many was hard to know because women were too ashamed to report them. One girl was raped in front of her father. I heard of one case in which the mercenaries grabbed a newborn baby, threw it among each other like a ball, then shot it dead in the air. The accounts were hard to believe, as though the soldiers had taken leave of their senses and become rabid dogs. More than 200 people died and many more were wounded.

Leaving the town for the hospital in Grozny, I passed a Russian armoured personnel carrier with the word “SAMASHKI” written on its side in bold, black letters. I looked in my rear-view mirror and to my horror saw a human skull mounted on the front of the vehicle. The bones were white; I guessed someone must have boiled the skull to remove the flesh. At the first checkpoint, the troop carrier overtook me and I saw painted on its other side the words: “GENERAL YERMOLOV”, a reminder of the cruelty that this nineteenth-century Russian general visited on the Northern Caucasus.¹³

In response to such brutal attacks on civilian populations, about 200 Chechen fighters under Shamil Basayev attacked government facilities in the Russian city of Budyonnovsk, in a province just north of Chechnya, on 14 June 1995. Under attack from the Russian military, they retreated to a hospital with about 1500 hostages and demanded an end to the war in Chechnya. Six Russian military hostages were killed when Basayev’s demand for a press conference was delayed. Russian security forces attempted to storm the hospital and the heavy fighting resulted in about 100 civilian deaths. This set

¹³ Khassan Baiev, *The Oath*, New York: Walker & Company, 2003, pp. 130–131.

a pattern, as more civilians were killed as a result of the Russian attack than by the Chechen fighters. A treaty was negotiated such that the hostages were released, Russian military operations in Chechnya were temporarily halted, and negotiations to end the war were begun. It was a turning point of the First Chechen War.

Chechen President Dudayev was killed on 21 April 1996. Zelimkhan Yandarbiyev was named his successor. Despite this setback, the army of the Chechen Republic of Ichkeria attacked and recaptured Grozny on 6–20 August 1996. In the midst of this surprise victory, a ceasefire between Russia and Chechnya was negotiated.

Temporary Peace

Presidential elections were held in Chechnya on 27 January 1997, and the moderate Chechen nationalist Aslan Maskhadov was elected. On 12 May 1997, a peace treaty was signed between President Maskhadov and President Yeltsin in Moscow. Under the treaty, a decision about the political status of Chechnya was to be delayed until 2001. Despite this treaty, tensions still existed in Chechnya. Thousands of Chechens were missing and many were suffering from a collapsed health care system: Tuberculosis, dysentery, and parasites were epidemic. Stress of the fighting on the civilian population brought about not only an increased occurrence of heart disease, strokes, and post-traumatic stress disorder, but also infant death and birth defects.

Renegade groups and opportunists also operated. Arbi Barayev was a leader of one of them. Nicknamed “The Terminator,” he was a brutal gangster who made attacks on behalf of the highest bidder, allegedly even on behalf of the Russian military. He and his men were suspected to have killed six international Red Cross nurses in Noviye Atagi in 1996 and four foreign telecommunications workers in 1998, as well as making two assassination attempts on President Aslan Maskhadov in 1998 and 1999. Maskhadov ordered Barayev’s units to be placed under the military command of the Chechen Republic of Ichkeria. Barayev refused, and his militia fought against the Chechen Army outside the town of Gudermes in 1998. Barayev was stripped of his rank of Brigade General and declared an enemy of the state. He finally became too “hot” for even the Russians to tolerate and was captured, during the Second Chechen War, by Russian military intelligence (GRU) at a Russian security facility (FSB) in which he had sought sanctuary. Barayev died in 2001 under torture at the Russian base of Khankala (near Grozny). His gang continued to operate, though, becoming involved in the Moscow Theater Siege in 2002 (see below).

During this lull between the two wars, President Maskhadov was unable to get control of the variety of factions in Chechnya, including within his own administration. Kidnappings, murders, and robberies became common. Local Chechens were victimized, in addition to foreign relief workers and journalists. Despite Islamic elders’ condemnation of such acts, the criminal activities persisted. Some of this gangsterism was the work of the Russian mafia colluding with the Chechen mafia. Russian security forces were also involved, trying to destabilize Chechnya as the time for the 2001 independence discussions approached.

Although the Muslim Congress of the Northern Caucasus condemned the Wahhabism movement (Fundamentalist Islam) in 1998, a Russian crackdown on Islamic and nationalist militants in the neighboring Russian Republic of Dagestan forced many of them into Chechnya. There, they joined with some Chechen militants and declared their desire to create an Islamic confederation in the northern Caucasus. About 1400 fighters, including 100 Chechens, invaded Dagestan on 7 August 1999 under Chechen commander Shamil Basayev and Saudi leader Emir Khattab. Russian military operations pushed them back into Chechnya by mid-September.¹⁴

Throughout this time, many ex-Soviet officials were understandably aghast at the corruption, incompetence, and disorientation taking place throughout Russia under President Boris Yeltsin's administration and the oligarchs. By the late 1990's, ex-KGB officer Vladimir Putin was being promoted by Russian security forces as a strong successor to replace Yeltsin. First appointed Deputy Chief of Staff to Yeltsin in 1997, he became head of the Federal Security Branch in 1998 and Prime Minister in 1999. Putin's rise to power was aided by his allies' control of the media and their scare tactics about Chechen terrorists.

While the fighting in Dagestan was going on, a series of five bombings took place in Moscow and other Russian cities in August and September 1999. Although there was no indication of Chechen involvement, security checkpoints were set up in Moscow and around Russia to capture "Chechen terrorists." Thousands of Chechens throughout Russia were arrested, interrogated, beaten, and intimidated. It is widely assumed that the bombings were "false flag" operations, done by Russian security forces in order to blame Chechens and justify a new Russian invasion of Chechnya. This impression was supported on 22 September 1999, when a resident in the city of Ryzan (southeast of Moscow) saw large sacks being carried into the cellar of his nine-story apartment building and called the local police, who found explosives that were traced to Russian agents in the federal security forces. The FSB and GRU claimed this event was just a training exercise, but the Russian government closed public investigations of the affair.

As a result of the fighting in Dagestan and the apartment bombings, the new Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin issued declarations against Chechnya and began preparations for another invasion. Russian air strikes hit Chechen oil facilities, buildings, and military bases. Putin became acting President in December 1999, when Yeltsin was finally forced to resign. This transfer of power was seen as a *coup d'etat*, but one in which the blood spilled was in Chechnya, not in the Kremlin.

Second Chechen War

On 15 October 1999, Russian military units took control of positions around Grozny and began bombardment. By 4 December, the city was surrounded. Corridors for civilian

¹⁴ Some felt that Basayev had been duped by a Dagestani leader, working for the Russian government, to invade Dagestan. The logic of such a "false flag" operation was that it provided Russia with justification for stronger intervention in the region as the 2001 date for negotiation of Chechen independence drew near.

evacuation were said to be opened, but those trying to leave were attacked by Russian forces. About 5,000 Chechen soldiers and 50,000 civilians remained in the city. Fierce fighting commenced. Chechen evacuation began at the end of January 2000. On 6 February 2000, Russians raised their flag of victory. The United Nations declared Grozny to be the most destroyed city on Earth. A campaign of guerilla warfare then began.

The Second Chechen War has been marked by exceptional Russian brutality against civilian populations. The Russian military routinely employed gangsters, paramilitary forces, and double agents, as well as used experimental weapons from poison gas that attacks skin and lungs to vacuum bombs that pulverize the victims' internal organs. After the shelling of villages, a *zachistka* or "purge" would take place: Russian contract security forces would loot, rape, and kill under the cover of "military operations." The Russian military established 22 "filtration camps," the most notorious being Chernokozovo Camp in northern Chechnya. These were supposed to be sites for separating fighters from civilians after Russian raids on villages, but became concentration camps where torture and murder were the norm. Civilians had to bribe the soldiers to release relatives or their relatives' bodies.¹⁵

The Russians committing such war crimes were seldom held accountable. A surprising exception was the case of Colonel Yuri Budanov. In February 2000, Budanov's tank regiment was stationed outside the Chechen village of Tangi-Chu. On the night of 26–27 March, after binge-drinking with fellow-officers, Budanov went to the village, seized 18-year old Elza Kungaeva, whom he accused of aiding rebels, and then raped, beat, tortured, and killed her. Budanov was taken into custody two days after the murder. After three years of trial, appeals, and retrial, Budanov was finally convicted and sentenced to ten-years in labor camps. However, such acts of state terror are generally ignored by the Russian military and government.

In the First and Second Chechen Wars, Russians were told that captured soldiers would be tortured to death by the Chechens. This was said despite the fact that captured Russian soldiers were routinely cared for by Chechen families and clandestinely returned to their homes in Russia through networks of mothers. The Chechen mothers returned soldiers to their homes because they knew that Russian military officers often brutally punish their own repatriated troops.

The wars in Chechnya have been largely wars of deception. Key to the Russian tactics is the prevention of media coverage or to only allow partisan reporters access to limited information. A similar technique is used by the U.S. military in Iraq, which allows only "embedded" journalists access to military zones and its highly distorted information.¹⁶ On 15 January 2000, Russian journalist Andrei Babitsky, who was covering the Second Chechen War for the U.S. news agency, *Radio Free Europe*, disappeared. It turned out

¹⁵ By 2002, filtration camps were said to be "abolished," but the practice has continued and the camps were reduced to fourteen and relabeled as "places of temporary imprisonment."

¹⁶ Although journalist Robert Fisk's discussion of the Caucasus in his book on the Middle East and Central Asia is limited, his review of the larger regional conflict of which it is part is excellent, especially his analysis of media control and manipulation. Robert Fisk, *The Great War for Civilisation: The Conquest of the Middle East* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2005).

that the Russian military had kidnapped him in retaliation for his reports on the Russian brutality in the war. On 4 February 2000, he was exchanged to the Chechens in return for two Russian soldiers, and was then released by the Chechens. Babitsky has since then been discredited by the Russian government and media for his “bias” in favor of the Chechens and the United States.

On 26 March 2000, Prime Minister Vladimir Putin was elected President of Russia on a “law and order” platform. As a result of the 9-11 events in the United States in 2001 and the Bush Administration’s “War on Terror,” Putin and his government saw a new opportunity to not only be allowed to conduct a war of terror against the people in the Caucasus, but to actually obtain assistance from the U.S. government. In this way, Sufi Chechens were lumped with Islamic Fundamentalists as global terrorists and so were deemed deserving of harsh repression for the sake of global peace. This stereotyping has even extended in the arts, when—in November 2006—the celebrated Chechen poet Apti Bisultanov was refused entry to Taiwan to attend the Taipei Poetry Festival.

One of the incidents that highlight the complexity of this situation happened on 23 October 2002, when 42 Chechen fighters took 850 hostages at the Dubrovka Theater in Moscow and demanded Russian withdrawal from Chechnya (this is referred to as the “Nord-Ost Siege,” from the name of the play being produced there at the time). After three days of desultory negotiations, Russian security forces pumped poison gas into the theater and attacked: 33 of the hostage-takers died, as well as 129 hostages. Chechen commander Shamil Basayev took responsibility for the assault, although he was not present. The hostage-taking was denounced by the Chechen Republic of Ichkeria (President Maskhadov), and—as a result—Basayev resigned from his position in the Chechen government. The Russian attack was said to be unwarranted, overly forceful, and poorly planned: Most of the hostages died from the gas attack and no contingency for their treatment had been made. It is also alleged that the Chechen operation had actually been orchestrated by double agents working for the Russians (the onsite Chechen leader was Movsar Barayev, nephew of the Chechen gangster and Russian collaborator, Arbi Barayev). The Russians making these accusations—FSB agent Aleksander Litvinenko, politician Sergei Yushenkov, and journalist Anna Politovskaya—were all subsequently murdered by hitmen, allegedly acting in cooperation with Russian security forces.

While Putin’s rise to power led to centralization of a national policy, it also led to the destruction of democracy. Perhaps nowhere else was this so apparent as in the case of pro-democracy politician Sergei Yushenkov. Elected to the Russian Parliament in 1989, Yushenkov participated in public investigations that incriminated the FSB in a number of illegal operations: The 1999 Russian apartment bombings and their pinning the blame on Chechens, the *coup d’etat* in arranging Vladimir Putin’s 1999 appointment first as Prime Minister and then President of Russia, the manufacture of public opinion for the Second Chechen War in 1999, and the 2002 Nord-Ost Siege. Yushenkov was shot dead on the streets of Moscow on 17 April 2003.

In 2002, a new phase of the Chechen conflict developed, as a desperate group of Chechen suicide attackers organized.¹⁷ In 2004, several bus stops, subway trains, and metro stations were bombed in Russia, which resulted in about 50 people killed and another 150 wounded.¹⁸ On 24 October 2004, two Russian passenger planes flying out of Moscow were blown up by Chechen separatists: One was enroute to Volgograd and exploded over the province of Tula (south of Moscow) in which 43 people died; the other was enroute to Sochi on the Black Sea and exploded over the province of Rostov (south of Moscow), resulting in 46 deaths.

This second war caused many Chechen families to seek refuge elsewhere, some as far away as western Europe and North America. Over 300,000 Chechens fled into neighboring Ingushetia, whose people share many cultural traits with Chechens and whose president (Ruslan Aushev) tried to help the refugees. At the height of this migration, as many Chechens as Ingush were living in this province—in tents and railroad cars, under tarpaulins, and with Ingush families. However, beginning in 2001, the Russians forced Aushev out of power, the Ingush borders were sealed, refugee camps were closed, and most of the families were forced back into the hell of Chechnya.

On 1 September 2004, about 32 Chechen separatists took 1300 adults and students hostage at the opening-day events at School # 1 in Beslan, North Ossetia, in the northern Caucasus. After three days, Russian security forces attacked the Chechen position in the school with tanks, flame-throwers, and heavy weapons. About 396 people were killed, including 186 children. Much controversy surrounds this incident. Once again, the Chechen commander Shamil Basayev took responsibility for it, although he was not present in Beslan. The goals and demands were not well articulated, but there were allegations of al-Qaeda involvement and the general attempt to instigate a religious war across the northern Caucasus (while North Ossetia is largely Russian Orthodox, up to 70% of those killed by the Russian attack at Beslan were Muslim). The hostage-taking was denounced by the government of the Chechen Republic of Ichkeria (President Maskhadov), who offered to intervene in negotiations to end the siege. For their part, the Russian attack was said to have been unwarranted and overly strong, which led to the high number of casualties. The Russian government also prevented journalists from covering the event, even drugging two reporters (one being Anna Politkovskaya). A human rights group emerged out of the Beslan siege, *The Mothers of Beslan*, who called for a public investigation and the release of evidence pertaining to the siege.¹⁹

¹⁷ Shamil Basayev's group of suicide bombers was called The Riyadus-Salikhin Reconnaissance and Sabotage Battalion of Chechen Martyrs.

¹⁸ In August 2003, 4 people were killed and 17 wounded in Krasnodar, Russia. On 6 February 2004, a suicide bomber exploded himself aboard a subway train near Avotzavodskaya Metro Station in Moscow: 40 people were killed and 120 wounded. In July 2004, other bus stops were blown up in Voronezh, Russia: 1 died and 9 injured. On 31 August 2004, a second Moscow subway bombing was planned, but the suicide bomber accidentally blew herself up outside Rizhskaya Metro Station, killing 11 people.

¹⁹ Similar to labor organizers in other parts of the world, women have taken the lead in confronting Russian troops, forcing them to release detainees or stop killing boys and men. In the United States, Mother Jones (1830–1930) regularly organized women to protest and stop abuses of workers families.

President Maskhadov was assassinated by the Russians with a hand grenade at Tolstoy-Yurt in Chechnya on 8 March 2005. His Vice-President, Abdul-Halim Sadulayev, succeeded him until he too was killed fighting the Russian military on 17 June 2006. Sadulayev's Vice-President, Dokka Umarov, took over as the fifth president of the Chechen Republic of Ichkeria. So far, the Second Chechen War has killed up to 100,000 people, largely civilians, and displaced tens of thousands more from their homes. Why is it continuing when many of the original Chechen leaders are now dead?

The conflict in Chechnya continues, in part, because it serves the needs of Russian politicians who believe that they have the best formula to recover Russia's prominence in the world, and they want to remain in power to achieve this goal. The war in the Caucasus is used as a way to divert public attention from the real issues of crisis faced by the Kremlin—their domination of Russian politics and economics.²⁰ The Russian propaganda about the Caucasus is as dishonest as that used by the Americans in Central Asia: Russia announces their solidarity with the “Civilized West” in the “War on Terror” by claiming that they are merely defending themselves from Islamic terror, while they themselves perpetuate the terror.

As a result of this focus of public attention on Chechnya and the Caucasus, the Russian leadership is able to justify the maintenance of a repressive police state of secret prisons, illegal detentions, media censorship, democratic suppression, and outright murder—not only in Chechnya, but throughout Russia. This bizarre, co-operative relationship is shown by the fact that most of the weapons used by the Chechen forces have been bought from the Russians. However, there are many Russian human rights groups opposed to the war, and recent polls have indicated that a significant majority of Russian citizens want the war ended. The parallels to the U.S. wars in Central Asia are dramatic, leading some to call Chechnya “Russia's Iraq.”²¹

Today & the Future

Tensions persist and have intensified in some parts of the Caucasus. Attacks have spread to Ingushetia; they appear to be largely the work of Russian paramilitary groups and

²⁰ The hope of the leaders in Moscow is that if Russian citizens are distracted by the war in the Caucasus, then they won't notice the Kremlin's removal of competition. An example is the case of Mikhail Khodorkovsky. A tycoon who amassed a fortune in the 1990s that included the oil company Yukos, Khodorkovsky became the richest man in Russia and began to challenge Putin's leadership. He was arrested for tax fraud in 2003 and jailed. The assets of Yukos were then broken up, with portions being taken over by public and private companies, including Russian state corporations. The Russian leaders use the war in the Caucasus as a way to distract public attention from not only individual injustices such as the case of Khodorkovsky, but to distract public attention from the poverty and powerlessness of all ordinary people throughout Russia. On a national scale these leaders now use the system of repression they perfected in the Caucasus to suppress grassroots attempts to establish responsible government in Russia.

²¹ “Russia's Iraq” was the name of a seminar on Chechnya at the University of Southern Maine on 30 October 2006 in Lewiston, Maine (USA). The parallel between Russia's war in the Caucasus and the United States' war in Iraq is striking, as is both countries' concern for political and economic control, as well as repression of dissent. While there is an absence of good information about the Caucasus in the American media, discussion does periodically occur on right-wing talk radio and among left-wing conspiracy theorists, with both groups using events in the Caucasus to bolster their political agendas.

agents provocateurs trying to destabilize opposition to Russian policies of suppression. Tension has increased between Georgia and Russia over the unresolved regions of Abkhazia in the western Caucasus and South Ossetia in the central Caucasus. Russia has shut down and hindered human rights groups that are working to alleviate the suffering and bring attention to the issues in the Caucasus.

The challenge of rebuilding Chechnya is enormous. Up to one-quarter of the Chechen population has been killed since the wars began in 1994: 250,000 out of one million people. Children make up a large part of these casualties:

Up to 40,000 killed;
26,000 orphaned;
15,000 missing arms and legs; and
3,000 blind.

Nearly half the Chechen population has been exiled and dislocated, leaving entire parts of Chechnya uninhabited. At present, a partial ceasefire has developed, although activities of paramilitary forces and death squads persist.

Although a Muslim moderate, President Umarov of the Chechen Republic of Ichkeria proclaimed a Caucasus Emirate on 31 October 2007 and appointed himself its first Emir. His faction represents a minority, but their vocal presence has led to a split between his presidency and the constitutionalists led by Foreign Minister Akhmed Zakayev, who had taken political asylum from the Russians in England. These secular leaders are followers of the 1992 Chechen Constitution and are the surviving officials from the last democratic elections in Chechnya that were held in 1997. As Danish activist Thomas Bindesbøll Larsen sums up the situation:

The strength of those indeed very different Chechen lines remains unclear at current, although a clear majority of the Chechen refugees and Diaspora, numbering up to 100,000 in Europe alone, tends to side with the Maskhadov legacy, publicly declaring their loyalty to the Chechen Constitution of the free Ichkeria.

Nonetheless, the militant Islamist faction serves as a justification for the Russians to continue their brutal war in the northern Caucasus and a *raison d'être* for them to deny a political solution in Chechnya.²² The Russian military, however, is fatigued and in disarray, and does not want to continue such a brutal campaign in such an “insignificant” area.

Although criminal gangs and illicit trade persists, as they do throughout all of Russia, the new president of Russia’s Chechen Republic, Ramzan Kadyrov, appears to have used his

²² Concerning the situation in Chechnya and the Caucasus in 2007–2008, see Ivar Amundsen’s article, “Clarity in Chechen resistance,” *SIA ChechenPress*, 31 December 2007, which appears on the *Chechnya Shortlist* at (<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/chechnya-sl/message/54401>). Amundsen is the Norwegian Chair of the Chechnya Peace Forum.

experience and connections as a Chechen militia commander to force these syndicates to cease some of their more blatant activities and participate in the rebuilding of Chechnya. While there is fear that Kadyrov might revert to heavy-handed tactics, he appears to have worked to build some common interests between Russia and Chechnya. (See journalist Ruth Daniloff's recent article on Chechnya, below). It is unclear at this time what will result in the Caucasus. We encourage all citizens of the world to become involved in seeking justice for Chechnya and the Caucasus, as well as throughout our planet.



Grozny apartment building, 2007.

IN YOUR FACE: A view from the capital of Chechnya

By Ruth Daniloff

GROZNY — An in-your-face attitude rules Grozny these days. It is as though the city is telling the Kremlin: OK, you won the war. You killed 15 percent of our population and dispatched us across the world as refugees. You can still arrest us arbitrarily. But you cannot kill our spirit!

When I arrived in Grozny recently, I expected to see heaps of rubble similar to the pictures in the newspapers during the last 12 years of the country's war with Russia. Instead, I found houses going up, some of them on a baronial scale, with fancy brick facades and decorated gates leading to inner courtyards. Roads are being repaved, the Grozny airport rebuilt. The Turks are building what promises to be one of the largest mosques in the world. The Russian Orthodox Church has been restored and there are plans to open a synagogue.

"And all this has been done in one year," said one of the assistants in the mayor's office. Hard to believe, I thought, as I drove down the main street where small cafes and beauty parlors have sprung up. It must be a "pokazukha" (a show-piece) especially designed to show the world the Kremlin's success in turning off the war with Chechnya.

After spending ten days in Grozny, I can affirm that the Chechen capital is no Potemkin Village. In the wake of war's devastation it is a return of the renowned Chechen vitality. The mood of the people has lifted now that they no longer face bombardments, flying shrapnel and bullet-pitted walls. It will take years to forget the bloodshed and the lost relatives, but the city's new face lift raises spirits and the prospect of normal lives again.

As if to stress the return to normalcy, young women in head scarves negotiate the potholed street on five-inch high heels (shpilki) and tight black skirts decorated with glitter, zips, chains, safety pins, and silver studs. Men sport pointy black shoes so shiny you can see your face in them.

Everyone credits Ramzan Kadyrov, Chechnya's 31-year-old president for the turn-around. Chechens like Kadyrov for the same reason that Russians like Vladimir Putin. He is a law and order man who gets things done. He sets deadlines and sends minions out to enforce the orders. First things first. Forget democracy.

Where the money comes from for the reconstruction is something of a mystery. Everyone I talked to, including Grozny Mayor Muslim Khuchiyev, say that most of the financing comes from wealthy Chechens and the Kadyrov Foundation. Kadyrov is forcing wealthy Chechen criminals to return stolen money. So far, most Chechens seem ready to overlook the cult of personality which is building up around their president.

It is hard to know how long an iron fist will continue to be accepted by a people who have always prided themselves on being free. Human rights abuses still take place. Unemployment runs at 80 percent. Beneath the astounding new construction, lie social problems which even the traditional Chechen network of relatives cannot solve. Right now people are optimistic, but—if Kadyrov is not wise enough to solve some of the other serious problems—their patience may run out.

At Grozny's Ninth City Hospital a dentist treats her patients while rain water drips from the ceiling. The small room is picked up and clean. A Muslim people, the Chechens enjoy a tradition of cleanliness. But the dentist's equipment is old and make-shift. Crowds of people wait in a corridor with sickly green walls. The overhead lights have gone out and it is dark. A doctor examines a child who has a sausage-like protrusion growing off the back of her neck. She was born with it, the mother says, removing the child's jacket. "I have never seen anything like it," the doctor comments, rolling his eyes in disbelief.

"Chechens have the highest birth rate in Russia," the doctor says. "Even during the bombing, women got pregnant. From personal experience, I can say that the birth rate went up 20-30 percent. It's to make up for the loss of population."

Chechens may be repopulating their country. But because of post-traumatic stress and environmental pollution, Chechnya is producing a high percentage of children with birth defects. One child in ten is born with some kind of anomaly that requires treatment explains the doctor at Grozny's Children's Hospital. If the parents have the money, the children are sent to the neighboring republic of Dagestan where treatment is marginally better. There are few diagnostic facilities in the hospital, no ultra-sound machines, no specialists on genetic disorders. Doctors are lucky if they can find suture materials. The social network enjoyed by the medical profession in Soviet times has gone and there is nothing to replace it.

Right now people joke when they see the portraits of the “Holy Trio” displayed all over the city: Ahkmed Kadyrov, assassinated father of the current president, Ramzan Kadyrov, his strongman son, and Vladimir Putin, the Russian president who has succeeded in Chechenizing the country.

Still, there is an underlying fear that Ramzan Kadyrov’s popularity and power could go to his head and he could revert to his youthful out-of-control character. His personal peccadilloes are noted, his stable of fancy foreign cars, his tame lion, his huge palace, and several wives.

Meanwhile, some 50,000 Russian troops remain in Chechnya, discreetly billeted beside the airport, at roadside check points, and at the enormous military base of Khankala. The pasty-faced Russian soldiers who man the posts keep out of sight, knowing how much they are despised. They know, too, that if serious unrest explodes, they will be called in to put it down. The Chechens know that, too, and sense that today’s stability resides on a very fragile peace. (Ruth Daniloff, a former Moscow correspondent, is a freelance writer based in Cambridge, Massachusetts; Telephone: 617.868.8343).



Women workers rebuilding Grozny, 2007 (Photograph by Julia Wishnewetz – <http://kunstkamera.livejournal.com/156555html>)

CHECHNYA CHRONOLOGY

- 1817 The Caucasian War begins.
- 1874 The Caucasian War ends (1817–1874). Armenia, Chechnya, and other tribal nations are incorporated into the Russian Empire.
- 1944 Caucasus peoples exiled to Kazakhstan and Siberia.
- 1957 Soviet President Nikita Khrushchev provides amnesty for Caucasus peoples and they return home, creating the Chechno–Ingush Autonomous Republic.
- 1991 Soviet Union collapse. October—Chechen–Ingush Republic declares sovereignty.
- 1992 Conflict over the Prigorodny District between Ingushetia and North Ossetia.
- 1993 The Chechen Republic of Ichkeria declares full independence.
- 1994 First Chechen War begins (1994–1996). August—covert Russian air strikes on Chechnya. December—Russian Army invades Chechnya.
- 1995 14–19 June—Chechen attack on Russian facilities in Budyonnovsk. A treaty is negotiated, hostages released, Russian military operations in Chechnya temporarily halted, negotiations to end the war commence.
- 1996 21 April—President Dzhokhar Dudayev of the Chechen Republic of Ichkeria killed. Zelimkhan Yandarbiyev succeeds him as President. August—Grozny recaptured by Chechens. 15 August—Ceasefire.
- 1997 27 January—elections in Chechnya, Aslan Maskhadov elected president. 12 May—Formal peace treaty signed between President Maskhadov of the Chechen Republic of Ichkeria and President Yeltsin of Russia; in order to provide time for negotiations, discussion about Chechen independence is deferred until 2001.
- 1998 The Muslim Congress of the Northern Caucasus condemns Wahhabism.
- 1999 7 August—An independent Dagestani force, with 70 Chechen fighters, invades Dagestan, a move condemned by the Chechen Republic of Ichkeria. August and September—bombs explode around Russia; no evidence of Chechen involvement, but used by Russian officials to justify the Second Chechen War. 15 October—Russian military units begin bombardment of Grozny.
- 2000 Over 300,000 Chechens seek sanctuary in neighboring Ingushetia. 30 January—Russian seize Grozny, tens of thousands of people trapped in the fighting. 26 March—Vladimir Putin elected President of Russia.

- 2001 The U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum issues a genocide alert for Chechnya. President Ruslan Aushev of Ingushetia forced out of office by the Russians.
- 2002 23 October—Moscow Theater Crisis; Chechen fighters demand Russian withdrawal from Chechnya. Russian security forces pump poison gas into the theater and attack: 33 hostage-takers die, as well as 129 hostages.
- 2003 Refugee camps in neighboring Ingushetia closed, forcing tens of thousands of Chechens back across the border into Chechnya.
- 2004 Chechen bombing campaign targets transportation sites in Russia. 9 May—President Akhmad Kadyrov of Russia's Chechen Republic killed. 1 September—Beslan School Hostage Crisis, 1200 hostages taken, 334 civilians killed, largely by the Russian attack. 24 October—two Russian passenger planes are blown up.
- 2005 8 March—Third President Aslan Maskhadov of the Chechen Republic of Ichkeria killed; succeeded by Abdul-Halim Sadulayev.
- 2006 17 June—Fourth President Abdul-Halim Sadulayev of the Chechen Republic of Ichkeria assassinated; is succeeded by Dokka Umarov. 10 July—Commander Shamil Basayev of the Chechen Islamist forces killed. 7 October—Russian journalist Anna Politkovskaya murdered.
- 2007 5 April—Ramzan Kadyrov named President of Russia's Chechen Republic. 31 October—President Umarov of the Chechen Republic of Ichkeria proclaims a Caucasus Emirate and himself its first Emir, causing a split with constitutional nationalists led by Akhmed Zakayev.



Russian tanks on a Chechen highway, 2007.

BIOGRAPHIES

Ruslan Aushev (1954) is an Ingush soldier and politician. He served as an officer in Afghanistan, becoming the youngest lieutenant general in the Soviet Army. He then entered the Soviet Parliament for two years. In 1992, Aushev returned to Ingushetia, where he entered the provincial administration and was elected President in 1993. A humanitarian, he came into conflict with the aggressive Russian policies in the Caucasus and was forced out of office in 2001.

Arbi Barayev (1973–2001) was a Chechen gangster and renegade military leader, nicknamed “The Terminator” and leader of the Special Purpose Islamic Regiment, he allegedly carried out the executions of foreign workers in 1996 and 1998. Declared an outlaw by the Chechen Republic of Ichkeria, he died in Russian custody in 2001, but his gang continued to operate, participating in the Moscow Theater Crisis (2002).

Shamil Basayev (1965–2006) was a Chechen military leader aligned with militant Islamists, also known as Amir Abdallah Shamil Abu-Idris. He led an armed incursion into neighboring Dagestan to rally opposition to Russian control in 1999. An organizer of the Moscow Theater Siege and the Beslan School siege, his power increased after the assassination of Maskhadov in 2003. Basayev was killed in an unidentified explosion in Ekazhevo, Ingushetia on 10 July 2006.

Dzhokhar Dudayev (1944–1996) was a Chechen general in the Soviet Air Force who was inspired by independence movements in the Baltic Republics, as the Soviet Union began to deteriorate. He resigned his commission in 1990, returned to Chechnya, and joined its independence movement, becoming the first president of the Chechen Republic of Ichkeria in 1991. Dudayev was killed by a Russian laser-guided missile in 1996.

Akhmad Kadyrov (1951–2004) founded an Islamic institute in Chechnya and served as a militia commander in the First Chechen War. In 1995, he was appointed Chief Mufti (Islamic jurist) of the Chechen Republic of Ichkeria. He opposed Wahhabism, condemned Basayev’s 1999 invasion of Dagestan, but—when the Second Chechen War broke out—joined the Russian side. After Grozny’s occupation, the Russians named him president of their Chechen Republic in 2000, and he was elected its president in 2003. He was assassinated by a bomb blast during a military parade in Grozny in 2004.

Ramzan Kadyrov (1976) is the son of Akhmad Kadyrov and was leader of his militia. He was appointed Deputy Prime Minister of the Russia’s Chechen Republic in 2004, Prime Minister in 2006, and President in 2007.

Emir Khattab (1969–2002) was a Saudi financier and militant, also known as Habib Abdul Rahman; his real name was Samir Saleh Abdullah Al-Suwailem. He fought with the mujahadin against the Soviets in Afghanistan in 1985 and in the civil war in Tajikistan in 1993–1995. In 1995, he entered Chechnya as a journalist, joined forces with Shamil Basayev, and worked as a financial liaison for Islamic funding of the Chechen

military. Khattab was killed on 20 March 2002, when a Dagestani messenger hired by the Russian FSB gave him a poisoned letter.

Alexander Litvinenko (1962–2006) was a Russian KGB and then FSB officer, whose specialty came to be in counter-terrorism and on organized crime. Given the task of protecting Russian oligarch Boris Berezovsky, he blew the whistle on a Russian government plot to assassinate Berezovsky. Arrested and released, Litvinenko defected to Britain, where he was given asylum. He documented how the 1999 Russian apartment bombings were carried out by the Russian FSB and blamed on the Chechens to facilitate the rise of KGB-FSB officer Vladimir Putin to power as President of Russia. In November 2006, Litvinenko was poisoned in London with polonium-210 radiation, which was traced back to Moscow and to another KGB-FSB operative, Andrei Lugovoi.

Aslan Maskhadov (1951–2005) became chief of staff of the Chechen Army during the First Chechen War. He led peace talks that established a truce with Russia and was elected President of the Chechen Republic of Ichkeria in 1997. When Basayev's independent forces invaded Dagestan in 1999, Russia declared war on Chechnya and outlawed Maskhadov and his government. With the Second Chechen War in 1999, Maskhadov again became a military leader. After initiating a unilateral cease fire, he was killed by the Russians with a hand grenade in Tolstoy-Yurt (Chechnya) on 8 March 2005.

Anna Politkovskaya (1958–2006) was a Russian journalist writing for the journal *Novaya Gazeta*. Born in New York to Ukrainian diplomats, she held dual citizenship in Russia and the United States. Sent to cover the Chechen Wars as an “ordinary person,” she wrote devastating accounts of Russian brutality, including *A Small Corner of Hell: Dispatches from Chechnya*. She worked with humanitarian groups, negotiated for hostages, and was considered a traitor by Russian nationalists. Discredited, drugged, blocked from information, and often arrested, she was finally shot entering her apartment in Moscow on 7 October 2006, allegedly on orders from Russian security forces.

Vladimir Putin (1952) served as a KGB officer until 1991, when he resigned to enter civic and business life, as the Soviet Union disintegrated. Appointed Deputy Chief of Staff to Russian President Boris Yeltsin in 1997, Yeltsin appointed him head of the FSB in 1998 and Prime Minister in 1999. Putin became acting President later that year, when Yeltsin resigned, and was then elected in 2000 and re-elected in 2004 and 2007, aided by his control of the media and scare tactics about Chechen terrorists. Term limits ended his presidency in 2008, but his hand-picked successor—Dimitry Medvedev—appointed Putin prime minister: *Plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose*.

Abdul-Halim Sadulayev (1966–2006) was a language student when the First Chechen War broke out in 1994. He served as a soldier and an imam. After the First Chechen War, President Maskhadov appointed Sadulayev to work on the reform of the sharia (Muslim) law in 1999. He again became a soldier during the Second Chechen War and followed President Maskhadov as the fourth President of the Republic of Ichkeria in 2005. Although he advocated for establishment of sharia law, he also advocated for a war more

directly focused against Russian military targets. On 17 June 2006, he was killed in a gunfight with Russian security forces and was succeeded by Dokka Umarov.

Dokka Umarov (1964) is also known as Emir Abu Usman. Trained as a construction engineer in the oil industry, he returned to Chechnya to join the Chechen army at the start of the First Chechen War. Afterwards, he became President Maskhadov's head of the Security Council, then a field commander in the Second Chechen War. He succeeded Abdul-Halim Sadulayev as president in 2006. A Sufi Muslim, Umarov nonetheless proclaimed a Caucasus Emirate on 31 October 2007 and himself its first Emir. This led to a split with the constitutionalists led by Foreign Minister Akhmed Zakayev.

Zelimkhan Yandarbiyev (1952–2004) was a scholar, poet, and writer of children's literature. He founded the Vainakh Democratic Party in 1990, served as Vice President to Dzhokhar Dudayev and wrote in support of Chechen independence. When Dudayev was assassinated in 1996, Yandarbiyev became the second President of the Chechen Republic of Ichkeria. He ran for president in 1997, but lost to Aslan Maskhadov. As Yandarbiyev increasingly supported the hardline Islamic faction, the Chechen Republic of Ichkeria denounced him. He supported the invasion of Dagestan in 1999, and then traveled to Pakistan and the United Arab Emirates to raise support for the war. He settled in Qatar in 2001, where he was assassinated three years later by Russian agents.

Boris Yeltsin (1931–2007) was a construction manager and Communist Party official who became a leader in Moscow by the time of the collapse of the Soviet Union. He used his successful opposition to a 1991 coup to launch himself to power, banning the Communist Party and dissolving the Soviet Union. An advocate of a capitalist "free market," his policies plunged the new Russian Federation into chaos and depression, inaugurating a period of widespread corruption and violence. The oligarchs came to power, and he ordered the Russian military into the First Chechen War (1994–1996). An alcoholic, he faced impeachment and was only kept in office by corrupt officials, until he was forced out by the security clique led by Vladimir Putin.

Sergei Yushenkov (1950–2003) was a Russian advocate for democracy, market reforms, and human rights. First elected to the Soviet and later Russian Parliament in 1989, Yushenkov participated in public investigations that incriminated the FSB in clandestine and illegal operations. He was gunned down on a Moscow street on 17 April 2003.

Akhmed Zakayev (1956) was a stage actor who specialized in Shakespearian roles. He became Chair of the Chechen Union of Theatrical Actors in 1991 and three years later Chechen Minister of Culture under President Dudayev. During the First Chechen War he became a successful military leader. Afterwards, he became Deputy Prime Minister for Education and Culture, as well as a special envoy for President Maskhadov in negotiations with the Russians. Wounded in 2000, during the Second Chechen War, he went abroad as special foreign envoy for President Maskhadov, living as a refugee in the United Kingdom since 2002. Since 2007, Zakayev has declared himself to be Prime Minister of the Chechen Republic of Ichkeria in exile. He is a moderate, secular nationalist who follows the Chechen Constitution of 1992.



Commemoration for assassinated journalist Anna Politkovskaya outside the Russian Embassy in Copenhagen (Denmark). Photograph by Helle Degnbol.

GLOSSARY

Cheki: Russian expression for Chechen fighters.

Dukhi: Spirits or phantoms. Slang Russian expression for guerilla fighters who attack and disappear. An expression used during the Soviet-Afghan War (1979–1989) for the mujahadin (holy warriors), but transposed now to Chechen fighters in the Caucasus.

The ***FSB*** or Federal Security Service of the Russian Federation (ФСБ, Федера́льная слúжба безопа́сности) is Russia's domestic security service. It is a successor to the Soviet Cheka, NKVD, and KGB. It reports to the Ministry of Justice.

The ***GRU*** is the Russian military intelligence service or Main Intelligence Directorate of the General Staff of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation (ГРУ, Гла́вное Разве́дывательное Управле́ние). It is Russia's largest intelligence service.

Kontraktniki: Privately contracted security forces in the hire of the Russian military, often consist of released convicts known for their brutality.

OMON: Special forces of the units of Russian police or Special Purpose Police Squad (Отряд милиции особого назначения).

Spetsnaz: Russian special forces (Войска специального назначения or спецназ). It is subordinate to the FSB.

Zachistka: Russian mopping up operation on Chechen villages. Any able-bodied men from thirteen to sixty years of age are summarily executed or taken to the dreaded filtration camps.

LINKS

(Obviously, attention should be paid to the sponsors of each agency and their affiliations in order to understand the perspectives expressed on their websites. Our research about them is only brief and meant to serve as a guideline).

Chechnya Advocacy Network (www.chechnyaadvocacy.org). This is an independently run news and advocacy network about Chechnya based in the United States.

Chechnya Free.ru (www.chechnyafree.ru). This website is sponsored by *The Voice of Russia*, which is the Russian government's international broadcast service and successor to the Soviet Union's *Radio Moscow*.

Chechnya Shortlist (groups.yahoo.com/group/chechnya-sl). This is a Yahoo internet group site that links to materials about Chechnya.

Chechen State News Agency Press (chechenpress.co.uk/english/index.shtml). This is the press website for the Chechen Republic of Ichkeria.

Chechnya Weekly: News and Analysis on the North Caucasus. This Internet site at (www.jamestown.org/chechnya_weekly) is sponsored by the private Jamestown Foundation, which was founded in 1984 in the United States to gather and disseminate material about Communist and totalitarian nations.

Committee for the Defense of Forced Refugees. This Committee is a member of the International Helsinki Federation for Human Rights. Their website is at (www.mhg-sk.narod.ru/); telephone number 8(928)795-20-34; e-mail (mhg-sk@yandex.ru); and mailing address Республика Ингушетия, г. Назрань, ул. Московская, 12.

Études Sans Frontières—Mission Tchétchénie. This French NGO is involved in bringing young people from Chechnya to France to advance their studies. Their website is at (www.etudessansfrontieres.org/esf/tchetchenie).

Human Rights Watch (www.hrw.org). An organization based in the United States that evaluates and advocates for global human rights, the organization developed from issues of compliance surrounding the human rights provisions of the 1975 Helsinki Accords. Its work includes advocacy for Chechnya and Caucasus.

Institute for War and Peace Reporting, Caucasus (www.iwpr.net/) and you will easily find their pages about the Caucasus.

International Committee for the Children of Chechnya (www.chechenchildren.org/). This is an independent NGO run by Chechen surgeon Khassan Baiev. Their mailing address is P.O. Box 381305, Cambridge, Massachusetts 02238 USA.

Kavkaz Center (www.kavkaz.org.uk/eng/). Founded in 1999 in Grozny, Chechnya, this is a Chechen Islamic internet news agency.

Kafkas Vakfi, Caucasus Foundation (www.kafkas.org.tr/english). The Caucasian Cultural, Education & Social Help Foundation was begun in the 1990s by a group of Turkish-born residents of northern Caucasus origins.

Lliga dels Drets dels Pobles (League of Peoples Rights), Barcelona, Spain, has Catalan news and discussion about Chechnya: (www.txetxenia.org).

Novaya Gazeta, English translation of selected articles (en.novayagazeta.ru). This is the website for the independent Russian newspaper based in Moscow for which Anna Politovskaya wrote.

Prague Watchdog: Reporting on the conflict in the North Caucasus (www.watchdog.cz). This Prague-based website is sponsored by the private National Endowment for Democracy, which has been located in Washington D.C. since 1983.

Memorial (www.memo.ru/eng/). Memorial is a Russian equivalent of Amnesty International in the United States. *Memorial Caucasus* manages the website, *Caucasian Knot* (eng.kavkaz.memo.ru).

Support Committee for Chechnya (www.tjetjenien.dk/chechnya). This is a multi-language Danish website for issues pertaining to justice in Chechnya and related activities in Europe.

Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization (www.unpo.org): This grassroots organization was founded at The Hague in 1990 to advocate for indigenous peoples, minorities, and residents of unrecognized or occupied territories who have joined together to protect and promote their human and cultural rights, to preserve their environments, and to find nonviolent solutions to conflicts which affect them. Its work includes advocacy for Chechnya and Caucasus.

World Chechnya Day (www.worldchechnyaday.org). This site coordinates and commemorates the deportation and exile of the Chechens from the Caucasus by the Stalinist Red Army on 23 February 1944.

Documentary, Literature, Movies, etc.

(This list is not exhaustive, just materials easily found in the English-speaking world).

Literature

Awde, Nicholas; and Muhammad Galaev. *Chechen–English, English–Chechen: Hippocrene Dictionary and Phrasebook*. Richmond (Surrey, England): Curzon Press Limited, 1997; also OnLine at (<http://ingush.narod.ru/chech/awde/>).

The Chechen Language (<http://ist-socrates.berkeley.edu/~chechen/>) derived from Johanna Nichols and Arbi Vagapov, *Chechen-English and English-Chechen Dictionary*, London: Routledge Curzon, 2004.

Babchenko, Arkady. *One Soldier's War in Chechnya*. London: Portobello Books, 2007.

Baiev, Khassan. *The Oath: A Surgeon Under Fire*, New York: Walker Publishing Company, 2004. Issued in paperback in 2005 as *Grief of My Heart: Memoirs of a Chechen Surgeon*.

Fisk, Robert. *The Great War for Civilisation: The Conquest of the Middle East*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2005.

Meier, Andrew. *Chechnya: To the Heart of a Conflict*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2005.

Politkovskaya, Anna. *A Dirty War: A Russian reporter in Chechnya*, London: Harvill, 2001.

Politkovskaya, Anna. *A Small Corner of Hell: Dispatches from Chechnya*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003.

Politkovskaya, Anna. *Putin's Russia: Life in a Failing Democracy*. New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2004.

Politkovskaya, Anna. *A Russian Diary: A Journalist's Final Account of Life, Corruption, and Death in Putin's Russia*, New York: Random House, 2007.

Pushkin, Alexander. "A Prisoner in the Caucasus," in *Eugene Onegin and four tales from Russia's southern frontier*, pp. 131–148. Ware (England): Wordsworth Editions, Limited, 2005.

Seierstad, Åsne. *De Krenkede: Historier fra Tsjetsjenia*, Oslo: Cappelen, 2007; *The Angel of Grozny: Inside Chechnya*, English translation by Nadia Christensen, London: Virago Press, Limited, 2008. An account by Norwegian journalist and author Asne Seierstad, based on a visit to the Chechen Republic.

Tishkov, Valery. *Chechnya: Life in a War-Torn Society*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004.

Tolstoy, Leo. "A Prisoner in the Caucasus," in *Walk in the Light and Twenty-Three Tales*, pp. 78–107. Maryknoll (Maryland): Orbis Books, 2003.

Wood, Tony. *Chechnya: The Case for Independence*. London: Verso, 2007.

Music

Songs of Defiance: Music of Chechnya and the North Caucasus. Recorded and compiled by Michael Church. London: Topic Records, 2007. Music C.D.

Films

Ботинок (The Shoe), Luna Development & Production, Pavel Lungin (director), 1997. In Russian with English subtitles. This short film (3-minutes) is available from *The Short List*, which is an annual collection of international short films that is based at The Production Center for Documentary and Drama at San Diego State University, California. (www.theshortlist.us).

Кавказский пленник (Prisoner of the Caucasus), Sergei Bodrov Production, Sergei Bodrov (director), 1996. In Russian, Georgian, and Chechen with English subtitles. Distributed in the United States as *Prisoner of the Mountains*. Updated and Chechen-located version of the 19th century short story by Leo Tolstoy and poem by Alexander Pushkin, both of the same title.

Плачущее солнце (Crying Sun). Film (DVD) from Witness, 80 Hanson Place, 5th Floor, Brooklyn, New York 11217 (USA); 718.783.2000; (www.witness.org). In Chechen and Russian with English subtitles.

Дом дураков (House of Fools), Bac Films and others, Andrei Mikhalkov-Konchalovsky (director), 2002. In Chechen and Russian with English subtitles. Loosely based on the hospital siege in Budyonnovsk of 14–19 June 1995, during the First Chechen War and has much in common with the 1966 film, *Le roi de coeur* (King of Hearts).



Protest at the summit between Presidents Vladimir Putin & George W. Bush, Kennebunkport Maine (USA), 1 July 2007. Photograph by Barry Rodrigue.

Who we are...American-Caucasus Solidarity Group

We are a group of human rights activists based in the State of Maine (USA)—students, teachers, business people, home-keepers, journalists, workers, parents, civic leaders, and more. We feel that far too little attention has been paid to the enormous human rights violations going on in Chechnya and the Caucasus. In the United States, this has resulted in an almost total blackout of information in the popular media or a gross distortion of events. We have sponsored seminars, panel presentations, poetry readings, and speakers on Chechnya. We have collected books and winter clothing and shipped them to schools and families in Chechnya. We have sponsored sister-city projects between Chechen and Maine communities. We advocated for a resolution on Chechnya and the Caucasus that Dr. Barry H. Rodrigue wrote and Representative Elaine Makas sponsored in the Maine State Legislature (copy below). We are also advocating for a similar resolution in the United States Congress. You may contact us through the address of one of our sponsors listed on the front cover page of this booklet.

State of Maine

In the Year of Our Lord Two Thousand Eight

JOINT RESOLUTION TO ENCOURAGE THE PEACE PROCESS, A RETURN TO CIVIL SOCIETY AND INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION IN CHECHNYA AND THE NORTHERN CAUCASUS REGION OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION

WHEREAS, two profoundly violent civil wars have taken place in Chechnya, Ingushetia and the Northern Caucasus Region of the Russian Federation since the collapse of the Soviet Union; and

WHEREAS, these wars, which took place from 1994 to 1996 and from 1999 to 2007, have resulted in the death of up to 250,000 people, which is almost one-quarter of the population of Chechnya, and the dislocation of up to 500,000 people, or almost half the population of Chechnya; and

WHEREAS, the most violent aggression has fallen on innocent families and refugees in Chechnya, Ingushetia and the Northern Caucasus Region through the activities of the Russian military and security forces, and ethnic discrimination is suffered by Chechen, Ingush and other Caucasus peoples throughout the Russian Federation; and

WHEREAS, various citizens, scholars, students and residents in the State of Maine are involved in civic, cultural, social and business exchanges with Chechnya, Ingushetia and the Northern Caucasus Region in the Russian Federation; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED: That We, the Members of the One Hundred and Twenty-third Legislature now assembled in the First Special Session, on behalf of the people we represent, take this opportunity to urge the government of the Russian Federation to honestly and transparently engage in creating a just peace in Chechnya, Ingushetia and the Northern Caucasus Region; and be it further

RESOLVED: That we also urge the encouragement of a return to democratically elected officials and institutions in Chechnya, Ingushetia and the Northern Caucasus Region, and we urge the encouragement of civic and social links between Chechnya, Ingushetia and the Northern Caucasus Region, the Russian Federation and the rest of the world.

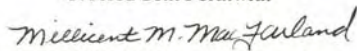
House of Representatives

Read and Adopted

April 16, 2008

Sent for Concurrence

Ordered Sent Forthwith



MILLICENT M. MacFARLAND

Clerk of the House

H.P. 1684

ATTEST:



GLENN CUMMINGS

Speaker of the House of Representatives

Sponsored by:

Rep. Elaine Makas of Lewiston

Cosponsored by:

Sen. Dennis S. Damon of Hancock
Rep. Herbert Adams of Portland
Rep. Christopher R. Barstow of Gorham
Rep. Paulette G. Beaudoin of Biddeford
Rep. Richard D. Blanchard of Old Town
Rep. Andrea M. Boland of Sanford
Rep. Mark E. Bryant of Windham
Rep. Richard J. Burns of Berwick
Rep. Marilyn E. Canavan of Waterville
Rep. Timothy A. Carter of Bethel
Rep. Alan M. Casavant of Biddeford
Rep. Gary A. Connor of Kennebunk
Rep. Margaret M. Craven of Lewiston
Rep. Patsy Garside Crockett of Augusta
Rep. Michael Edward Dunn of Bangor
Rep. Sean Faircloth of Bangor
Rep. Charles William Harlow of Portland

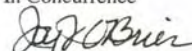
In Senate Chamber

Under Suspension of the Rules

Read and Adopted

April 16, 2008

In Concurrence



JOY J. O'BRIEN

Secretary of the Senate

ATTEST:



BETH EDMONDS

President of the Senate

ШТАТ МЭН

2008 онд анд гишүүнээр оролцсон

Совместная резолюция с целью содействия мирному процессу, возвращению к гражданскому обществу и международному сотрудничеству в Чечне и Северо-Кавказском регионе Российской Федерации

Принимая во внимание, что в Чечне, Ингушетии и на территории Северо-Кавказского региона Российской Федерации с момента распада Советского Союза прошло две ожесточенные гражданские войны; а также что

в республиканском масштабе, республике Чечня в 1994 г. до 1996 г., а в 1999 г. до 2007 г., погибло около 250 тыс. человек, что свидетельствует о масштабах репрессивных действий, в которых 500 тыс. человек, что свидетельствует о масштабах репрессивных действий, о масштабах репрессивных действий; в масштабах

республиканского масштаба в республике Чечня, республике Ингушетия и на территории Северо-Кавказского региона Российской Федерации с момента распада Советского Союза прошло две ожесточенные гражданские войны; а также что

это свидетельствует о том, что в Чечне, Ингушетии и на территории Северо-Кавказского региона Российской Федерации с момента распада Советского Союза прошло две ожесточенные гражданские войны; а также что

республиканского масштаба: это, около 123-го республиканского масштаба, что свидетельствует о масштабах репрессивных действий, о масштабах репрессивных действий, о масштабах репрессивных действий; в масштабах

это свидетельствует о масштабах репрессивных действий, о масштабах репрессивных действий, о масштабах репрессивных действий; в масштабах репрессивных действий, о масштабах репрессивных действий, о масштабах репрессивных действий; в масштабах репрессивных действий, о масштабах репрессивных действий, о масштабах репрессивных действий.

Палатой представителей
16 октября 2008 г.

Сенатом
16 октября 2008 г.

Палатой представителей
16 октября 2008 г.

Сенатом
16 октября 2008 г.

Палатой представителей
(Палатой)

Сенатом
(Сенатом)

Палатой представителей: Палатой представителей

Сенатом: Сенатом

Палатой представителей: Палатой представителей
Палатой представителей: Палатой представителей
Палатой представителей: Палатой представителей
Палатой представителей: Палатой представителей
Палатой представителей: Палатой представителей
Палатой представителей: Палатой представителей
Палатой представителей: Палатой представителей
Палатой представителей: Палатой представителей
Палатой представителей: Палатой представителей

С.С.С. Палатой представителей
С.С.С. Палатой представителей
С.С.С. Палатой представителей
С.С.С. Палатой представителей
С.С.С. Палатой представителей
С.С.С. Палатой представителей
С.С.С. Палатой представителей
С.С.С. Палатой представителей
С.С.С. Палатой представителей
С.С.С. Палатой представителей

0.0.0. 000000 000000 00 00000000000000 000000
 0.0.0. 0000000 0000000 00 00000000000000 000000
 0.0.0. 0000000 0000000 00 00000000000000 000000
 0.0.0. 0000 0000000 00 00000000000000 000000
 0.0.0. 000000 0000000 00 00000000000000 000000
 0.0.0. 000000000 0000000 00 00000000000000 000000
 0.0.0. 000000 0000000 00 000000000000 000000
 0.0.0. 000000 0000 00 000000000000 000000
 0.0.0. 0000 000000 00 000000000000 000000
 0.0.0. 000 0000000 00 000000000000 000000
 0.0.0. 000000 0000000 00 000000000000 000000

0.0.0. 0000000 0000000 00 00000000000000 000000
 0.0.0. 0000 00000 0000000 00 000000000000 000000
 0.0.0. 000000 0000000 00 0000000 0000000
 000. 00000000 0000000 00 0000000000000000 000000
 000. 0000 000000000 00 00000000000000 000000

David Moreau lives in Wayne, Maine (USA) with his wife, son and daughter. Having worked in Lewiston in a center for adults with developmental disabilities for nearly twenty years, he also has published books of poetry. He writes: "For the Russian Children at Beslan" comes from listening to National Public Radio, safe in my kitchen and hearing the terrible news about Beslan. Over the next couple of days, as events unfolded, we went about our lives safe and prosperous. Although we cannot know the fear of the people in the gymnasium or the parents waiting for news, it becomes part of who we are. Because we know it exists and can happen to us, the moral course for all people is to work to keep it from happening again. One of the uses of poetry is to remind us of such important tasks. I hope this poem contributes."

For the Russian Children at Beslan

David Moreau, 2008

The radio intrudes with noise of sirens
and mothers screaming, but we're practiced
at this and the death toll seems modest.

Later, more sirens and more screams
and more children in the gymnasium
than first admitted and the death toll
rises like warm dough in a bread bowl.

While Russia bites its lip, prepares to continue
a war where freedom is a nuisance,
and the Chechens say, *Who cares for our
children when the bombs are dropping?*
we pause and mutter and say some prayers,
then go on making supper.

On the first day of school my children
ate pancakes for breakfast, waited gladly
for the yellow bus, and later I hear the driver
gave out candy, although he did yell at
the eighth graders. Like wildebeests
on Animal Planet, grazing within sight
of lions gorging on the slow brother,
the living are concerned with themselves.

The earth is always springing forward
somewhere turning green the dead ground,
and birth will mostly balance death for as long
as we know it, but human acts determine whether
children laugh or tremble.

Hand to hand and mouth to mouth in constant
motion, human acts are borne everywhere
on this small planet and more than supper
is needed now, or gas in the car,
or books returned to the library.



Poem excerpt by Apti Bisultanov, from the village of Goitschu (Chechnya); illustration by Michelle Morgan, Lewiston, Maine (USA).