

Anatomy of a Terrorist Attack:

Terror at Beslan: A Chronicle of
On-going Tragedy and a Government's
Failed Response

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TERROR AT BESLAN:

**A CHRONICLE OF ON-GOING TRAGEDY AND
A GOVERNMENT'S FAILED RESPONSE**



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TABLE OF ACRONYMS

BBC – British Broadcasting Corporation

CIS – Commonwealth of Independent States

CNN – Cable News Network

EU – European Union

FSB – Federal Security Service

FPS – Federal Border Service

GAI – Traffic Police

GrOU – Operational Management Group

GRU – Military Intelligence Agency

ITAR-TASS – official news agency of Russia

KGB – Committee for State Security (of the former Soviet Union)

MOD – Ministry of Defense

MVD – Ministry of Internal Affairs

NATO – North Atlantic Treaty Organization

NGO – non-governmental organization

OGV – Unified Grouping of Federal Forces

OMAN – Special Purpose Militia Detachment

OSNAZ – Alpha Group

RF – Russian Federation

RPG – rocket-propelled grenade

US – United States of America

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On the morning of September 1, 2004, at least 32 armed men and women attacked a school in the southern Russian town of Beslan, taking over 1,200 children and adults hostage. Over the next two days, the hostages languished in the school's sweltering gymnasium as Russian authorities scrambled to resolve the crisis. Finally, on the third day, a mysterious series of explosions began an all-out assault on the school buildings by Russian forces, leading to heavy fighting and sections of the school catching fire. By nightfall on September 3, at least 330 hostages were reported dead. Behind the media images of crying children and grieving family members lies a complicated historical and political dilemma, originating in the separatist intentions of Chechens inhabiting the northern flanks of Russia's Caucasus Mountains. The following findings attempt to shed some light on what remains the most deadly terrorist attack in Russian history.

Finding One: What transpired in Beslan was not an international terrorist incident.

It was the product of a frustrated insurgency desperate to fulfill a political agenda and the Russian government's failure to respond accordingly. Beslan was the result of an internal Russian problem, yet government authorities spun the event as an international terrorist attack in hopes of gaining legitimacy for its ongoing actions in Chechnya. Following the attack, the Russian government exaggerated the perpetrators' links to international terrorist networks. Yet the perpetrators' primary demand was Russian force withdrawal from Chechnya and acknowledgement of its independence. The Beslan attack must be interpreted in light of the historical context of the Chechen conflict. The perpetrators acted in response to the ongoing war in Chechnya, and sought to affect localized change rather than support a global jihadist agenda.

Finding Two: The perpetrators clearly possessed detailed knowledge of the school, anticipated the inadequate Russian response, and displayed a high level of organization.

The hostage-taking tactic was not new; the perpetrators clearly adapted their methods from previous attacks. There is evidence that the school was “cased out” and hostages report that some weapons were already placed in the school prior to the attack. Weapons and vehicles used by the perpetrators bore the insignia of the Russian Army and were either stolen or bought from federal security forces. The organizers of Beslan had seized buildings and taken hostages before, yet the scale of this attack was larger and its execution more sophisticated than any other hostage crisis in Russia to date.

Finding Three: The Russian response at Beslan was disorganized and ineffective, even though the Russian government received advanced warning that a school would be targeted. Russian authorities had ample experience and precedent in dealing with such a crisis, yet failed to implement any lessons learned from previous hostage situations. Evidence suggests a troubling presence of corruption and incompetence at different levels of the Russian security structure. Pre-established operating procedures during the hostage crisis were ignored, with the authority of designated organizations superseded by executive order. Massive oversights were made in implementing the response, including the failure to cordon off and secure the school’s perimeter during and after the crisis. Russian security forces employed heavy weaponry inappropriate for use in a hostage situation; security forces additionally failed to assess the status or location of civilians in the school prior to their use.

Finding Four: From the onset of the crisis, the Russian government sought to shape perception of the events at Beslan. Perhaps to offset criticism of its chaotic response, the Russian government prevented media access at many levels, destroyed evidence, and failed to

secure the site in accordance with standard crime-scene investigating procedures. The government initially reported that only 100 persons were taken hostage in Beslan, despite having knowledge that in reality more than ten times that number were forced into the school. Negotiators requested by the perpetrators were left out of the process, or were conveniently delayed in ever reaching Beslan. There are numerous discrepancies in government, media, and civilian accounts as to what actually happened on the third and final day of the crisis.

Finding Five: In retrospect, the Beslan attack has gravely damaged the Chechen separatist cause. The brutality of the attack and specific targeting of children destroyed most of the Russian public's sympathy for Chechnya's independence movement. Much of the international community's condemnation of Russia's human rights abuses and war crimes in Chechnya decreased following the attack as well. Russia subsequently intensified its military campaign against Chechen separatists, conducting high-profile killings of rebel commanders and Chechen political figures.

Finding Six: Russian President Putin has successfully exploited the crisis to institute further "reforms" that centralize more power in the Kremlin. The Russian legislature has been restructured, political party formation and activity have been limited, and regional governors are now appointed by the executive. Press freedom has been further curtailed, as have the activities of NGOs and other civil society groups.

In his speech immediately following the Beslan attack, President Putin attributed the alarming frequency and increasing lethality of terrorist attacks to Russia's relative weakness. This speech was not atypical for Putin, who has revived symbols of the Soviet Union in an effort to instill a sense of resurgent Russian power. Whether the reforms instituted in the wake of Beslan have made Russia any *stronger* is arguable, but they have certainly made the country less

democratic and more authoritarian. Recent events in Russia suggest a continuation of this trend away from pluralism toward greater state control. Political reforms and symbolic measures may give the impression that Russia is now stronger, but they have not addressed one of the most pressing of Russia's institutional weaknesses: the endemic corruption at all levels of government and society. Russia's military and internal security forces remain plagued by charges of bribetaking, theft, and brutality.

Nor do President Putin's reforms sufficiently deal with the enduring problem of Chechen separatism. The Kremlin has recently installed a new Chechen president, widely-feared regional strongman Ramzan Kadyrov. Although his main goal is to make Chechnya prosperous and peaceful, human rights groups claim that security forces under Kadyrov's control routinely abduct and torture civilians suspected of ties to separatist rebels.¹ Although the main leaders of Chechnya's separatist movement have recently been killed, their replacements insist the fight for independence will continue.

Moscow's attempts to stifle separatist ambitions through heavy-handed measures may have carried the day, but long-term stability in the North Caucasus region is unlikely without any serious inter-party dialogue or negotiations. Russia's retraction of democracy from its peoples has not gone unnoticed, but has been largely tolerated since the country is flush in petrodollars. Increased state spending has spurred some growth in the Russian economy and has raised the living standard for many Russian citizens, but recent violent demonstrations suggest that segments of the population are not prepared to surrender their basic freedoms just yet. Unless Russia makes immediate efforts to improve its security structures, formulate effective crisis-

¹ Associated Press, "Russia: Strongman Becomes President of Chechnya," *The New York Times*, 6 April 2007, 17 April 2007, <<http://www.nytimes.com/2007/04/06/world/europe/06briefs-chechnya.html?ex=1177041600&en=d2c0f6bd1cfc9f52&ei=5070>>.

response strategies, and amend its policies in the Caucasus, another Beslan may very well happen again.

THE SIEGE AT BESLAN SCHOOL NUMBER ONE

Timeline of Events

Day 1:

School Number One was one of four schools located in Beslan, and with approximately sixty teachers and nine hundred students, it was the largest.² The holiday of September 1, or “Day of Knowledge” was most likely selected to assure the highest number of hostages. All students, their parents and relatives, and alumni attend school in Russia on this day to celebrate the first day of school for new students and for those entering their final year. The additional presence of extended family and alumni would make the number of people present in the school far higher than on any other school-day.

On the morning of September 1, 2004, at 09:30, approximately 32 heavily armed perpetrators violently interrupted the opening-day ceremonies at School Number One in the Russian town of Beslan, North Ossetia.³ It was later concluded the perpetrators were part of the Riyadus-Salikhin “martyr battalion,” then headed by Chechen rebel commander Shamil Basayev (See Appendix C for an exhaustive list of affiliated terrorist organizations and Basayev’s leadership roles.)

Several accounts indicate that the attack on School Number One was implemented by two teams. The first team entered the school the night before on August 31 and waited to emerge from hiding until the second team raided the school from the outside on September 1.⁴ The first team was responsible for securing the building from the inside while the second team was responsible for gathering hostages. The second team reportedly arrived at the school that

²John B. Dunlop, *Beslan: Russia’s 9/11?* (The American Committee for Peace in Chechnya and the Jamestown Foundation, Oct. 2005) 6.

³Michael V. Uschan, *The Beslan School Siege and Separatist Terrorism*, (Gareth Stevens Publishing, 2006).

⁴Dunlop, *Beslan: Russia’s 9/11*, 8.

morning in Russian military vehicles: a GAZ-66 truck, as well as at least one van.⁵ Upon nearing the school, they split into two units; one entered from the back of the school, crossing the train tracks of a nearby railway line and the other approached the front of the building, forcing over 1,200 hostages into the school at gunpoint.

They held the majority of the hostages in the school gym and stripped them of all forms of communication, such as cell phones, cameras, and video cameras. The perpetrators ventilated the school by breaking the windows and mined it with explosive devices.⁶ This measure prevented the hostages from communicating with outside security personnel, and divulging information about the layout and environment within the school area. During the Dubrovka Theater crisis, the perpetrators failed to confiscate cellular phones, allowing some of the hostages to assist security officials by communicating information about the hostage-takers and the theater's layout.⁷

The intelligence indicating that the perpetrators had previously entered the school was later confirmed by hostages who testified that they were ordered to help remove the weapons hidden in floorboards and in the ceiling.⁸ Days after the attack, the head of the North Ossetian secret police again confirmed the weapons and explosive materials had been hidden in the school prior to the attack.⁹ Further investigation indicated that when the perpetrators were mining the school with explosives during the attack, they had the wire between detonating devices already

⁵ Peter Baker, "Russia Says Siege Leader Brutally Killed 3 Followers," *The Washington Post*, 9 Sept. 2004, <<http://www.washingtonpost.com/ac2/wp-dyn/A6704-2004Sep8?language=printer>>.

⁶ Dunlop, *Beslan: Russia's 9/11?* 8.

⁷ "When Hell Came Calling at Beslan's School Number 1," *The Guardian Unlimited*, Sept. 5, 2004, <<http://observer.guardian.co.uk/focus/story/0,6903,1297633,00.html>>.

⁸ Dunlop, *Beslan: Russia's 9/11?* 8 – 9.

⁹ Dunlop, *Beslan: Russia's 9/11?* 8.

cut to the necessary lengths, demonstrating knowledge of the layout and dimensions of the school.¹⁰

Everything from the floor to the basketball nets were lined with explosives. Kazek Misikov, a hostage (and former KGB operative) at Beslan, described one of the explosive devices: "...a simple device, a plastic bucket with explosive paste, nails, and small metal balls...perhaps eight pounds...blue electric wire linking...part of a simple system, an open electric circuit rigged to a motor-vehicle battery."¹¹ Another hostage, Zalina Levina, described the explosive devices as wire and cable on wooden spools, bombs of different sizes, including several made from plastic soda bottles and two rectangular charges, each the size of a briefcase. The small bombs were hooked together and hoisted above the hostages, while larger explosives lined the floor.¹² There is speculation that the perpetrators built a sniper's nest in the attic of the school fortified with bricks and sandbags.¹³ Cables were used to connect the mines and bombs placed on the floor, taped to the walls, and suspended from the ceiling. In the two basketball nets, the perpetrators had placed two large explosive devices.¹⁴

The perpetrators themselves carried explosive belts, ammunition vests, and rifles. Aslan Kudzayev, a hostage, stated that some of the perpetrators carried hand grenades and 40mm grenade launchers mounted under their rifle barrels.¹⁵ Several of the hostages testified that the perpetrators had detonators, some claim they were standing on detonators, while others believed that the perpetrators were holding them.

¹⁰ C.J. Chivers. "The School," *Esquire* Volume 145, Issue 6 (June 2006).

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ John B. Dunlop, *Beslan: Russia's 9/11?* (The American Committee for Peace in Chechnya and the Jamestown Foundation, Oct. 2005) 8.

¹⁴ "Beslan School Siege: Plight," *BBC News*, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/shared/spl/hi/world/04/russian_s/html/2>.

¹⁵ Chivers. "The School".

Once the perpetrators placed the hostages in the gymnasium, they separated the men from the women and began killing adult males. Approximately 16-21 males were shot and killed to reduce the threat of these hostages overpowering their captors in the gymnasium. Their bodies were thrown out of a window.¹⁶

While hostages were being herded into the gymnasium and organized into rows, security authorities arrived at the school and surrounded it. The security authorities consisted of Militsia and Russian Army soldiers, the Alpha Group of OSNAZ, the Vypel units of the Federal Security Service (FSB) and the Special Purpose Militia Detachment (OMON) forces of the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MVD).¹⁷

At 16:30, Russian government authorities announced that they had established communication with the perpetrators and were undergoing negotiations.¹⁸ Negotiations began with Dr. Leonid Roshal, the pediatrician who had also negotiated during the Dubrovka Theater Crisis, to secure the hostages' release and discuss perpetrator demands.

The perpetrators also requested the presence of three elected individuals: Aleksander Dzasokhov, Murat Zyazikov, and Ruslan Aushev. Aleksander Dzasokhov was the president of North Ossetia at the time of the attacks but has since submitted his resignation to President Putin to take a higher position on the Federation Council (the Russian Senate) on July 6, 2005. Murat Zyazikov, president of Ingushetia, is considered to be a close ally with President Putin. Ruslan Aushev was the former president of Ingushetia and a former member of the Federation Council at the time of the attack. Aslambek Aslakhonov, chief Chechen advisor to President, was also requested to negotiate.

¹⁶ John Giduck, "*Terror at Beslan: A Russian Tragedy with Lessons for America's Schools*," (Archangel Group, Inc., 2005), p. 135.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ "Timeline: The Beslan School Siege," *The Guardian Unlimited*, 6 Sept. 2004, <<http://www.guardian.co.uk/russia/article/0,,1296826,00.html>>.

The following handwritten transcript of the perpetrators' demands (possibly written by Taziyeu and dictated by Basayev) was passed on to Russian security forces on September 1:

We request the republic's president Dzasokhov, the president of Ingushetia Ziazikov, the children's doctor Rashailo for negotiations. If anyone of us is killed, we'll shoot 50 people. If anyone of us is wounded, we'll kill 20 people. If 5 of us are killed, we'll blow up everything. If the light, communications are cut off for a minute, we'll shoot 10 people.¹⁹

At first, Russian officials confused the misspelling of Roshal's name ('Rashailo') for Rushailo, another Russian official, but ultimately sent the right man to the scene.²⁰ On the first night and following some fruitless negotiating, some of the perpetrators explored the school building and the immediate surrounding area, reportedly to create escape plans.²¹

Day 2:

On September 2, 2004, at 12:40, the perpetrators agreed to release 26 nursing women and their infants, although many of these women were forced to leave their other children inside.²² Soon afterward, further negotiations between the perpetrators and security authorities came to an impasse, and the perpetrators denied hostages water and trips to the toilet.²³ By 03:00, negotiations between Dr. Roshal and the perpetrators came to a standstill.²⁴

¹⁹ "Copies of notes by terrorists," *Pravda Beslana*, 29 Nov. 2004, 1 March 2007, <<http://pravdabeslana.ru/zapiska.htm>>.

²⁰ "Beslan terrorists confused Roshal with Rushailo," *Russian Information Network*, 7 Oct. 2004, <<http://news.rin.ru/eng/news///278/all/>>.

²¹ Sergey Ivanov, "Terrorists Hoped to Leave Beslan," *Grani.ru*, 9 Dec. 2004, <<http://www.vybory.net/Politics/Russia/m.76648.html>>.

²² "Timeline: The Beslan School Siege".

²³ Kelly McEvers, "Beslan Timeline: How the Siege Unfolded," *NPR*, 31 Aug. 2006, <<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=5740009>>.

²⁴ "Timeline: Russian School Siege," *BBC News*, 3 Sept. 2004, <<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/3621856.stm>>.

Reportedly, a significant number of children and adult hostages began showing signs of exhaustion, dehydration, and food deprivation. Many of the hostages began fainting as a result of not having any food or water, and being forced to stand for extended periods of time.²⁵

At 15:30, the perpetrators fired at the surrounding security forces, setting one police vehicle on fire.²⁶ Security forces held back from returning heavy fire and reconvened attempts at negotiation procedures.²⁷

Sometime during the day on September 2, 2004, the following demands were passed to Russian forces:

From Allah's servant Shamil Basayev to President Putin.

Vladimir Putin, it wasn't you who started this war. But you can finish it if you have enough courage and determination of de Gaulle. We offer you a sensible peace based on mutual benefit by the principle independence in exchange for security. In case of troops withdrawal and acknowledgement of independence of Chechen Republic of Ichkeria, we are obliged not to make any political, military or economic treaties with anyone against Russia, not to accommodate foreign military bases on our territory even temporarily, not to support and not to finance groups or organizations carrying out a military struggle against RF, to be present in the united rouble zone, to enter CIS. Besides, we can sign a treaty even though a neutral state status is more acceptable to us. We can also guarantee a renunciation of armed struggle against RF by all Muslims of Russia for at least 10 to 15 years under condition of freedom of faith. We are not related to the apartment bombings in Moscow and Volgograd, but we can take responsibility for this in an acceptable way.

The Chechen people are leading a nation-liberating struggle for its freedom and independence, for its self-protection rather than for destruction or humiliation of Russia. We offer you peace, but the choice is yours.

Allahu Akbar²⁸

²⁵ "Boy In Hostage Videotape Recounts How He Survived the Beslan Ordeal," *The St. Petersburg Times*, 14 Sept. 2004, <<http://www.sptimes.ru/story/1546>>.

²⁶ "Timeline: Russian School Siege".

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ "Copies of notes by terrorists," *Pravdabeslana.ru*, 29 Nov. 2004, 1 March 2007, <<http://pravdabeslana.ru/zapiska.htm>>.

Day 3:

On September 3, 2004, at 09:00, the terrorists agreed to admit Russian Ministry of Emergency Situations servicemen to remove the dead bodies in the front of the school.²⁹ As the emergency personnel approached the building, two explosions were heard within the school building, and the perpetrators began shooting at the emergency personnel, killing two servicemen.³⁰ The two explosions occurred in the school at approximately 10:00, at which point some of the hostages began to flee from the gaping holes in the school structure. Many of them were reportedly shot at by the perpetrators.³¹

At this point, some of the perpetrators fled the school. Security forces stormed the building, extracting hostages, and engaging the perpetrators in a gunfight. From 10:30- 11:30 the gunfight between security forces and perpetrators continued, with additional perpetrators attempting to flee the building. During this hour, part of the roof collapsed immediately after a sequence of explosions.

At 13:00, the order was given to extinguish the smoldering structure and at 13:20, helicopters reportedly flew over School Number One.³² At 17:00, two additional explosions were heard. Periodic fighting was reported until 21:40 in the area surrounding the school when Russian forces finally secured the building.

²⁹ Dunlop, *Beslan: Russia's 9/11*, 3.

³⁰ Jeremy Bransten, "Russia: Recounting the Beslan Hostage Siege—A Chronology," *Radio Free Europe*, 9 Sept. 2004, <<http://www.rferl.org/featuresarticle/2004/09/94e355d2-b747-4ee3-ab9d-28a2cbe53429.html>>.

³¹ "Timeline: The Beslan School Siege"

³² "Timeline: Russian School Siege"

SIGNIFICANCE OF LOCATION



North Ossetia is located in Russia's North Caucasus, bordered by the Republic of Ingushetia on the east/southeast sides and the Chechen Republic on the east/northeast. Beslan lies less than twenty-five miles from the border of Ingushetia. The population of North Ossetia is predominately Orthodox Christian. As the most prosperous and economically-developed of the North Caucasian republics, North Ossetia enjoyed a relative degree of stability and close ties with Moscow. Nur-Pashi Kulayev (the only known surviving perpetrator) testified that selection of a school with women and children as hostages was deliberately made to fuel a war in the Caucasus, where it was hoped that the Christian Ossetians would take revenge on the Muslim Ingush and their Chechen neighbors.³³ The selection of Beslan, which was close to the border of Ingushetia and located just outside the Prigorodny District, was an attempt to reignite the Ossetian – Ingush conflict of 1992. Some of the perpetrators were Ingush refugees of this conflict, expelled from Prigorodny after North Ossetia successfully repelled the attempted Ingush takeover of the contested district.

³³ "Beslan School Hostage Crisis - Motives - Islamism," *Wikipedia*, 2 Feb. 2007, <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Beslan_hostage_crisis>.

PLANNING

One of the perpetrators was in fact a former student of the school, and some of the planners' intelligence may have originated from this source. However, the gymnasium where the hostages were held was a very recent addition. The eyewitness accounts of pre-planted weapons and explosives support the existence of at least one prior visit to the school by the planners of the attack. ITAR-TASS, the official Russian news agency, received reports from local law enforcement that men disguised as repairmen had entered the school and concealed weapons and explosives in July 2004.³⁴

Additionally, the Russian parliamentary commission chairman confirmed the attack was premeditated by releasing information that a map of the floor plan of the school had been found in the pocket of one of the leaders of the attack.³⁵ This is also corroborated by hostage accounts.³⁶ Further evidence of sophisticated planning was confirmed by Russian Deputy Prosecutor General Nikolai Shepel. Russian forces retrieved a video cassette showing a recorded instruction session for the group that carried out the attack on Beslan.³⁷ One of the hostage accounts (that of Aslan Kudzayev) states that the perpetrators were organized into distinct groups: the leaders, those specialized in explosives, the jailers, and finally, a group organized to ward off any Russian response.³⁸

WARNING SIGNS

³⁴ "Beslan School Hostage Crisis – course of the crisis – Hostage-taking," *Wikipedia*. 7 Feb. 2007, <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Beslan_hostage_crisis>.

³⁵ Dunlop, *Beslan: Russia's 9/11?* 9.

³⁶ *Ibid*, 23.

³⁷ "Russian Prosecutor Says International Terrorists Planned Beslan," 12 Nov. 2005, <<http://www.mosnews.com/news/2005/09/12/beslanshepel.shtml>>.

³⁸ Chivers. "The School".

Months before the attack:

On June 21 and 22, 2004, Basayev organized a raid on an MVD armory located in Ingushetia. His group seized 1,177 firearms and 70,922 bullets.³⁹ Some of the weapons (seven automatic weapons and three pistols) were used at Beslan. During the Beslan crisis, the perpetrators demanded the release of the remaining individuals imprisoned as a result of the armory raid. Following the raid on the Ingushetian armory and just prior to Beslan, Shamil Basayev released a video message of an attacker asking his confederate: “Are you ready to meet Allah?” and the response: “I am ready.” The men in the video were later identified as perpetrators at Beslan by survivors of the crisis.

Days before the attack:

On August 18, 2004, the MVD confirmed that an attack was being planned when they sent a telegram to all regional police commandants: “It is said that there were indications that Chechen rebels were planning an operation in North Ossetia. It was said to resemble the one that Shamil Basayev once launched at a hospital in the city of Budennovsk in the summer of 1995...”⁴⁰ While this transmission provided the MVD with valuable information, the alert was not extended to include schools.

The attack on the armory had placed Ingushetia on a high terrorism alert; however there is evidence that the police had knowledge of multiple terrorist meetings in the woodlands of Ingushetia as far back as August 20, 2004, and failed to act.⁴¹ On August 21, the MVD gave orders to security services in the region to provide or increase security at educational facilities on

³⁹ Dunlop, *Beslan: Russia's 9/11*, 7-8.

⁴⁰ Uwe Buse, et al., “Putin’s Ground Zero,” *Der Spiegel*, number 53, December 27, 2005.

⁴¹ Dunlop, *Beslan: Russia's 9/11*, 9.

the first day of school, which they would issue again on August 31.⁴² On August 28, civilians were made aware of the increased threat level. A resident of Beslan testified to having his vehicle searched because ‘a group of rebels had penetrated into Beslan.’ This same local would also testify to the lack of police presence on September 1.⁴³

Hours before the attack:

All reports concur that the perpetrators entered School Number One at 9:30, however by 5:00, MVD officials received an intelligence report that claimed “a seizure was planned [the same day] of a school in the city of Beslan.”⁴⁴ The intelligence was gathered in the early morning of September 1, during the interrogation of a suspect apprehended on unrelated charges.⁴⁵ This information was not relayed to local authorities, and there was also a noticeable absence of the armed traffic police (GAI) that were usually in close proximity to the school on the first day of classes. Local authorities in Beslan placed an unarmed local policewoman at the entrance to School Number One.⁴⁶

In the hours prior to the attack, further investigation revealed that the perpetrators would have needed to pass through four police checkpoints on their way from the woods of Psedakh in Ingushetia to the school in Beslan.⁴⁷ Some of the perpetrators were on wanted lists, while others had prior police convictions and many were known terrorists; at least one group was traveling in the GAZ-66 truck during a high terrorism alert through four police checkpoints. (Identification of five of the perpetrators post-Beslan confirmed that they were wanted by Russian special services for other crimes. Five additional perpetrators had been detained by the security services prior to

⁴² Peter Finn, “New Report Puts Blame on Local Officials in Beslan Siege,” *The Washington Post*, 29 Dec. 2005, 11 Jan. 2007 <<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2005/12/28/AR2005122800194.html>>.

⁴³ Dunlop, *Beslan: Russia's 9/11*, 6.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Peter Finn, “New Report Puts Blame on Local Officials in Beslan Siege,” *The Washington Post*, 29 Dec. 2005, 11 Jan. 2007 <<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2005/12/28/AR2005122800194.html>>.

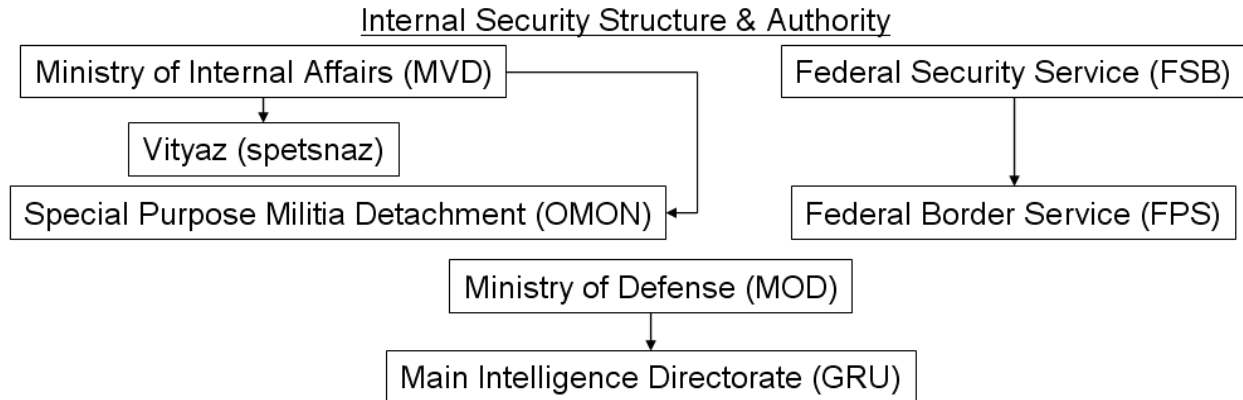
⁴⁷ Dunlop, *Beslan: Russia's 9/11*, 7.

Beslan.) Vladimir Khodov, one of the leaders of the attack, claims that part of the attack included bribing the police for \$20,000.

The perpetrators:

Beslan was one of a series of attacks in Russia that were organized and financed primarily by Basayev and his organization. He later claimed responsibility for this attack and all preceding Chechen attacks in Russian territories. According to witnesses, leading the group was Vladimir Khodov (code name “Abdul”). Another leader present was Ruslan Tagirovich Khuchbarov, an Ingushetian; witnesses later reported that he had been referred to as “the Colonel” by the other perpetrators. He was the only perpetrator reported to be seen carrying a heavy weapon issued by Russian *spetsnaz* forces. Russian reports suggest that there were 32 perpetrators present; although some sources question this as it would have been difficult to secure that number of people in that space with only 32 perpetrators. There were at least two Shahidka (Black Widows) present. (See Appendix D for more details about this distinct group.) It also appears that the group was organized in a hierarchical structure. (See Appendix E for a full listing of suspected perpetrators.)

RUSSIAN SECURITY FORCES



The Russian government designates the Federal Security Services (FSB), the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MVD) and the Ministry of Defense (MOD) to counter and mitigate terrorism and insurgency within Russia's borders. The MVD Internal forces units include the anti-terrorist teams of Vityaz and riot control teams from the Special Purpose Militia Detachment troops (OMON).⁴⁸ The FSB anti-terrorist command is set up under the Special Purpose Center and includes the elite detachments Alpha and Vypel. The Federal Border Service (FPS) and the Federal Agency for Communication and Information are also under the authority of the FSB. The MOD utilizes specific regional military detachments as a supplemental support for the anti-terrorist operations of the FSB and MVD. There are also detachments from the army designated as anti-terrorist units for the specific protection of military personnel and infrastructure. The Military Intelligence Agency (GRU) is part of the MOD and contributes GRU spetsnaz teams for internal security operations.

⁴⁸ Henry Zyberk-Plater, "Beslan - Lessons Learned?," Conflict Studies Research Centre, Nov. 2004, 10 Feb. 2007, <<http://www.defac.ac.uk/colleges/csrc/document-listings/russian/>>.

In the North Caucasus region all of these departments are consolidated into the overarching authority of the MVD, known as the Regional Operational Staff for Control of Counterterrorist Operations in the North Caucasus.⁴⁹ This authority includes the Unified Grouping of Federal Forces (OGV), the previous authority in the region until 2003.⁵⁰ By creating both the Regional Operational Staff for Control of Counterterrorist Operations and the OGV, the Russian government intended to facilitate better cooperation among the security forces after assessing previous failures in the region. However, in practice the MVD's authority over the other services is still limited in the region.⁵¹

Command Structure for Terrorist Attack Response

Following the insurgent incursion into Ingushetia a month prior to Beslan the Russian government changed the designation of authority during the response to a terrorist attack in the Southern Federal District. The government took the authority from regional FSB deputy heads and created Operational Management Groups (GrOU) for the North Caucasus.⁵² This shift charged the MVD with coordinating the response to a terrorist attack in the region within thirty minutes of learning of the attack.⁵³ This change represents a shift from federal authority over terrorist attack response to responsibility now resting with the regional authorities. A colonel from the MVD manages the GrOU and acts as the commander of all security services personnel during the response and carries the authority to respond accordingly.⁵⁴

⁴⁹ Mark Kramer, "The Perils of Counterinsurgency," *International Security*, Winter 2004/2005: 5-63.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Andrei Soldatov and Irina Borogan, "Terrorism prevention in Russia: One Year After Beslan," Agentura.Ru Studies and Research Centre, Sep. 2005, 18 Feb. 2007, <<http://studies.agentura.ru/english/listing/terrorismprevention/>>.

⁵³ Henry Zyberk-Plater, "Russia's Special Forces," Conflict Studies Research Centre, Sep. 2005, 10 Feb. 2007, <<http://www.defac.ac.uk/colleges/csrc/document-listings/russian/>>.

⁵⁴ Andrei Soldatov and Irina Borogan, "Terrorism prevention in Russia: One Year After Beslan".

Though this protocol was put into effect before Beslan, it was not followed in the response of the security forces. The restructuring of internal security roles was disregarded, as executive order superseded the newly established chain of command. The legality of this measure is unquestioned, since a clause written into the Russian Constitution allows for executive decree to overtake any existing power structures during hostage situations.

Response at Beslan

Given the recent restructuring of security forces and subsequent executive order rendering it irrelevant, the actual Russian response was a confused and disjointed effort. It was unclear to the many groups and individuals present who held authority or jurisdiction at the scene; conversely, individuals who may have given insight and provided some sense of organization were left out of the proceedings.

Table 1: Key Players and Their Roles at Beslan

Name	Type	Position
Rashid Nurgaliyev	Security Services	Minister of the MVD
Nikolay Patrushev	Security Services	FSB Director
Gen. Vladimir Pronichev	Security Services	First Deputy Director of the FSB and Commander of Russian Border Guards
Vladimir Anisimov	Security Services	First Deputy Director of the FSB
Col Gen. Aleksandr Tikhovo	Security Services	Head of the FSB Special Purpose Center
Valeriy Andreyev	Security Services	Head of the FSB for the Southern Federal District
Aslambek Aslakhanov	Federal Government	Chief Chechnya Advisor to the President
Vladimir Ustinov	Federal Government	Prosecutor General

Name	Type	Position
Aleksander Dzasokhov	Local Government	President of North Ossetia
Taimuraz Mansurov	Local Government	Regional Parliament Speaker
Mikhail Markelov	Local Government	Duma Deputy
Murat Zyazikov	Local Government	President of Ingushetia
Eduard Kokoiti	Local Government	President of South Ossetia
<hr/>		
Ruslan Aushev	Other	Former President of Ingushetia
Leonid Roshal	Other	Pediatrician and Former Hostage Negotiator
Aslan Maskhadov	Other	Chechen Separatist Leader
Akhmed Zakayev	Other	Emissary for Maskhadov

September 1:

One of the first government reports on Beslan to the public came from Duma Deputy Mikhail Markelov, who stated on the radio that there were only one hundred hostages inside the school.⁵⁵ Throughout the crisis, Russian officials consistently underreported the number of hostages inside the building and kept local witnesses from disseminating more accurate numbers to the media. There were two headquarters set up near the school, one for local officials and one for federal security personnel. In the immediate aftermath of the school's takeover, Aleksander Dzasokhov (President of North Ossetia) formulated much of the state response.⁵⁶

After hearing of the incident, President Vladimir Putin returned from his holiday at the Black Sea resort town of Sochi and held a meeting with Rashid Nurgaliev (Minister of the

⁵⁵ Peter Baker and Susan Glasser. *Kremlin Rising* (New York: Scribner, 2005) 21.

⁵⁶ John B. Dunlop, Dr. Andreas Umland, ed. *The 2002 Dubrovka and 2004 Beslan Hostage Crises* (Germany: Stuttgart, 2006) 56.

MVD), Vladimir Ustinov (Prosecuter General), Nikolay Patrushev (FSB Director), and General Vladimir Pronichev (First Deputy Director of the FSB and Commander of Russian Border Guards). President Putin called Dzasokhov at noon on September 1 and ordered that the FSB control the response.⁵⁷

Nurgaliyev, Patrushev and Pronichev traveled to Beslan to take part in the response, as did Eduard Kokoiti (president of the Georgian breakaway region of South Ossetia), Vladimir Anisimov (First Deputy Director of the FSB), General Tikhonov (Head of the FSB Special Purpose Center), and General Kaloev (Head of the FSB for the Southern District).⁵⁸ *Spetsnaz* troops arrived in Beslan and practiced maneuvers in the event that they would be called upon to forcibly enter the building.

September 2:

Patrushev sent a telegram formally appointing Valeriy Andreyev (Head of the FSB for North Ossetia) as the head of the operational response. However, this status as commander was in name only and did not reflect the true command structure of the response. Several witness reports concluded that the employees of the Federal FSB took control of the response. Pronichev seemed to control operations, as John B. Dunlop found, “A journalist who writes for the government newspaper *Rossiiskaya gazeta*, who was present in Beslan, has recalled General Pronichev’s issuing orders at the time of the storming of the school on 3 September.”⁵⁹

Counter-capture:

⁵⁷ John B. Dunlop, Dr. Andreas Umland, ed. *The 2002 Dubrovka and 2004 Beslan Hostage Crises* (Germany: Stuggart, 2006) 58.

⁵⁸ *Ibid*, 61.

⁵⁹ *Ibid*, 62.

In an effort to compel the perpetrators to release the hostages, Russian authorities deployed the tactic of counter-capture. Russian authorities took into custody forty relatives of Basayev and Maskhadov, including children, and broadcast their detention on Grozny television.⁶⁰ Russian authorities also brought the wife and children of one of the perpetrators to the school to try and persuade the release of some of the children. As witnessed by Markelov, “She called her husband at the school and told him she was being held by the federal troops and told him not to kill children. He asked her to give the telephone to one of the officers, and when she did, he is reported to have said, “Kill her and all three of my kids.””⁶¹

September 3:

There are many different accounts as to how the crisis came to its conclusion and the types of weapons used by the Russian government. One expert reported that Russian forces fired machine guns, cannons, tank rounds, and grenades into the school which resulted in the death of over 100 hostages.⁶² This use of force would later be criticized by many as excessive and a cause for the tremendous loss of life among the hostages in the school.

Also, there were several different theories for how the siege began. Aslakhanov reported that an accidental explosion set off in the building led to the unplanned Russian attack. Ruslan Aushev, former President of Ingushetia and key negotiator during the siege, reported that an initial explosion was set off by a hostage-taker who had accidentally tripped on a wire. Duma member and a weapons and explosives expert, Yuri Savelyev, found in his report that the raid began when two RPGs or flame throwers were fired by the Russian forces

⁶⁰ Peter Baker and Susan Glasser. *Kremlin Rising* (New York: Scribner, 2005) 26.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Fred Weir, “Russian Forces Faulted in Beslan School Tragedy,” *Christian Science Monitor*. 01 Sept. 2006, <<http://www.csmonitor.com/2006/0901/p07s01-woeu.html>>.

into the building.⁶³ In court, it was revealed that two Russian snipers started the end of the siege after they shot and killed two of the militants inside the school; there is some speculation that this caused the explosion, as those perpetrators were standing on pedal detonators.⁶⁴ During the initial storming of the school, many of the hostages' relatives were armed and managed to breach the security cordon. Many of these relatives fought alongside security forces when the final raid occurred.⁶⁵ Whether these armed civilians attacked the school first and forced the Russian military into launching a premature raid is still open to debate, revealing the extreme chaos of the scene.

The theories all converge at the fact that the Russians used heavy artillery to fire into the building in an attempt to rescue the hostages, although it is unclear who caused the initial explosion that set off the raid. The Russian government at first refused to admit to the use of tanks and flame-throwers, but contrary evidence was presented by some Beslan civilians to the FSB.⁶⁶ Afterward, the Russian government defended the use of tanks and other heavy weaponry, arguing that it was used after all surviving hostages escaped from the school.⁶⁷ Later interviews with Russian security personnel suggest that they were aware of the use of flame throwers during the raid.⁶⁸

⁶³ "Beslan School Hostage Crisis," *Wikipedia*, Accessed 17 Feb. 2007.

⁶⁴ "Government Snipers Triggered Beslan Bloodbath, Court Told," *CBC News*, 1 June 2005, <<http://www.cbc.ca/world/story/2005/06/01/beslantrial0601.html>>.

⁶⁵ "Beslan School Siege," *BBC News*, Accessed 10 Feb. 2007, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/shared/spl/hi/world/04/russian_s/html/5.stm>.

⁶⁶ "The sensational statement of the representative of Public Prosecution: "Tanks and flame throwers were used during the storm," *Pravda Beslana*, 29 Jan. 2007, <<http://www.pravdabeslana.ru/pass.html>>.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

SUPPRESSION OF THE PRESS

During the crisis, Russian authorities acted largely to prevent the public from knowing the true magnitude of events and sought to prevent full-scale negotiations from taking place. Mikhail Markelov, a Russian Duma deputy on the scene, was the first Russian authority to report what was transpiring at Beslan. After being told by witnesses that over 800 people were in the gym, Markelov went on the radio shortly thereafter to report that just 100 people were taken hostage.⁶⁹ His rationale for underreporting the true number of hostages was to prevent “a panic.” The Kremlin subsequently maintained strict control over what was said over all media outlets, and amended the initial report of 100 hostages to establish a final count of 354. The perpetrators were reportedly infuriated by the government’s misinformation, and quite accurately “assumed that meant the Russians were preparing to storm the building and lying in order to minimize the situation.”

The perpetrators were not the only people in Beslan frustrated over the government’s deliberate misrepresentation of the situation. Some Beslan residents tried to communicate the real number of hostages by holding up signs in the background of live television reporting crews, and others even attacked a state television news team. Other reporters were prevented from even reaching Beslan. Anna Politkovskaya, the Russian investigative journalist who earned the ire of the Kremlin with her incisive and highly critical dispatches from the Chechen front, was en route to Beslan when she fell extremely ill after drinking what she claims was poisoned tea. Andrei Babitsky, another independent journalist critical of the Kremlin, was arrested under false pretenses in a Moscow airport just before stepping onto a south-bound flight. On the second day of the stand-off, President Putin finally appeared on state television to make a statement, vowing

⁶⁹ Baker and Glasser, *Kremlin Rising*, 21-35.

that “Our principle task in the current situation is of course to save the lives and health of the hostages.””

On the final day of the crisis, as the initial mysterious explosions rocked the scene, CNN and BBC news teams immediately went to live coverage, while the state networks waited another hour before finally interrupting regular programming. Finally, at 14:00, both state networks Channel One and Rossiya aired a report on the ensuing battle, but by 14:06, Channel One abandoned its coverage in favor of an episode of a popular Brazilian soap opera. The only independent broadcaster in Russia, the radio station Ekho Moskvyy, resorted to reiterating live CNN reports to notify listeners of what was occurring. Even when the state networks were reporting from Beslan, they wildly misrepresented what was actually happening despite audible and visible evidence to the contrary. NTV, another state-controlled network, switched to sports coverage after a brief report that mentioned no fighting or casualties. By the evening of Day 3, Rossiya was airing a military series that documented the valiant Russian fight against Chechen bandits, while Channel One broadcast *Die Hard*.

Reports in the printed media were also censored by Russian authorities, with the editor of the large Moscow daily *Izvestiya* fired for running graphic images of Beslan parents holding their bloodied children. Due to rampant mistrust of the government, many Russians contested the final official body count of 330 dead, and were confused by the government’s conflicting reports that they captured first three, then two, and finally just one of the perpetrators. None of the government’s contradictions or discrepancies were accounted for when President Putin finally addressed the nation a day and a half after the crisis ended.

ATTEMPTS TO THWART NEGOTIATIONS

In addition to suppression of the press, there were instances when Russian authorities acted to stifle negotiations. The perpetrators demanded that they be allowed to undertake negotiations with Alexander Dzasokhov, the president of North Ossetia. The FSB, however, excluded him from its crisis headquarters and threatened to detain him if he approached the school. Dzasokhov asked the former president of Ingushetia, Ruslan Aushev, for help. Aushev spoke with Akhmed Zakayev, representative of the London Chechen Resistance. On September 2, Aushev visited the school and left with 11 nursing mothers and 15 children.⁷⁰ Negotiations with those individuals requested may have gained an even more significant result prior to the Russian assault on the school.

On September 3, Zakayev told President Dzasokhov that Aslan Maskadov, the former Chechen president often described as a moderate, wished to visit Beslan and serve as a mediator. Dzasokov informed the head of the FSB operation, General Pronichev, about this development. The FSB did not offer an immediate reply. The storming of the school began within the same hour.⁷¹

According to the Kremlin's final account, all of the 32 gunmen were killed except for one - Nur-Pashi Kulayev, who was found hiding under a truck. During the operation, 11 Russian special forces were killed in the initial raid on the building. On September 6 and 7, 2004, two days of national prayer were declared by President Putin. On the second day, 135,000 people held an anti-terror rally in Red Square.⁷²

DISSENTING REPORTS OF BESLAN

⁷⁰ Satter, David, "The truth about Beslan: What Putin's government is covering up," *The Weekly Standard*, 13 Nov. 2006, 12 March 2007, <<http://www.encyclopedia.com/doc/1G1-154023652.html>>.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² "Beslan School Siege," *BBC News*, Accessed 10 Feb. 2007, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/shared/spl/hi/world/04/russian_s/html/5.stm>.

The lack of a clear explanation and the number of conflicting accounts surrounding the events of September 1 –3, 2004, have been terribly frustrating for both Beslan survivors and victims' relatives. The influential group *Mothers of Beslan* has requested that the United States and European Union (EU) conduct their own investigations into the Beslan massacre.⁷³ A major obstacle to reaching a definitive account has been the misplacement and loss of evidence from the scene. Witnesses observed evidence being moved as early as September 4, 2004. Furthermore, authorities failed to seal off the school so a proper investigation could be conducted: “there were no fences – no gates to keep visitors away.”⁷⁴

Because the scene has been so significantly disturbed, it is impossible to conduct a fully objective, scientific investigation of the events. Furthermore, and most importantly, it means investigators must rely to a great extent on eyewitness testimony, which social psychologists have demonstrated to be somewhat unreliable. Professor Greenberg of the University of Pittsburgh states: “Research on perception has generally shown that people’s motivational states strongly influence what they perceive. Such states create a psychological set, or readiness to perceive an event in a particular way.”⁷⁵ This phenomenon was observed at Pearl Harbor. Several eyewitnesses, both civilians and sailors, claimed to have seen German swastikas on enemy planes.⁷⁶

Because the scene at Beslan has been so thoroughly compromised, the entire truth may never be known. The grave Russian mismanagement of the crisis and its aftermath speaks volumes of the government’s counterterrorism capabilities and the competence of those in

⁷³ “Beslan Mothers ask US, EU to Help Investigate School Siege,” *MosNews*, 30 Nov. 2005, 19 Feb. 2007, <<http://www.mosnews.com/news/2005/11/30/beslanforeign.shtml>>.

⁷⁴ David James Smith, “Special Report: Beslan: the aftermath,” *The Sunday Times*, 12 Dec. 2004, 17 Feb. 2007, <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/life_and_style/article398244.ece>.

⁷⁵ Martin S. Greenberg and R. Barry Ruback, *Social Psychology of the Criminal Justice System* (Dubuque, Iowa: Kendall/Hunt, 1991) 37.

⁷⁶ Richard F. Hill, *Hitler Attacks Pearl Harbor* (Boulder, Colorado: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2003) 52.

charge of rescue operations. The last-minute scrambling and reappointment of people in charge would seem indicative of a country with little or no experience with terrorist acts and hostage situations. However, Beslan's tragedy is reminiscent of two other major incidents which should have acted as catalysts to create more sophisticated response policies. Accounts of the Budennovsk Hospital and Dubrovka Theater crises can be found in Appendix A.

The Reports

The official Russian parliamentary commission report on Beslan was met with significant opposition. The final report was released in December 2006, after much criticism and controversy caused by another report produced earlier that year. The official government document is in excess of 60,000 pages.⁷⁷

Yuri Petrovich Savelev, a doctor of technical sciences and a highly-qualified expert on the laws of the physics of combustion and explosion, published his own report entitled "Beslan: The Hostages' Truth." He was initially a member of the official Russian commission. The document is approximately 700 pages long and includes over 300 photographs.⁷⁸ The report compiled by Savelev (a State Duma deputy) was completely dismissed by the chairman, Alexander Torshin, who is quoted calling the report a "deliberate falsification of the data."⁷⁹ The Russian government has forbidden Russian newspapers to publish this report. The following is a summary of its controversial findings:

⁷⁷ "Russia: Beslan Reports Compared," *Radio Free Europe*, 3 January 2007, <<http://www.rferl.org/featuresarticle/2007/01/7e7550cc-9ea5-43c4-973f-f2cde65514b9.html>>.

⁷⁸ "Authorities Ban Expert's Report on Beslan Crisis," 10 January 2007, <<http://www.mosnews.com/news/2006/09/01/banreport.shtml>>.

⁷⁹ Marina Litvinovich, "The Truth About Beslan," *Pravda Beslana*, 20 January 2007 <<http://www.pravdabeslana.ru/truth.htm>>.

1) The actual number of hostage takers was higher than the commission (Torshin) report indicates. There were between 58-76 hostage takers (compared to the 34 concluded in the Torshin report), many of which escaped during the massive confusion on Day 3.⁸⁰

2) Two shots fired from outside the gymnasium, one from a flame thrower and one from a grenade launcher, initiated the finale at approximately 13:00 on September 3. (The Torshin report indicates that a hostage taker accidentally tripped a wire, triggering the explosion.)⁸¹

The first explosion was the result of a RPO-A Shmel flame-thrower fired at the sports hall (adjoins the gymnasium) from neighboring five-story House No. 37 in School Lane. The shot was fired into the northeast corner of the attic space. Alternatives to this weapon mentioned in the report were: RPG-7VI grenade thrower, RShG-2 rocket propelled assault grenade or an MPO-A.⁸²

The second explosion was the result of an RShG-1 grenade thrower fired from the five-story House No. 41 in School Lane. This shot destroyed the portions of the wall beneath the northern window's sill of the sports hall.⁸³

3) President Vladimir Putin initially gave instructions to attack the school to Russian security chiefs. A source in the presidential administration reported that President Putin accepted the storming of the school in principal midday on September 1, stating, "a storming and no negotiations."⁸⁴ No plan to raid the school was ever prepared by the actual law enforcement

⁸⁰ "Russia: Beslan Reports Compared," *Radio Free Europe*, 3 January 2007, <<http://www.rferl.org/featuresarticle/2007/01/7e7550cc-9ea5-43c4-973f-f2cde65514b9.html>>.

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² Marina Litvinovich "The Truth About Beslan"

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

agencies present. The perceived storming was actually a “spontaneous attack” headed by armed civilians. This attack was followed shortly thereafter by the support of special forces⁸⁵.

4) Tanks and flamethrowers were fired on the school prior to assessing the status of remaining hostages; this resulted in some casualties.⁸⁶ The order to extinguish the fire caused by the multiple explosions occurring around 13:00 was not given until 15:10, and was not executed until 15:28. Hostages remaining in the gymnasium while rafters fell around them burned to death.⁸⁷

The report was welcomed by many eyewitnesses of the crisis and relatives of victims. The report, although suppressed by the Russian government, has found its way to many in the international media, where it has been championed as more candid and in parts more accurate than the official accounts. Its dramatically different findings however, add to the atmosphere of mistrust that permeates Russia. With so many dissenting voices documenting the crisis, Russians are reluctant to believe anything official but are also suspicious of “independent” reports.

The most pressing discrepancies concern the role (if any) of the heavily-armed civilians present at the scene in Beslan. One version of the story indicates the civilians themselves may have fired on the school in a fit of rage, causing an explosion.⁸⁸ Another version argues that the civilians surrounded the school to prevent the Russian authorities from storming the school and thus repeating the Dubrovka Theater disaster.⁸⁹ According to another version, President Putin decided there would be no negotiations and that the Special Forces fired grenades at the school in

⁸⁵ “Russia: Beslan Reports Compared,” *Radio Free Europe*, 3 January 2007, <<http://www.rferl.org/featuresarticle/2007/01/7e7550cc-9ea5-43c4-973f-f2cde65514b9.html>>.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

⁸⁷ Marina Litvinovich, “The Truth About Beslan”.

⁸⁸ “The Greatest Secret of Beslan: Two years after the tragedy, there are five versions of events,” *Lexis Nexis Academic* 11 Sep. 2006.

⁸⁹ Marina Litvinovich, “The Truth About Beslan”.

an effort to gain the support of the civilians for an assault by making it appear that the perpetrators had begun detonating explosives.⁹⁰ Yet another version argues that several perpetrators inter-mingled with the civilians, and that they may have fired grenades at the school.⁹¹

Beslan was the result of an internal problem; Russian authorities portrayed it as an international terrorist event in hopes of gaining legitimacy for ongoing actions in Chechnya. It should be interpreted in light of the historical context of the Chechen conflict. There is a centuries-long history of hostility and war between Russian and Chechnya (see Appendix F for further details). The perpetrators' primary demand was Russian force withdrawal from Chechnya and acknowledgement of its independence. There was no published message implying religious intent, other than comments made after the attack. However, even those comments (indicating the intent to instigate a war between Christian North Ossetia and Islamic Ingushetia) have roots in regional separatist movements, not "global jihad". There is no indication that Beslan was in any way part of an international plot to destabilize Russia.

And yet, the Russian government, having painted it that way, appears to have convinced the Western world that Chechnya was another front in the "global war on terror". By focusing international attention on international terrorist networks, Russia was able to enact sweeping domestic changes that changed the nature of its nascent democracy.

⁹⁰ "The Greatest Secret of Beslan: Two years after the tragedy, there are five versions of events," *Lexis Nexis Academic* 11 Sep. 2006.

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THE AFTERMATH

The 9/11 attacks made apparent in no uncertain terms that the United States' long-standing problem with Islamist terrorists (which originated with the 1983 Hezbollah bombing of the US Marine barracks in Lebanon) was no longer tolerable. Similarly, Beslan is aptly described as Russia's 9/11. The events of September 1-3, 2004, made it painfully clear to Russian authorities (especially President Vladimir Putin) that the Beslan crisis had "pushed a long conflict [with Islamist militants] beyond the ceiling of tolerance."⁹² Immediately following Beslan, Russia attempted to assassinate those who planned the attack.

In late January 2006, the Chechen rebel alleged to have planned a "backup" attack on a school in Ingushetia was killed after a shootout with police.⁹³ And on July 10, 2006, Russian media reported that Shamil Basayev, who had claimed responsibility for the attack, had been killed in Ingushetia by Russian special forces in what President Putin referred to as "deserved retribution" for attacks carried out by Basayev's group,⁹⁴ of which Beslan was the most serious. In March of 2005, Maskhadov was killed after an encounter with Russian troops who were able to locate him after paying \$10 million for information on his whereabouts.⁹⁵ It is unclear whether he was actually killed by Russian troops or whether there was an accident involving his

⁹² Amir Taheri, "Out of Grief, a New Role for Russia". *The Sunday Times*, 12 Sep. 2004, 17 Feb. 2007
<<http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/article481306.ece>>.

⁹³ "Terrorist Who Plotted Beslan 'Backup' Attack is Killed," *Hindustan Times*, 29 Jan. 2006, 19 Mar. 2007
<http://www.hindustantimes.in/news/181_1611268,00050003.htm>.

⁹⁴ "Beslan Terrorist Leader Killed, Reports Say," *Guardian Unlimited*, 10 Jul. 2006, 19 Mar. 2007
<<http://www.guardian.co.uk/chechnya/Story/0,,1817213,00.html>>.

⁹⁵ "Russia 'Paid \$10m' for Maskhadov," *CNN*, 15 Mar. 2005, 19 Mar. 2007
<<http://edition.cnn.com/2005/WORLD/europe/03/15/maskhadov/>>.

bodyguards.⁹⁶ Regardless, this was interpreted by many Western analysts as a blow to what limited prospects had existed for a peaceful resolution to the conflict.⁹⁷

One cannot help but notice that a significant amount of time elapsed after Beslan before the Russian government was able to find and kill those it held responsible for the crisis. This would seem to indicate that Russia faces intelligence-gathering problems similar to those experienced by the United States.

Political changes

Immediately after the events, President Putin framed Beslan and Russia's ongoing battle with Chechen separatists as part of the international "war on terror."⁹⁸ He emphasized alleged links between some of the perpetrators and al-Qaeda. Initial reports indicated that up to ten of the hostage-takers were "Arabs".⁹⁹ A photograph of a man with Middle Eastern features was released to the media. The Kremlin invoked Washington's post-9/11 language, stating it would attack terror bases, and do so preemptively. Russia's army chief of staff, Yury Baluyevsky, stated that Moscow would "liquidate terror bases in any region".¹⁰⁰ President Putin rejected calls from the West, especially from the EU, to seek a political solution to the crisis in Chechnya by negotiating with the so-called Chechen moderates, stating that Russia would not negotiate with "child-killers."¹⁰¹

⁹⁶ "Chechen Leader Maskhadov Killed," *BBC News*, 8 Mar. 2005, 19 Mar. 2007 <<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/4330039.stm>>.

⁹⁷ "Mr. Maskhadov's Death," *The Washington Post*, 11 Mar. 2005, 19 Mar. 2007 <<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A25589-2005Mar10.html>>.

⁹⁸ J.F.O. McAllister and Paul-Quinn-Judge, "The Whole World Is Crying," *Times Europe*, 12 Sep. 2004, 17 Feb. 2007 <<http://www.time.com/time/europe/html/040920/story.html>>.

⁹⁹ Mark Franchetti and Matthew Campbell, "How a Repressed Village Misfit Became the Butcher of Beslan," *The Sunday Times*, 12 Sep. 2004, 17 Feb. 2007 <<http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/world/article481524.ece>>.

¹⁰⁰ "Britain Backs Russian Threats of Pre-emptive Strikes," *SpaceWar*, 8 Sep. 2004, 21 Feb. 2007 <<http://www.spacewar.com/2004/040908160400.hs9abmix.html>>.

¹⁰¹ "Putin Rejects 'child-killer talks'," *BBC News*, 7 Sep. 2004, 21 Feb. 2007 <news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/3633668.stm>.

President Putin argued that the attacks had been possible because of the fall of the Soviet Union and Russia's difficulties transforming to democracy.¹⁰² He sought to "manage" the nascent Russian democracy and acted to centralize power and marginalize Moscow's opposition. Although President Putin had been systematically dismantling individual freedoms and checks-and-balances since taking office in 1999 (and thus Beslan should not be considered a "watershed event"¹⁰³), both the scale and scope of these reforms increased after Beslan.

Specifically, the Kremlin gained the power to directly appoint regional governors. President Putin now "nominates" candidates, and if the provincial assembly rejects his choice three times, he has the authority to disband the assembly.¹⁰⁴

The Russian parliament is divided into two parts – the Duma (lower house) and the Federation Council (upper house). Members of the Federation Council serve until their regional governor leaves his post. Thus, if President Putin wishes to remove a member of the Federation Council, he can do so by dismissing the member's regional governor. Furthermore, Moscow has gained considerable control of the Duma. Single-constituency voting has ended, and political parties must now gain 7% of the popular vote – as opposed to 5% pre-Beslan – to be represented in the Duma. It is also more difficult to form a political party, and parties are no longer allowed to form electoral blocks. These developments are considered rather friendly to pro-Moscow parties, but quite threatening to the opposition. Finally, President Putin has expressed his desire to control the hiring/firing of judges, although it is unclear whether or not this has been implemented.

¹⁰² "Russian Proposals Threaten Democracy," *FreedomHouse*, 13 Sep. 2004, 7 Mar 2007
<<http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=70&release=25>>.

¹⁰³ Roemer Lemaitre, "The Rollback of Democracy in Russia After Beslan," *Review of Central and East European Law*, Oct. 2006 v31 i4 p369(43).

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

Freedom House issues yearly country-specific reports describing trends in the amount of freedom enjoyed in countries around the world. These reports are used to generate a map dividing nations into free, somewhat-free, and non-free categories. *Freedom House* first listed Russia among the “non-free” in its 2005 report. It did so again in its recently released 2006 report.¹⁰⁵

Security

Immediately after the Beslan crisis, experts predicted that relations between Russia and the West would improve.¹⁰⁶ Although the United States tempered its criticism of Russian atrocities in Chechnya, the EU did not do so.¹⁰⁷ Furthermore, relations between Russia and the West have cooled considerably since the days and weeks following Beslan.¹⁰⁸

The Russians object to the expansion of NATO which has included former satellite states of the Soviet Union. Russia especially resents that NATO membership was offered to Ukraine and the pro-U.S. government of Georgia, which now receives weapons and military advisors from the United States. This is especially distressing to Moscow because it has accused Georgia of harboring Chechen rebels. Russia objects that the United States not only continues to develop its ballistic missile defense system but has asked Poland and the Czech Republic to host missile-defense equipment.¹⁰⁹ Russia also objects that the United States offered asylum to at least one

¹⁰⁵ “Freedom in the World – Russia (2005),” *Freedom House* 17 Feb. 2007

<<http://freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=22&year=2005&country=6818>>.

¹⁰⁶ “Out of Grief, a New Role for Russia,” *The Sunday Times*, 12 Sep. 2004, 17 Feb. 2007

<<http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/article481306.ece>>.

¹⁰⁷ “The Chechnyan factor in Russia - E.U. Relations,” *Power & Interest News Report*, 4 Oct. 2004, 21 Feb. 2007

<http://www.pinr.com/report.php?ac=view_printable&report_id=223&language_id=1>.

¹⁰⁸ Gerard Baker, “Icy Blast from Putin Hints at a New Cold War,” *The Times*, 12 Feb. 2007, 17 Feb. 2007

<http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/comment/columnists/gerard_baker/article1368824.ece>.

¹⁰⁹ Vladimir Isachenkov, “Russia: U.S. Base Hosts May Be Targets,” *Yahoo! News*, 19 Feb. 2007, 19 Feb. 2007

<http://news.yahoo.com/s/ap/20070219/ap_on_re_eu/europe_us_missile_defense_1>.

Chechen separatist before the Beslan crisis.¹¹⁰ President Putin made his concerns rather clear in Munich during a speech to the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe on February 10, 2007. There was even some talk among Western diplomats that President Putin's speech was tantamount to the declaration of a second Cold War.¹¹¹

The West, for its part, objects to the "reforms" instituted by President Putin since Beslan and the Kremlin's "managed democracy." It is concerned about Moscow's movement away from democracy and toward a re-embrace of totalitarianism. It also suspects the Kremlin is willing to exterminate political opponents, as evidenced by the execution-style death of journalist and Kremlin-critic Anna Politkovskaya and the poisoning of British citizen and former-KGB member Alexander V. Litvinenko. The West also objects to Russia's use of its energy sources to exert political pressure on its energy-dependent neighbors. The United States especially objected to Russian weapons-sales to Iran, since suspended.¹¹² Included in these were anti-aircraft weapons, which would make any U.S. or Israeli strike on Iran's nuclear facilities even more difficult to succeed.

The Beslan hostage crisis was condemned without reservation by world leaders. The US, United Nations, EU,¹¹³ the Vatican,¹¹⁴ and human rights NGOs¹¹⁵ all deplored the attacks. There

¹¹⁰ "Chechen Separatist Granted Asylum in USA," *MosNews*, 6 Aug. 2004, 19 Feb. 2007 <<http://www.mosnews.com/news/2004/08/06/ilyas.shtml>>.

¹¹¹ Gerard Baker, "Icy Blast from Putin hints at a new Cold War," *The Times*, 12 Feb. 2007, 17 Feb. 2007 <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/comment/columnists/gerard_baker/article1368824.ece>.

¹¹² John O'Sullivan, "Putin Speech Stokes Worry for Europe, U.S.," *FreeRepublic*, 13 Feb. 2007 <<http://www.freerepublic.com/focus/f-news/1784467/posts>>.

¹¹³ "EU, UN Condemn Beslan Killings And Call For Multilateral Action," *EuropaWorld*, 9 Sep. 2004, 17 Feb. 2007 <<http://www.europaworld.org/week191/euun10904.htm>>.

¹¹⁴ Kate Foster and Murdo MacLeod, "Stunned Aftermath of a Siege Bloodbath," *Scotland on Sunday*, 5 Sep. 2004, 17 Feb. 2004 <<http://scotlandonsunday.scotsman.com/index.cfm?id=1045952004>>.

¹¹⁵ "Joint NGO Statement on the Beslan Hostage Tragedy," *Amnesty International*, 8 Sep. 2004, 17 Feb. 2007 <<http://web.amnesty.org/library/Index/ENGEUR460502004>>.

has also been a substantial international charity effort aimed at helping the Beslan survivors and their families.¹¹⁶

¹¹⁶ Daniel J. Wakin, "Relief Effort: A Groundswell of Support and Donations," *The New York Times*, 8 Sep. 2004, 21 Feb. 2007 <http://www.nytimes.com/2004/09/08/international/europe/08aid.html&position=>.

APPENDIX A: ECHOES FROM THE PAST

Budennovsk Hospital Crisis

The Budennovsk Hospital crisis occurred in 1995, nearly ten years prior to Beslan. The similarities in these two terrorist events are striking: the leadership involved, number of hostages, and civilian involvement. However, these two crucial events of modern Russian history offer differences that illustrate drastic changes in the Russian approach to terrorism.



Budennovsk Hospital Crisis
Source: Moscow Times

In June 1995, Shamil Basayev and a group of 70 individuals entered the southern part of Russia, into Stravapol from northern Chechnya. They arrived on buses, avoiding detection or seizure by bribing various Russian checkpoint officials with food, water and money. The group reportedly joined with other rebel forces already in place, and on June 14, 1995, attacked the City Hall of Budennovsk. According to Basayev, it was here where he and his brigade “ran out of dollars to bribe their way through check points and were forced to begin an attack”.¹¹⁷ After a two-hour standoff with ill-prepared local law enforcement, 20 police officers were dead and an additional 21 individuals were wounded. Basayev and his troops then moved to a nearby hospital, where between 1,200 and 1,500 people were taken hostage.¹¹⁸

The Russian government attempted to take the hospital by force numerous times and the siege wore on for approximately four days. Basayev requested that the journalists present report his demands and there was active communication between him and the Russian forces. His

¹¹⁷ Felgenhauer, Pavel, “Was it just a warning shot?,” *Moscow Times*, 31 October 2002: JRL 6524.

¹¹⁸ Kohan, John, “Assault at high noon,” *Time Magazine*, 26 June 1995, 1 February 2007
<<http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,983088,00.html>>.

brother was used as communicator for negotiations. Despite the efforts to negotiate, some of the hostages were killed. It was rumored, although not confirmed, that the hostages were sprayed with gasoline, to prevent attempts by the military to storm the building with heavy artillery and fire power.¹¹⁹

Through negotiations with then Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin, Basayev relayed his demands to President Boris Yeltsin and the Russian government: 1) cease fire and peace talks; 2) an immediate withdrawal of Russian troops from Chechnya; 3) a safe exit for the perpetrators at the hospital. Initially, there were over 1,200 hostages held within the hospital, many of whom were children and elderly patients. On June 19, most of them were released; 120 were transported with Basayev and his army on a path back to Chechnya. At the border of Dagestan, assured of protection from fellow countrymen who were awaiting his return, Basayev and his troops released the remaining hostages and were welcomed back to Chechnya as heroes.¹²⁰

What began as a relatively minor incident led to one of the largest-scale hostage crises in post-Soviet Russia (until the later incidents in Moscow and Beslan). During this siege, 24 Russian police officers and soldiers were killed and 19 were wounded. The Alpha Group suffered three fatalities and six special force members were wounded. 105 citizens of Budennovsk were killed and 400 were wounded. 160 buildings in the town were destroyed or damaged.¹²¹

Perhaps most remarkably, substantiated reports assert that Basayev had no initial intentions of taking control of the hospital. However, after being pushed into a corner, Basayev

¹¹⁹ Kohan, John, "Assault at high noon," *Time Magazine*, 26 June 1995, 1 February 2007 <<http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,983088,00.html>>.

¹²⁰ Ibid.

¹²¹ Ibid.

reacted desperately to protect himself and his brigade. This event became one of the most “successful” Chechen maneuvers, and is widely considered to be the turning point of the First Chechen War. After the Budennovsk Hospital crisis, President Yeltsin eventually followed through with his promise to engage in peace talks with the Chechen leadership. Additionally, Russian troops were almost immediately withdrawn from the region. After some negotiating, Russian and Chechen leaders reached a compromise thus ending the First Chechen War.¹²²

This incident holds particular significance to the incident at Beslan. It set precedence for: the use of Russian civilian hostages by Chechens to gain political advantage; the use of new civilian targets (previously protected sectors of society – women and children); the “soft” response of Russian government to minimize civilian casualties. This incident also enlightened Chechen insurgents as to the possible response tactics of Russian forces in a large-scale hostage situation; it therefore should have triggered Russian security forces to improve their tactical approaches and negotiations, and to establish preventive security measures.

In his frighteningly prophetic article (“Was it just a warning shot?”), Pavel Felgenhauer of *The Moscow Times* reflected on the relevance of Budennovsk after the siege at Moscow’s Dubrovka Theater:

It may in fact be a final warning to the Kremlin that if it does not begin peace negotiations, the rebels could embark on a series of vicious terrorist attacks inside Russia. . . . Since the beginning of the current conflict in 1999, Maskhadov has – time and again – specifically ordered his supporters not to attack targets, particularly civilian ones, within Russia. However with the separatist movement becoming more radical, all restrictions may soon be dropped. . . . President Vladimir Putin apparently believes that the Kremlin’s weakness in the Budennovsk crisis led directly to an overall defeat that threatened the unity, and indeed, survival, of the Russian State. At the beginning of the current war, Putin vowed “there will be no new Khasavyurt, no new Budennovsk”.¹²³

¹²² “*The world regional conflicts project*,” 9 January 2007 <<http://www.boyntonweb.com>>.

¹²³ Felgenhauer, Pavel, “Was it just a warning shot?,” *Moscow Times*, 31 October 2002: JRL 6524.

And indeed, there was not. Vladimir Putin's government response, dramatically different from that of Boris Yeltsin's, led to a highly different outcome.

After Budennovsk, the perpetrators escaped, leaving behind 100 casualties; and the first war in Chechnya saw the beginning of its end. After Beslan, all the perpetrators were officially either captured or killed, but over 400 people lost their lives; the second war in Chechnya continues on.

Dubrovka Theater Crisis

Nord-Ost began its run in Moscow on October 19, 2001. The lavish theatrical production was Russia's most expensive ever, a patriotic celebration of Russia's wartime sacrifices and indomitable national spirit. The popular play's stage provided a fitting location to launch a terrorist attack.

On the night of October 23, 2002, dozens of armed Chechen separatists took the theater hostage. The group's leader, Movsar Barayev, was a 25-year-old veteran of both Chechen wars who answered to Basayev. The 22 male and 19 female terrorists sealed off all exits and strung up explosives through the theater to ensure that it would not be stormed by Russian defense forces. According to Irina Khakamada, Russia's most famous female politician and a lead negotiator during the crisis, the terrorists' demands were "contradictory, unclear, and always changing. But they were not set to blow up everything and kill everybody."¹²⁴ President Putin found himself confronted with the direst crisis of his presidency.¹²⁵

Putin refused to seriously negotiate with the terrorists, choosing to respond with force rather than repeat the mistakes of Budennovsk and appease Basayev. Alpha commando units were tasked with storming the theater and immediately began mapping the theater's layout and

¹²⁴ Baker and Glasser, *Kremlin Rising*, 166.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, 162.

determining where each of the terrorists were stationed.¹²⁶ Meanwhile, Putin's negotiators lied to Barayev, claiming on the second night of the crisis that General Viktor Kazantsev, Putin's envoy to the Caucasus region, was on his way to Moscow, and would meet with him the following morning at 10:00.¹²⁷ Satisfied that an end to the crisis was in sight, the terrorists were lulled into complacency and let their guard down. Around 5:00 the next morning, a haze began filling the theater and the Chechens soon realized that the Russians had used the theater's ventilation system to diffuse an anesthetic agent. The never-before-used chemical, an aerosolized version of the opiate anesthetic fentanyl, was pumped through the theater's air ducts and both hostages and terrorists began passing out immediately.

With many in the theater incapacitated, at approximately 5:30, Alpha commandos stormed the exits, engaging in firefights with those terrorists still conscious. What followed next was a scene of utter chaos, as police forces, medical personnel, and civilians rushed the theater and started hauling out hostages. Many of the hostages were already dead by the time emergency responders reached them. Many more died of asphyxiation because of insufficient medical supplies. In all, 130 hostages died; details about terrorist casualties have been suppressed by Russian authorities, although 41 are believed to have been killed during the botched rescue operation.¹²⁸

¹²⁶ Ibid., 163.

¹²⁷ Ibid., 168.

¹²⁸ Ibid., 172.

APPENDIX B: GROUP PROFILES AND TIMELINES

Islamic International Peacekeeping Brigade

Riyadus-Salikhin Reconnaissance and Sabotage Battalion of Chechen Martyrs

Special Purpose Islamic Regiment (Dabrovka Theater)

Name: *Islamic International Peacekeeping Brigade (IIPB)*

A.k.a.¹²⁹:

- a) The Islamic Peacekeeping Brigade
- b) The Islamic Peacekeeping Army
- c) The International Brigade
- d) Islamic Peacekeeping Battalion
- e) International Battalion
- f) Islamic Peacekeeping International Brigade

OFAC Specially Designated Global Terrorists (SDGT): 28 Feb 2003¹³⁰

Listed by United Nations 1267 Committee*: 04 March 2003¹³¹

Primary area of operation: Russia and Chechnya, throughout North Caucasus

Strength: 400¹³²

Current leader: Unknown

Former leadership¹³³:

- a) al-Khattab, Ibn (co-founder, deceased—20 March 2002)
- b) al-Urduni, Abu Hafs (succeeded al-Walid, deceased—27 Nov 2006)
- c) al-Walid, Abu (succeeded al-Khattab, deceased—April 2004)
- d) Basayev, Shamil (co-founder, deceased—11 July 2006)

¹²⁹ United Nations 1267 Committee, “The New Consolidated List of Individuals and Entities Belonging to or Associated with the Taliban and Al-Qaida Organisation as Established and Maintained by the 1267 Committee,” 12 Dec. 2006: 40.

¹³⁰ United States Department of Treasury, Office of Foreign Assets Control, “What You Need to Know About U.S. Sanctions,” 20 June 2005: 6.

¹³¹ United Nations 1267 Committee, “The New Consolidated List of Individuals and Entities Belonging to or Associated with the Taliban and Al-Qaida Organisation as Established and Maintained by the 1267 Committee”

¹³² United States Department of State, Office of the Coordinator for Counterterrorism, *Country Reports on Terrorism 2005*, April 2006: 245-257.

¹³³ “Group Profile: Islamic International Peacekeeping Brigade (IIPB),” *MIPT Terrorism Knowledge Base*, No date, 02 Feb. 2007 <<http://www.tkb.org/Group.jsp?groupID=4357>>.

Shares members with: RSRsBCM and SPIR¹³⁴

External aid: “Primary conduit for Islamic funding of the Chechen guerrillas, in part through links to al-Qaida-related financiers on the Arabian Peninsula.”¹³⁵

Goals: Muslim state in the North Caucasus¹³⁶

Major attacks¹³⁷:

- a) Aug-Sept 1999, several attacks in Dagestan
- b) Sept 1999, apartment bombings in Moscow
- c) Feb 2000, attack on Russian Airborne Infantry Company
- d) March 2000, ambush on Russian Special Forces
- e) Oct 2002, Dubrovka Theater attack

¹³⁴ Armond Caglar, “In the Spotlight: Islamic International Peacekeeping Brigade,” *Center for Defense Information*, 30 May 2003, 02 Feb. 2007 <<http://www.cdi.org/program/issue/document.cfm?DocumentID=1116&IssueID=56&StartRow=21&ListRows=10&appendURL=&Orderby=DateLastUpdated&ProgramID=39&issueID=56>>.

¹³⁵ United States Department of State, Office of the Coordinator for Counterterrorism, *Country Reports on Terrorism 2005*, April 2006: 245-257.

¹³⁶ Ibid.

¹³⁷ “Group Profile: Islamic International Peacekeeping Brigade (IIPB),” *MIPT Terrorism Knowledge Base*, No date, 02 Feb. 2007 <<http://www.tkb.org/Group.jsp?groupID=4357>>.

Islamic International Peacekeeping Brigade (IIPB) Timeline



Name: *Riyadus-Salikhin Reconnaissance and Sabotage Battalion of Chechen Martyrs*
(RSRSBCM)

A.k.a¹³⁸:

- a) Riyadus-Salikhin Reconnaissance and Sabotage Battalion
- b) Riyadh-as-Saliheen
- c) The Sabotage and Military Surveillance Group of the Riyadh al-Salihin Martyrs
- d) Firqat al-Takhrib wa al-Istitla al-Askariyah li Shuhada Riyadh al-Salihin
- e) Riyadus-Salikhin Reconnaissance and Sabotage Battalion of Shahids (martyrs)

OFAC Specially Designated Global Terrorists (SDGT): 28 Feb 2003¹³⁹

Listed by United Nations 1267 Committee*: 04 March 2003¹⁴⁰

Primary area of operation: Russia

Strength: ≤ 50¹⁴¹

Current leader: Unknown

Former leadership: Basayev, Shamil¹⁴² (deceased—11 July 2006)

Shares members with: IIPB and SPIR¹⁴³

External aid: Possible aid from foreign mujahedin¹⁴⁴

Goals: Muslim state in the North Caucasus¹⁴⁵

¹³⁸ United Nations 1267 Committee, “The New Consolidated List of Individuals and Entities Belonging to or Associated with the Taliban and Al-Qaida Organisation as Established and Maintained by the 1267 Committee”.

¹³⁹ United States Department of Treasury, Office of Foreign Assets Control, “What You Need to Know About U.S. Sanctions”.

¹⁴⁰ United Nations 1267 Committee, “The New Consolidated List of Individuals and Entities Belonging to or Associated with the Taliban and Al-Qaida Organisation as Established and Maintained by the 1267 Committee”.

¹⁴¹ United States Department of State, Office of the Coordinator for Counterterrorism, *Country Reports on Terrorism 2005*.

¹⁴² “Group Profile: Riyad Us-Saliheyn Martyrs’ Brigade,” MIPT Terrorism Knowledge Base, No date, 02 Feb. 2007 <<http://www.tkb.org/Group.jsp?groupID=3673>>.

¹⁴³ Armond Caglar, “In the Spotlight: Islamic International Peacekeeping Brigade”.

¹⁴⁴ United States Department of State, Office of the Coordinator for Counterterrorism, *Country Reports on Terrorism 2005*.

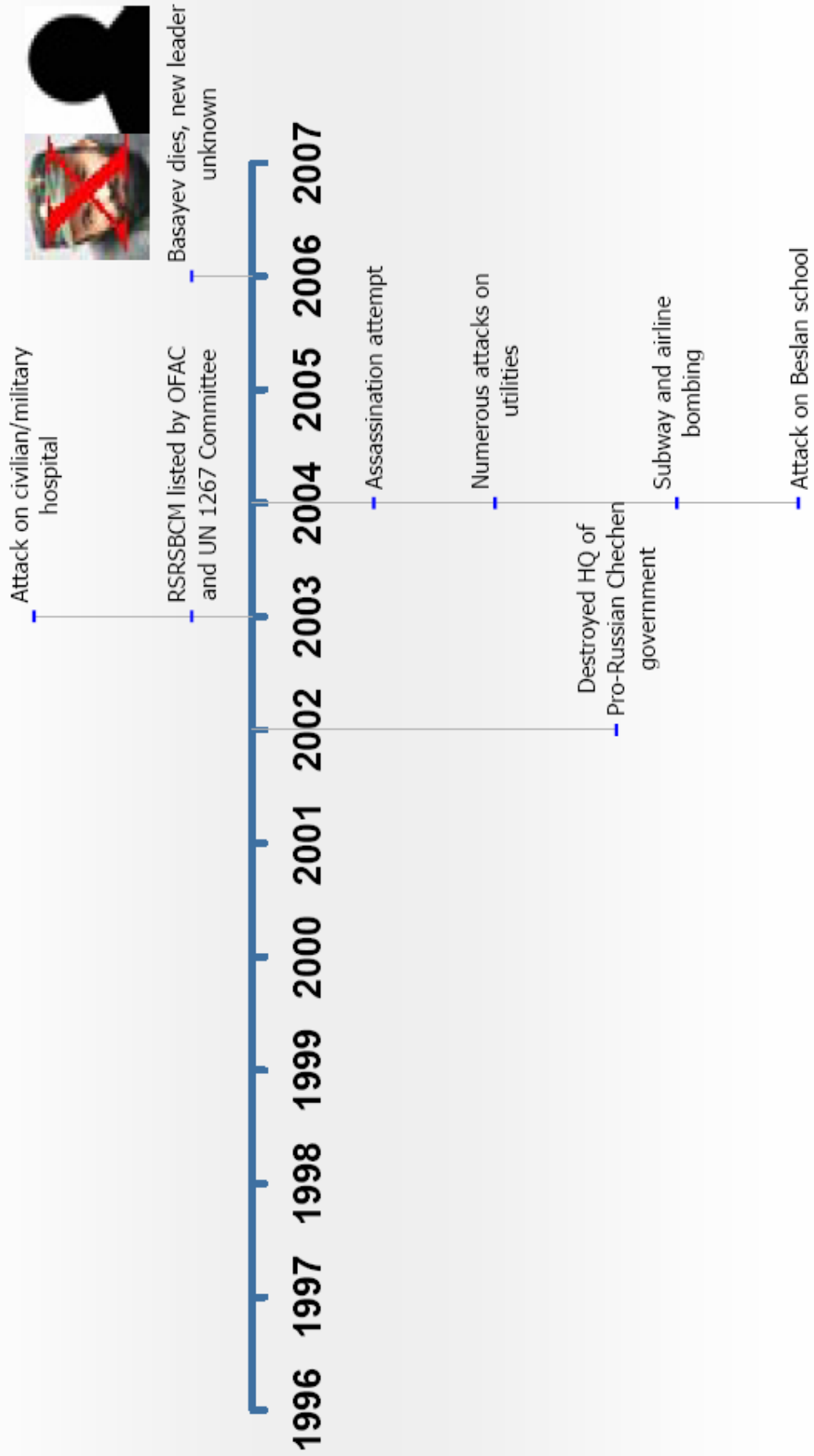
Major attacks¹⁴⁶:

- a) Dec 2002, destroyed HQ of Pro-Russian Chechen government
- b) Aug 2003, attack on civilian/military hospital
- c) Feb-March 2004, numerous attacks on utilities
- d) Apr 2004, assassination attempt against Ingushetian President Murat Zyazikov
- e) Aug 2004, subway and airline bombing (use of “Black Widows”)
- f) Sept 2004, attack on Beslan school

¹⁴⁵ United States Department of State, Office of the Coordinator for Counterterrorism, *Country Reports on Terrorism 2005*.

¹⁴⁶ “Incidents, Terrorist Organization: Riyad us-Saliheyn Martyrs' Brigade,” MIPT Terrorism Knowledge Base, No date, 02 Feb. 2007 <<http://www.tkb.org/MoreGroupIncidents.jsp?groupID=3673>>.

Riyadus-Salikhin Reconnaissance and Sabotage Battalion of Chechen Martyrs (RSRBCM) Timeline



Name: *Special Purpose Islamic Regiment (SPIR)*

A.k.a.¹⁴⁷:

- a) The Islamic Special Purpose Regiment
- b) The al-Jihad-Fisi-Sabililah Special Islamic Regiment
- c) Islamic Regiment of Special Meaning

OFAC Specially Designated Global Terrorists (SDGT): 28 Feb 2003¹⁴⁸

Listed by United Nations 1267 Committee*: 04 March 2003¹⁴⁹

Primary area of operation: Russia

Strength: ≤ 100¹⁵⁰

Current leader: Amir Kazbek¹⁵¹/Amir Aslan¹⁵² (Not true ID)

Former leadership¹⁵³:

- a) Barayev, Arbi (founder, deceased—June 2001)
- b) Barayev, Movsar (succeeded Arbi Barayev, deceased—25 Oct 2002)
- c) Tazabayev, Khamzat (succeeded Movsar Barayev, deceased—23 Feb 2004)

Shares members with: RSRBSCM and IIB¹⁵⁴

External aid: Possible aid from foreign mujahedin¹⁵⁵

¹⁴⁷ United Nations 1267 Committee, “The New Consolidated List of Individuals and Entities Belonging to or Associated with the Taliban and Al-Qaida Organisation as Established and Maintained by the 1267 Committee”

¹⁴⁸ United States Department of Treasury, Office of Foreign Assets Control, “What You Need to Know About U.S. Sanctions”

¹⁴⁹ United Nations 1267 Committee, “The New Consolidated List of Individuals and Entities Belonging to or Associated with the Taliban and Al-Qaida Organisation as Established and Maintained by the 1267 Committee”.

¹⁵⁰ United States Department of State, Office of the Coordinator for Counterterrorism, *Country Reports on Terrorism 2005*.

¹⁵¹ “Group Profile: Special Purpose Islamic Regiment (SPIR),” *MIPT Terrorism Knowledge Base*, No date, 02 Feb. 2007 <<http://www.tkb.org/Group.jsp?groupID=3732>>.

¹⁵² United States Department of State, Office of the Coordinator for Counterterrorism, *Country Reports on Terrorism 2005*.

¹⁵³ “Group Profile: Special Purpose Islamic Regiment (SPIR),” *MIPT Terrorism Knowledge Base*, No date, 02 Feb. 2007 <<http://www.tkb.org/Group.jsp?groupID=3732>>.

¹⁵⁴ Armond Caglar, “In the Spotlight: Islamic International Peacekeeping Brigade”.

Goals: Independent Chechen state¹⁵⁶

Major attacks¹⁵⁷:

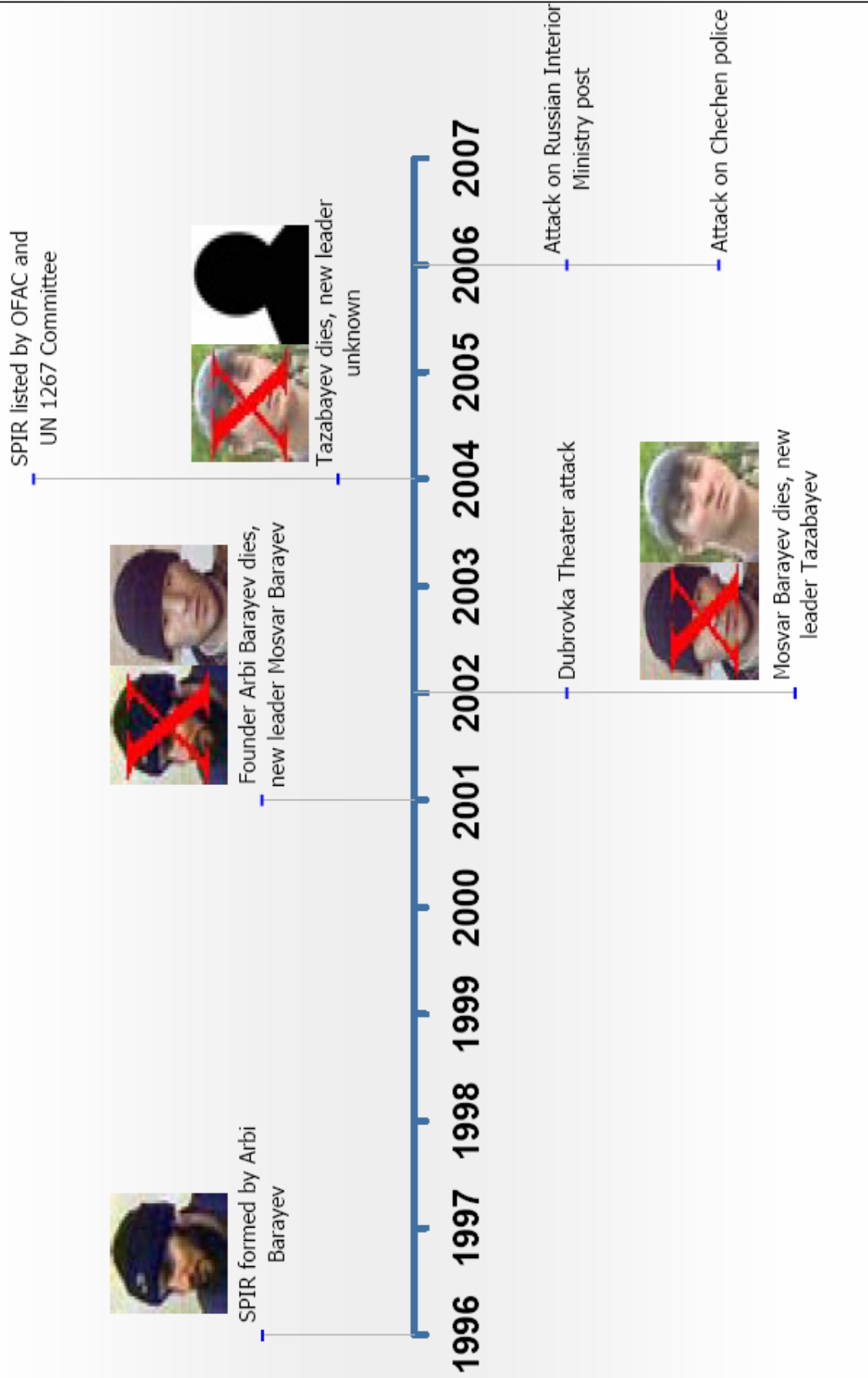
- a) Oct 2002, Dubrovka Theater attack
- b) July 2006, attack on Russian Interior Ministry post
- c) Aug 2006, attack on Chechen police

¹⁵⁵ United States Department of State, Office of the Coordinator for Counterterrorism, *Country Reports on Terrorism 2005*.

¹⁵⁶ "Group Profile: Special Purpose Islamic Regiment (SPIR)," *MIPT Terrorism Knowledge Base*.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

Special Purpose Islamic Regiment (SPIR)



**APPENDIX C:
INDIVIDUAL PROFILES OF CHECHEN RESISTANCE SENIOR LEADERSHIP**

Basayev, Shamil Salmanovich

al-Khattab, Omar Ibn

al-Saif, Abu Omar Mohammed

al-Urduni, Abu Hafs

al-Walid, Abu

Barayev, Arbi

Barayev, Mosvar

Tazabayev, Khamzat

Name: Basayev, Shamil Salmanovich

A.k.a.: Abdullakh Shamil Abu-Idris¹⁵⁸

Birth: 14 Jan 1965¹⁵⁹

Death: Jul 2006

Place of birth: Dyshni-Vedeno, Chechnya¹⁶⁰

Organization(s): Islamic International Peacekeeping Brigade (IIPB)

Riyadus-Salikhin Reconnaissance and Sabotage Battalion of Chechen Martyrs
(RSRSBCM)

Date Listed by OFAC as a Specially Designated National: Aug 2003¹⁶¹

Date Listed by United Nations 1267 Committee: Aug 2003¹⁶²

Notes:

- Co-founded the Islamic International Peacekeeping Brigade (IIPB) with al-Khattab
- Founded the Riyadus-Salikhin Reconnaissance and Sabotage Battalion of Chechen Martyrs (RSRSBCM)—Claimed the RSRSBCM was responsible for the Beslan crisis¹⁶³

Original image of Basayev (Right) from <http://republika.pl/blog_km_1073345/2169599/tr/bass.jpg>.

Original image of Basayev (Left) from <http://republika.pl/blog_km_1073345/2169599/tr/36676.jpg>.

Additional biographical information: Shamil Basayev

¹⁵⁸ United Nations 1267 Committee, “The New Consolidated List of Individuals and Entities Belonging to or associated with the Taliban and Al-Qaida Organisation as Established and Maintained by the 1267 Committee”. . .

¹⁵⁹ Ibid.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid.

¹⁶¹ United States Department of Treasury, Office of Foreign Assets Control, “Changes to List of Specially Designated Nationals and Blocked Persons Since January 1, 2003,” 24 Dec. 2003: 43.

¹⁶² United Nations 1267 Committee, “The New Consolidated List of Individuals and Entities Belonging to or associated with the Taliban and Al-Qaida Organisation as Established and Maintained by the 1267 Committee”.

¹⁶³ Nabi Abdullaev, “Basayev Says he was Behind Beslan,” *Moscow Times* 20 Sept. 2004: 1.

In an interview following the Beslan siege Basayev admitted, “Ok, so I’m a terrorist, but what would you call them (the Russians)?”¹⁶⁴ This eye for an eye mentality was Basayev’s justification for his continued attacks on Russians and Russian sympathizers in the North Caucasus. Basayev spent much of the post-Soviet period fighting the Russian government for Chechen independence, eventually transforming his goal to include a greater Islamic state in the North Caucasus region. During this period Basayev participated in, orchestrated, or funded many of the terrorist attacks against Russian civilian and military targets in the Caucasus and within Russia itself.

Basayev was born in Vedeno, Chechnya on 14 January 1965, eight years after his family’s return from forced exile in Kazakhstan.¹⁶⁵ Basayev’s family named him for the Chechen hero Imam Shamil who battled the Tsarist conquest of the Caucasus region in the 19th century.¹⁶⁶ After serving in the Soviet army as a fireman and working for a short time at a state collective farm, Basayev studied at the Moscow Institute of Land Construction. In Moscow, he shared living quarters with fellow Chechens and members of the separatist group All-National Chechen Congress (ANCC).¹⁶⁷ Basayev eventually left school to sell computers in Moscow, but returned to Chechnya after the dissolution of the Soviet Union.

During the escalation of hostilities following Chechnya’s declaration of independence from the Russian Federation, Basayev responded to Yeltsin’s declaration of emergency by hijacking a Russian airliner bound for Turkey.¹⁶⁸ After forcing the plane to land in Grozny, Basayev released the 171 hostages and declared on Russian television, “We wanted to show that

¹⁶⁴ Andrei Babitsky, “Interview with Shamil Basayev,” BBC News 29 July 2005, 7 Mar. 2007 <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/4727211.stm#>.

¹⁶⁵ “Obituary of Shamil Basayev” *The Daily Telegraph* 11 July 2006: p. 21.

¹⁶⁶ Michael Radu, “Shamil Basayev: Death of a Terrorist,” Foreign Policy Research Institute 14 Jul. 2006, 18 Feb 2007 <http://www.fpri.org/enotes/20060714.russia.radu.shamilbasayevdeath.html>

¹⁶⁷ Mikhail Shevelev, “Russia’s No.1 Terrorist: A Profile of Shamil Basayev,” *Moscow News* 15 Sep. 2004: No. 35.

¹⁶⁸ “Obituary of Shamil Basayev” *The Daily Telegraph*.

we would resort to anything to uphold our sovereignty.”¹⁶⁹ This incident marks the beginning of Basayev’s use of civilian targets to meet his demands and to draw attention to his cause.

In 1992, Basayev commanded a group of men to fight on behalf of Abkhazia in its Russian backed fight for secession from Georgia. During the fighting in Abkhazia, Main Intelligence Directorate (GRU) agents reportedly trained Basayev and his men in “commando style” resistance. These tactics would later become the basis for many of Basayev’s strategic operations.¹⁷⁰ In 1994, Basayev was back in Chechnya to lead the defense of Grozny against the advancing Russian forces. During the fighting of the First Chechen War he gained prestige as the premier commander in the Chechen resistance.¹⁷¹

In 1995, a Russian air raid killed Basayev’s wife, two, daughters, brother and seven other members of his family.¹⁷² This event was a turning point in Basayev’s use of violence against civilian targets, and it shortly preceded his seizure of the Budennovsk hospital. Dr. Dmitri Trenin, deputy director of the Carnegie Moscow Center, said of the effect on Basayev, “That could have propelled him, because he was not a born terrorist. The annihilation of his clan may have pushed him in this direction.”¹⁷³

In 1997, Basayev ran for president of Chechnya but lost with only 23.5 percent of the vote.¹⁷⁴ He briefly served as prime minister in the new government, but stepped down after only six months. Basayev lacked the skills and the desire to deal with the administrative work

¹⁶⁹ C.J. Chivers, “The Chechen’s Story: From Unrivaled Guerrilla Leader to the Terror of Russia,” *New York Times* 15 Sep. 2004: A9.

¹⁷⁰ Mikhail Shevelev, “Russia’s No.1 Terrorist: A Profile of Shamil Basayev”.

¹⁷¹ C.J. Chivers, “The Chechen’s Story: From Unrivaled Guerrilla Leader to the Terror of Russia”.

¹⁷² “Obituary of Shamil Basayev” *The Daily Telegraph* 11 July 2006: p. 21

¹⁷³ C.J. Chivers, “The Chechen’s Story: From Unrivaled Guerrilla Leader to the Terror of Russia”.

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

required of a government official. He also resented his lack of power within the Chechen leadership and disagreed with the government's moderate stance toward Moscow.¹⁷⁵

After resigning from the government, Basayev developed a new approach in his resistance to the Russians. He came into contact with Saudi born Ibn-al Khattab in 1999, and began to work closely with Islamic extremists inside of Chechnya. This marks the evolution of Basayev's goal of an independent Chechnya into a quest for a greater Islamic republic across the North Caucasus. By embracing the Islamic extremist cause Basayev gained access to fighters and money from abroad.¹⁷⁶ Questions remain as to Basayev's true adherence to Islam, and whether he used it as a tool to gain financial and popular support from foreign Islamic resistance causes. His fight remained a local one. He never perpetrated any attacks outside of the Russian Federation, and expressed no wish to do so.

Basayev continued to play a major role in Chechnya during the Second Chechen War and lost a foot to a landmine in the insurgent retreat from Grozny in 2000.¹⁷⁷ After the Russians pushed the insurgents from the Chechen capital, Basayev retreated into hiding and spent the next six years orchestrating a number of attacks on Russian targets, both civilian and military. After Beslan, Basayev's tactic of targeting civilians lost the support of some within the resistance. Basayev also became the most wanted man in Russia with the Russians placing a ten million dollar bounty on his head.¹⁷⁸

The Russian government claimed that Russian special forces killed Basayev on July 20, 2006. However, supporters of Basayev maintain that his death was the result of an accident

¹⁷⁵ Liz Fuller, "Chechnya: The Rise of Russia's 'Terrorist No.1'," Radio Free Europe 28 June 2006, 21 Feb. 2007 <http://rferl.org/featuresarticle/2006/06/1268E721-8E8C-4A17-AA1D-0A5B84DCD614.html>.

¹⁷⁶ C.J. Chivers, "The Chechen's Story: From Unrivaled Guerrilla Leader to the Terror of Russia".

¹⁷⁷ "Obituary of Shamil Basayev" *The Daily Telegraph* 11.

¹⁷⁸ C.J. Chivers, "The Chechen's Story: From Unrivaled Guerrilla Leader to the Terror of Russia".

involving explosives.¹⁷⁹ Basayev died near Nazran, Igushetia about fourteen miles from Beslan.¹⁸⁰

¹⁷⁹“ Shamil Became a Shaheed (insha Allah),” Kavkazcenter.com 18 Feb 2007
<http://www.kavkazcenter.com/eng/content/2006/07/10/4942.shtml>.

¹⁸⁰ Steven Lee Meyers, Andrew E. Kramer, Nikolai Khalip, and Jim Rutenberg, “Explosion Kills Chechen Rebel Tied to Carnage,” *New York Times* 11 July 2006: A1.

Name: al-Khattab, Omar Ibn

A.k.a.: Samir Salih Abdallah al-Suwaylim¹⁸¹

Samir Saleh Abdullah Al-Suwailem¹⁸²

Birth: 1969¹⁸³

Death: March 2002

Place of birth: Saudi Arabia¹⁸⁴

Organization(s): Islamic International Peacekeeping Brigade (IIPB)

Date Listed by OFAC as a Specially Designated National: N/A

Date Listed by United Nations 1267 Committee: N/A

Notes¹⁸⁵:

- Co-founded the Islamic International Peacekeeping Brigade (IIPB) with Basayev
- Decided to use videos and CDs as promotional tools for recruitment
- Established training camps for aspiring fighters from the North Caucasus
- Used a representative in Kandahar, Afghanistan to screen future Chechen fighters
- Key organizer in the 1999 invasion of Dagestan



Original image of al-Khattab (Right) from *MIPT Terrorism Knowledge Base*.

<http://www.tkb.org/documents/Groups/GR4357_Khattab.jpg>.

Original image of al-Khattab (Left) from <http://republika.pl/blog_mt_1038998/2092353/tr/zkd4.jpg>.

¹⁸¹ Paul Tumelty, “The Rise and Fall of Foreign Fighters in Chechnya,” *Terrorism Monitor* 4.2 (2006): 8-10.

¹⁸² Marc Erikson,, “Bin Laden’s Terror Wave 2,” *Asia Times* 29 Oct. 2002.

¹⁸³ “Key Leader Profile: al-Khattab, Ibn,” *MIPT Terrorism Knowledge Base*, No date, 02 Feb. 2007 <<http://www.tkb.org/KeyLeader.jsp?memID=5895>>.

¹⁸⁴ Marc Erikson, “Bin Laden’s Terror Wave 2”.

¹⁸⁵ Paul Tumelty, “The Rise and Fall of Foreign Fighters in Chechnya”.

Name: al-Saif, Abu Omar Mohammed

A.k.a.: Mohammad Bin Abdullah Al-Seif¹⁸⁶ (True ID)

Abu Omar al-Sayf¹⁸⁷

Muhammad bin Abdallah bin Saif al-Jaber¹⁸⁸

Mohammad Bin Abdullah al-Saif al-Jaber al-Buaynayn al-Tamimi¹⁸⁹



Birth: May 1968¹⁹⁰

Death: Dec 2005

Place of birth: Qassim, Saudi Arabia¹⁹¹

Organization(s): Islamic International Peacekeeping Brigade (IIPB)

Date Listed by OFAC as a Specially Designated National: N/A

Date Listed by United Nations 1267 Committee: N/A

Notes:

- “Shariah Official of the Chechen mujahideen”¹⁹²
- Deputy to al-Walid¹⁹³
- Liaison between Arab financiers and Chechen fighters

Original image of al-Saif (Right) from <http://republika.pl/blog_cb_1145841/2330836/tr/g656y.jpg>.
Original image of al-Saif (Left) from <http://republika.pl/blog_cb_1145841/2330836/tr/5t4a.jpg>.

¹⁸⁶ al-Shishani, Murad, “Portrait of a Chechen Mujahid Leader,” *Terrorism Monitor* 2.8 (2004): 7-10.

¹⁸⁷ Paul Tumelty, “The Rise and Fall of Foreign Fighters in Chechnya”.

¹⁸⁸ “A Letter from Shaykh Abu Omar al-Saif to the Iraqi Mujahideen Concerning the Upcoming Elections,” *GlobalTerrorAlert.com*, 12 Jan. 2005, 02 Feb. 2007

<<http://www.globalterroralert.com/pdf/0105/chechnya0105.pdf>>.

¹⁸⁹ Murad al-Shishani, “Abu Omar al-Saif: His Life and After his Death,” *Chechnya Weekly* 7.3 (2006).

¹⁹⁰ Ibid.

¹⁹¹ Ibid.

¹⁹² Abu Musab Abdel Wadoud, “Communique from the Algerian Salafist Group for Prayer and Combat (GSPC),” *GlobalTerrorAlert.com*, 13 Dec. 2005, 02 Feb. 2007 <<http://www.globalterroralert.com/pdf/1205/gspc1205-3.pdf>>.

¹⁹³ “Al-Qa’ida Leader Calls for Attacks on Americans in Iraq Rather Than on the Saudi Government in Saudi Arabia,” *Middle East Media Research Institute, Special Dispatch Series*, No.635 (31 Dec. 2003).

Name: al-Urduni, Abu Hafs

A.k.a.: Yusuf Amerat¹⁹⁴ (True ID)

Abu Khavs¹⁹⁵

Abu Havs¹⁹⁶

Abu Hafs al-Ourdoni¹⁹⁷



Birth: Unknown

Death: Nov 2006

Place of birth: Jordan¹⁹⁸

Organization(s): Islamic International Peacekeeping Brigade (IIPB)

Date Listed by OFAC as a Specially Designated National: N/A

Date Listed by United Nations 1267 Committee: N/A

Notes:

- Succeeded al-Walid as leader of Islamic International Peacekeeping Brigade (IIPB)
- Deputy to al-Khattab and al-Walid¹⁹⁹
- “Controlled most of the money the Chechen guerillas received from their foreign sponsors”²⁰⁰
- “Main al-Qaida contact for the North Caucasus”²⁰¹

Original image of al-Urduni (Right) from

<http://republika.pl/blog_mt_1038998/2092353/tr/d7e9b6a20d37ujje.jpg>.

Original image of al-Urduni (Left) from <http://republika.pl/blog_mt_1038998/2092353/tr/00-17-33c.jpg>.

¹⁹⁴ Paul Tumelty, “The Rise and Fall of Foreign Fighters in Chechnya”.

¹⁹⁵ Arsen Mollayev, “Jordanian Chechen Chief Dies in Gunfight,” *Associated Press* 26 Nov. 2006.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁹⁷ “Abu Omar Reportedly Killed,” *Chechnya Weekly* 6.47 (2005).

¹⁹⁸ Arsen Mollayev, “Jordanian Chechen Chief Dies in Gunfight”.

¹⁹⁹ “Key Leader Profile: al-Urduni, Abu Hafs,” *MIPT Terrorism Knowledge Base*, No date, 02 Feb. 2007 <<http://www.tkb.org/KeyLeader.jsp?memID=6468>>.

²⁰⁰ Ibid.

²⁰¹ Arsen Mollayev, “Jordanian Chechen Chief Dies in Gunfight,”

Name: al-Walid, Abu

A.k.a.: Abu Walid al-Ghamdi²⁰²

Birth: 1967²⁰³

Death: Apr 2004

Place of birth: Saudi Arabia²⁰⁴

Organization(s): Islamic International Peacekeeping Brigade (IIPB)

Date Listed by OFAC as a Specially Designated National: N/A

Date Listed by United Nations 1267 Committee: N/A

Notes:

- Succeeded al-Khattab as leader of the Islamic International Peacekeeping Brigade (IIPB)



Original image of al-Walid (Right) from <http://republika.pl/blog_mt_899166/1788377/tr/8747s.jpg>
Original image of al-Walid (Left) from <<http://img25.exs.cx/img25/4196/AbuAlWalid.jpg>>.

²⁰² Paul Tumelty, “The Rise and Fall of Foreign Fighters in Chechnya”.

²⁰³ “Key Leader Profile: al-Walid, Abu,” *MIPT Terrorism Knowledge Base*, No date, 02 Feb. 2007
<<http://www.tkb.org/KeyLeader.jsp?memID=5896>>.

²⁰⁴ Ibid..

Name: Barayev, Arbi

A.k.a.: N/A

Birth: Unknown

Death: Jun 2001

Place of birth: Alkhan-Yurt, Chechnya²⁰⁵

Organization(s): Special Purpose Islamic Regiment (SPIR)

Date Listed by OFAC as a Specially Designated National: N/A

Date Listed by United Nations 1267 Committee: N/A

Notes:

- Founded the Special Purpose Islamic Regiment (SPIR)
- Uncle of Mosvar Barayev²⁰⁶



Original image of Arbi Barayev (Right) from <http://www.waynakh.com/cecen_buyukleri/abarayev.jpg>.

Original image of Arbi Barayev (Left) from *Moscow Times*.

<http://www.themoscowtimes.com/photos/index/2001_06/2001_06_26/barayev1_3.jpg>.

²⁰⁵ Patrick Smyth,, “Leader of Militant Chechens is Familiar with Terror Campaigns,” *Irish Times* 25 Oct. 2002: 13.

²⁰⁶ “Key Leader Profile: Barayev, Mosvar,” *MIPT Terrorism Knowledge Base*, 02 Feb. 2007
<<http://www.tkb.org/KeyLeader.jsp?memID=4156>>.

Name: Barayev, Mosvar

A.k.a.: Mosvar Suleimanov²⁰⁷ (True ID)

Birth: ~ 1977²⁰⁸, 1978²⁰⁹, 1979²¹⁰

Death: Oct 2002

Place of birth: Mesker-Yurt²¹¹ or Argun²¹², Chechnya

Organization(s): Special Purpose Islamic Regiment (SPIR)

Date Listed by OFAC as a Specially Designated National: N/A

Date Listed by United Nations 1267 Committee: N/A

Notes:

- Succeeded Arbi Barayev as leader of the Special Purpose Islamic Regiment (SPIR)
- Nephew of Arbi Barayev²¹³
- Led Dubrovka Theater attack²¹⁴



Original image of Mosvar Barayev (Right) from *MIPT Terrorism Knowledge Base*.

<http://www.tkb.org/documents/Members/MEM4156_barayev2.jpg>.

Original image of Mosvar Barayev (Left) *BBC News*.

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/media/images/38387000/jpg/_38387701_barayev_afp_300.jpg>.

²⁰⁷ Patrick Smyth, "Leader of Militant Chechens is Familiar with Terror Campaigns".

²⁰⁸ Sharon LaFraniere, "A Young Gang Leader Sheds his Obscurity," *Washington Post* 25 Oct. 2002: A.22.

²⁰⁹ Nick Paton Walsh, "Who Was Pulling the Strings of Chechen Terrorist Leader?," *Observer* 27 Oct. 2002.

²¹⁰ David Holley and Alexei V. Kuznetsov, "Chechen Rebel's Rise and Fall," *Los Angeles Times* 26 Oct. 2002: A.8.

²¹¹ Patrick Smyth, "Leader of Militant Chechens is Familiar with Terror Campaigns"

²¹² David Holley and Alexei V. Kuznetsov, "Chechen Rebel's Rise and Fall".

²¹³ "Key Leader Profile: Barayev, Mosvar," *MIPT Terrorism Knowledge Base*, No date, 02 Feb. 2007

<<http://www.tkb.org/KeyLeader.jsp?memID=4156>>.

²¹⁴ Nick Paton Walsh, "Who Was Pulling the Strings of Chechen Terrorist Leader?"

Name: Tazabayev, Khamzat

A.k.a.: Amir Abdu-Sabur²¹⁵

Birth: 1978²¹⁶

Death: Feb 2004

Place of Birth: Alkhan-Yurt, Chechnya²¹⁷

Organization(s): Special Purpose Islamic Regiment (SPIR)

Date Listed by OFAC as a Specially Designated National: N/A

Date Listed by United Nations 1267 Committee: N/A

Notes:

- Succeeded Mosvar Barayev as leader of the Special Purpose Islamic Regiment (SPIR)
- Active in the First and Second Chechen Wars²¹⁸



Original image of Khamzat Tazabayev from *KavkazCenter.com*.
<http://imgs2.kavkazcenter.com/eng/content/2004/02/25/2449_1.jpg>.

²¹⁵ “Chechen Commander Became Shaheed,” *KavkazCenter.com*, 25 Feb. 2004, 02 Feb. 2007
<http://kavkazcenter.net/eng/content/2004/02/25/2449_print.html>.

²¹⁶ Ibid.

²¹⁷ Ibid.

²¹⁸ Ibid..

APPENDIX D: SHAHIDKA (BLACK WIDOWS)

It is reported that between two and four Shahidka were present at Beslan. Many hostages reported that there were four, although official Russian reports only list two being present.²¹⁹ The following additional information is available about this group of perpetrators, whom have been involved in many terrorist incidents in Russian territories.

The Black Widows (Shahidka) are Chechen women committed to suicide missions, and have been involved in numerous terrorist acts in Russia, including Beslan. Many of them are widows or relatives of Chechen men killed during the ongoing Second Chechen War. These women are also known by the names: the *Black Widows Brigade*, *Gardens of the Righteous* (a sub-unit within Shamil Baseyev's organization), and the *Brides of Allah* (phrase coined by Russian journalist Yulia Yuzik).²²⁰

The Black Widows are typically between 15 and 19 years of age. They are trained in specials camps by psychologists, religious zealots, and experts in explosives and guerrilla warfare. At these camps, it is reported that some of the women even undergo drugging, rape, blackmail, and brainwashing tactics in preparation for their suicide missions.²²¹

The psyche and mindset of the shahidka is a complex one. Some believe that their motivations are of vengeance and desperation, others that they are financial and religious. In an interview with Bill Moyers (shortly after Beslan), Peter Baker stated the following:

It's hard for, I think, any of us to put ourselves into their place and to understand the psychology that goes into this. What they told their victims, what they told their hostages was 'you're responsible; this is because of what you've done to us' . . . You, the Russians, have done to us, the Chechen people. You came into our towns. . . . You killed my children. You killed my husband. There were two

²¹⁹ C.J. Chivers, "The School," *Esquire*, Vol. 145, Issue 6, June 2006.

²²⁰ Viv Groskop, "The women with death at their fingertips – martyrs or victims?," *The Scotsman*, 5 September 2004.

²²¹ *Ibid.*

women in there who wore the hijab. And they were wrapped with suicide belts and they carried guns, two women, shahidka, that's what the Russians call them, martyrs. And these suicide women have become a trend in Russia these days, because in theory at least most of them have lost loved ones to the war and have nothing left to live for. So the desperation, the bitterness, the resentment, the pathological hatred that has developed in Chechnya and that region is toward the Russians and toward the world to some degree, toward the outer world that has abandoned them.²²²

In her book *Female Suicide Bombers*, Rosemarie Skaine provides further insight into the complex motivations of Chechen female terrorists:

In the case of the Chechen women, several of the families received large sums of money for them performing these tasks. But I believe that they themselves would not do this kind of thing if there weren't mediating forces in society. . . . women combatants who engage in these suicide attacks are responding to a force that is common in their environment, such as nationalistic reasons. . . . they had a chosen mission, but then they also had these mitigating forces in their society that allowed them to go ahead and do this.

Ms. Skaine explains possible religious motivations:

Evidently, their goal is to be the queen of all virgins. If they are not a virgin on Earth, then, by committing this act, Allah makes them pure. . . . They will be a virgin. And they want to be the purest of pure and hopefully, the queen of all virgins.

It is reported that the last words of Khava Barayeva, the first Black Widow to carry out a suicide mission, were, "I know what I am doing. One has to pay for paradise. I think I have paid."²²³

However, there is another side to the Black Widow story. The Chechens claim that the hysteria about women terrorists is being propagated by the Russians, to provide additional support for civilian attacks in Chechnya. Furthermore, they claim that, at this point, it is only women that remain to fight for Chechen independence. F. Shamileva reported the following in her article "Women's Question" from *The Chechen Times*:

²²² Bill Moyers, Interview with Peter Baker and Susan Glasser of *The Washington Post*, September 2004.

²²³ Irina Lagunina,, "Russia: Nord-Orst anniversary recalls ascent of female suicide bomber," *Radio Free Europe*, 27 October 2006.

[Translation] Indiscriminate charges against Chechen women, their persecution and killings have another, demographic reason. According to unofficial data, the ratio of female and male population in the republic is 1:27. . . . Only women are left – Chechen mothers, sisters, daughters. And here the word Chechen is a clue to this hysteria around female suicide bombers. Not only Chechen men, but also women are being killed. And if previously women were considered as socially protected groups and civilians, now press has puffed up the image a Black Chechen Woman to necessary levels, PR-campaigners are satisfied, political technologists reviewed their own moral code in line with new trends.²²⁴

The first kknown Black Widow, Khava Barayeva drove a truck full of explosives into a building in Chechnya harboring Russian soldiers in June 2000; 27 were reported dead after the incident, but the Russian military admits to only two fatalities.²²⁵ In November 2001, Elza Gazuyeva sought out her husband’s killer. She walked up to him and detonated a bomb on her body, killing herself, the man she believed responsible for her husband’s death (Urus-Martan regional commander Gaidar Gadzhiyev), and his two bodyguards.²²⁶ The Black Widows have claimed partial or full responsibility for a large number of hostage and terrorist incidents, including the two large-scale incidents at the Dubrovka Theater (19 Black Widows reported among the hostage takers) and at Beslan.

It is certain that at least two women participated at Beslan. Many eyewitnesses suggest that there were four women (Black Widows) involved in the incident. One account suggests that the women became upset with the other hostage takers, protesting the excessively cruel treatment of the women and children there. It is even reported that after initial firing began, these women detonated the bombs on their bodies and blew themselves up rather than execute the hostages.²²⁷

²²⁴ F. Shamileve,, “Women’s question,” *Chechen Times*, 29 March 2004.

²²⁵ “MIPT Terrorism Knowledge Base,” 23 January 2007 <<http://www.tkb.org>>.

²²⁶ Irina Lagunina, “Russia: Nord-Orst anniversary recalls ascent of female suicide bomber”.

²²⁷ C.J. Chivers,, “The School”.

Since Beslan, there has been a significant decrease of Black Widow involvement in terrorist attacks.²²⁸

Additional incidents of Black Widow terrorist involvement are listed below.^{229 230}

Date	Location	Women involved	No. killed	No. wounded
8/31/2004	Moscow metro station	R. Nagayeva	10	unavailable
8/24/2004	Russian airliners (2)	A. Nagayeva S. Dzhbirkhanova	90	unavailable
2/6/2004	Moscow metro	1 unidentified woman	40	unavailable
12/9/2003	Moscow hotel	K. Mangeriyeva	7	13
12/5/2003	south Russia	1-3 unidentified women	44-46	100+
7/27/2003	Grozny	1 unidentified woman	1	unavailable
7/5/2003	Moscow concert	Z. Elikhadzhiyeva M. Sharipova	14-16	unavailable
6/5/2003	North Ossetia	1 unidentified woman	15	17
5/14/2003	Ilashkan-Yurt	S. Baimuratova 1 unidentified woman	147-16	150+
5/12/2003	Znamenskoye	2 unidentified women	60+	unavailable
10/23- 26/2003	Moscow theatre	19 women	170+	unavailable
11/29/2001	Urus-Martan	E. Gazuyeva	3	unavailable
6/7/2000	Alkhan-Yurt	K. Barayeva	2-26	unavailable

²²⁸ Lagunina, Irina, "Russia: Nord-Orst anniversary recalls ascent of female suicide bomber," *Radio Free Europe*, 27 October 2006.

²²⁹ Ibid.

²³⁰ Viv Groskop,, "The women with death at their fingertips – martyrs or victims?"

APPENDIX E: SUSPECTED PERPETRATORS

In November 2004, after less than three months of investigations, Russia's Prosecutor General Alexander Fridinsky stated that 32 perpetrators executed the Beslan school attack and that 31 of the 32 perpetrators had been confirmed dead; one had been captured alive.

Working from testimony and limited intelligence data, Russian prosecutors categorized the perpetrators into three groups: head leader, sub-leaders, and assailants²³¹. With Russian intelligence unable to procure any available information on some of the foreign-born attackers (including an unidentifiable African male and Korean male), 25 of the 32 perpetrators were guardedly identified as:

Head Leader

- **Polkovnik Ruslan Tagirovich Khochubarov** – A reportedly volatile leader of the perpetrators, Khochubarov, also known as Colonel, was identified as a short man with a barrel-like torso, a fiery red beard and a freckled face.²³² Khochubarov was said to have ordered the death of his own rebels upon any sign of disobedience. His true name and identity is under dispute.

Sub-leaders

- **Vladimir Khodov** – Also known as Abdulla, Khodov had been wanted by the Russian police for organizing and carrying out a terrorist act in the North Ossetian capital of Vladikavkaz on February 2. Shamil Basayev claimed Khodov was an FSB double agent.

²³¹ “Beslan School Hostage Crisis” July, 29 2006
March 1, 2007 <http://www.informat.io/?title=beslan>

²³² “Beslan hostage-takers being identified” *Gateway To Russia* September 06, 2004
March 1, 2007 http://www.gateway2russia.com/art/Unrubricated/Beslan%20hostage-takers%20being%20identified_251363.html.

• **Magomet Yevloyev** - An Ingush national also referred to as Magas, Yevloyev was thought to be involved in Shamil Basayev's attack on Nazran. Together with Basayev, Yevloyev also prepared an attack on Ingushetia on June 22, 2004, in which 98 people were killed. Russian security intelligence has confirmed Yevloyev as a participant in the attack; however his body was never identified among those of the dead perpetrators, leaving speculation as to whether Yevloyev managed to escape.²³³

• **Ali Taziyeu** – An Ingush ex-policeman, debate rages as to whether he assumed the alias/stolen identity of Khochubarov or Yevloyev. Rumors exist that Taziyeu escaped from Beslan and was actually assassinated along with Shamil Basayev in 2006. He reportedly led the negotiations on behalf of the perpetrators, and had joined the militant group after his wife and five children were killed by a Russian bomb.

Assailants

• **Khizir-Ali Akhmedov**

• **Magomed Aushev**

• **Sultan Kamurzaev**

• **Iznaur Kodzoyev**

• **Magomet Khochubarov**

• **Hanpashi Kulayev** - Brother of Nurpashi Kulayev; former bodyguard of Shamil Basayev

• **Adam Kushtov** - 17-year-old Ingushetian who fled the 1992 ethnic cleansing in North Ossetia

• **Abdul-Azim Labazanov** – 31-year-old Chechen; former Russian Federation soldier

• **Arsen Merzhoyev** – 25-year-old Chechen native of Engenoi; close associate of Nurpashi and Hanpashi Kulayev

²³³ “Profiles: Key siege suspects” *BBC News*, September 7, 2004, March 1, 2007
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/3632494.stm>.

- **Mairbek Shainekhanov** (also Mayrbek Shaybekhanov) – Native Chechen actually arrested shortly before the school attack
- **Buran Tetradze** – 31-year-old Georgian, native of Rustavi in Georgia, whose identity/existence is disputed by security minister of Georgia.
- **Issa Torshkoev** – 26-year-old Ingush native of Malgobek. His family asserted that his interest in joining the Chechen militant movement was incited when Torshkoev witnessed five of his close friends being killed by Russian security forces during a raid on his home. His father, who was brought in to identify his body, reportedly claimed that the body was not that of his son.
- **Musa Tsechoyev** – 35-year-old Ingush native of Sagopshi, Tsechoyev who reportedly owned the GAZ-66 military truck that transported the perpetrators to the school
- **Bei-Alla Tsechoyev** – 31-year-old Ingush native of Sagopshi and younger brother of Musa Tsechoyev. Tsechoyev had a prior conviction for the possession of illegal firearms. Despite Russian officials claiming to have identified his body in November of 2004, his younger brother, Hassan Tsechoyev, maintains that he is still alive.
- **Osman Larussi** - A British-Algerian in his mid-30s, Larussi lived in London where he is thought to have attended the Finsbury Park Mosque until 2001, and then left for Chechnya with Yacine Benalia and Kamel Rabat Bouralha. Although he was reportedly killed on March 8, 2004, in a clash with Russian security forces, when Bouralha was captured and interrogated, he claimed that fellow British citizens Larussi and Benalia had been among the September perpetrators.
- **Yacine Benalia** - A British-Algerian who Russian investigators believed came with Larussi to

Chechnya from London in 2001 to join the Chechen militant movement. Benalia had also already been reported as deceased in March 8, 2004.²³⁴

- **Fantomas** – Slavic man thought to have been a personal bodyguard for Shamil Basayev. His body was one of the few identified and confirmed by Nurpashi Kulayev.²³⁵
- **Roza Nagaeva** – A Chechen from the village of Kirov-Yurt in Chechnya's Vedeno District. She is the sister of Amant Nagaeva, who is suspected of being the suicide bomber to have blown up one of the two Russian airliners brought down on August 24, 2004.
- **Mairam Taburova** – A Chechen from the village Mair-Tub in Chechnya's Shali District. Both Nagaeva and Taburova were close associates, known to have worked as market traders in Grozny's central market, selling clothing.²³⁶ Nagaeva and Taburova were identified by Russian officials as Shakhidas. Nurpashi Kulayev made claims that Khochubarov ordered the death of both Nagaeva and Taburova for their refusal to take children hostage.
- **Khaula Nazirov** – 45-year-old member of the Shakhidas from Grozny, her husband had supposedly been tortured to death by Russian security forces; her 18-year-old son and her 16-year-old daughter, along with their cousins, were killed a year earlier when Russia security forces bombed a school in Chechnya
- **Nur-Pashi Kulayev** - Nurpashi Kulayev is believed to be the only surviving perpetrator of Beslan. The 25-year old from Engenoi, Chechnya was sentenced to life imprisonment on May 26, 2006 after a year-long trial.

Kulayev maintains that he was led to believe that they would be attacking a military

²³⁴ "Algerian-born UK man linked to Beslan attack", *Russian and Eurasian Security*, October 4, 2004 March 1, 2007 <http://www.res.ethz.ch/news/sw/details.cfm?ID=9844&nav1=1&nav2=2&nav3=2>

²³⁵ "Beslan hostage-takers being identified" *Gateway To Russia* September 06, 2004 March 1, 2007 http://www.gateway2russia.com/art/Unrubricated/Beslan%20hostage-takers%20being%20identified_251363.html

²³⁶ "Documents suggest the Feds were in charge at Beslan" *The Jamestown Foundation* April 20, 2005 March 1, 2007 http://www.jamestown.org/publications_details.php?volume_id=409&issue_id=3305&article_id=2369625

checkpoint or a local police station, and had no prior knowledge that the target would be Beslan School Number 1. He claimed that he was one among several of the perpetrators who argued in favor of seizing the local police station instead, and that he only agreed to help seize the school in order to watch over his brother, Hanpashi Kulayev.²³⁷

Kulayev denied shooting or killing anyone, and testified that he was nearly killed on orders from Ruslan Tagirovich Khochubarov for refusing to do so. According to Kulayev, Khochubarov shot a male perpetrator and the two female perpetrators because they objected to capturing children and keeping them hostage.

Local residents noticed Kulayev trying to escape under a military truck and he was nearly killed by the mob before he was taken into custody by Russian security forces. In his testimony, Kulayev did not provide the specific number of perpetrators involved, but noted that there were at least ten foreign born perpetrators involved. He testified



Kulayev taken into custody

that the hostage-taking was masterminded by Shamil Basayev and Aslan Maskhadov. (Maskhadov had gone on record as vehemently denying any involvement in the Beslan crisis, but has since been assassinated by Russian security forces.)

With the many inconsistencies in details between eyewitnesses/victims and Kulayev's testimony, speculation has been raised by independent investigators and families of victims that Kulayev's testimony may have been dictated and forced upon him by Russian interrogators.

²³⁷ Delphine Thouvenot "The 'accidental terrorist' of Beslan massacre gets life in jail" *Middle East Times* May 26, 2006

March 1, 2007 <http://www.metimes.com/storyview.php?StoryID=20060526-072402-2920r>

Kulayev was also known to have depicted the evidence brought against him as “made-up fairy tales.”²³⁸

Russian officials report that Kulayev is currently imprisoned in a high-security penitentiary on the island of Ognenny Ostrov in the Vologda region. They have revealed that Kulayev was given a new name to protect him from maltreatment by other inmates. There were reports, as recently as January of 2007, that Kulayev was murdered in prison; the parliamentary commission assigned to investigate the Beslan crisis is looking into that claim.²³⁹

Possible Assailant

- **Doku Umarov** – Approximately 42-year-old Chechen warlord, whom hostages allegedly claimed to have recognized, noting he was one of the few perpetrators not to have worn a mask. Umarov denies having any involvement in the attacks and firmly denounced the actions of the terrorists, *"In the eyes of the resistance such operations have no legitimacy. We ourselves were horrified by what they did in Beslan."*



Umarov

Umarov was named president of the Chechen Republic of Ichkeria on June 19, 2006 by the Chechen separatist movement following the assassination of the president, Sheikh Abdul Halim.²⁴⁰ The Russian government was in complete opposition to Umarov's presidency and on November 23, 2006, security forces of the Russian Defense Ministry and FSB troops engaged and surrounded Umarov and his forces in a forest near the village of Yandi-Katar on the border of Ingushetia and Chechnya. Umarov was

²³⁸ “Beslan perpetrator jailed for life” *BBC News* May 26, 2006 March 1, 2007 <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/5018928.stm>

²³⁹ “Jailed Beslan Terrorist’s Name Changed to Avoid Violence in Prison” *MosNews* August 7, 2006 March 1, 2007 <http://www.mosnews.com/news/2006/08/07/kulaev.shtml>

²⁴⁰ Nick Paton Walsh, “Chechnya rebels appoint new leader after killing” *Guardian Unlimited* June 19, 2006 March 1, 2007 <http://www.guardian.co.uk/chechnya/Story/0,,1800657,00.html?gusrc=rss>

reportedly wounded in the operation, but managed to escape, and fled to Ingushetia. By some accounts, he remains in hiding.²⁴¹

Aside from the testimony of Nurpashi Kulayev, the only officially accepted surviving perpetrator, reliable and in-depth profiles on the majority of the perpetrators are nearly non-existent. The Russian government is firm in its stance that there were only 32 perpetrators involved, however eyewitnesses and victims injured in the crisis said that the number of perpetrators was far higher, and that some of the perpetrators managed to escape during the clash with Russian security forces.

The information provided on some of the perpetrators is so varied and unreliable that several of the perpetrators profiled by the Russian government were people reportedly deceased prior to Beslan. Some are also reportedly still alive. With the Russian government standing firm on its accusations and its account of the events, the profiles on the perpetrators of Beslan may never be fully disclosed.

²⁴¹ “Profiles: Key siege suspects” *BBC News* September 7, 2004 March 1, 2007
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/3632494.stm>

“The Mountain of Languages”

The Russian Federation consists of 89 different regions, republics, and administrative units, covering one-sixth of the earth’s landmass and straddling 11 different time zones. The country is surprisingly diverse, home to approximately 100 different ethnic groups. Many of these peoples inhabit the southwestern reaches of Russian territory, where the border extends to the highest peaks of the Caucasus range. Divisions abound in the Caucasus, a “crossroads of history,” where Europe meets Asia and cultures collide. A land bridge between the vast plains of Eurasia to the north and the fertile crescent of civilization’s birthplace to the south, the Caucasus has been traversed by invaders, settlers, and nomads for millennia, leaving it one of the most ethnically diverse and linguistically rich regions on earth.

The region holds immense strategic importance, as it is extremely rich in mineral resources and serves as the primary route for Caspian oil to reach Western markets. The Caucasus is the historic meeting place of the Ottoman Turkish, Persian, and Russian empires, and each former power has left a deep imprint on the land and its peoples. Most peoples of the North Caucasus adhere to either the Sunni Islamic or Orthodox Christian faiths. National and religious identification was to a large extent discouraged during the 70-odd years of Soviet rule, but following the Soviet Union’s collapse in 1991, the semi-autonomous republics of Russia’s North Caucasus embarked on nationalistic and religious revivals, resulting in the conflicts discussed below.

The following profiles provide some contextual background for the calamitous events at Beslan. The perpetrators of the horror there brought with them not only a political but an ideological agenda, and carried grievances rooted in both the distant and recent pasts.

Russia's North Caucasus Republics

Chechnya

Chechnya's volatile history is legendary in both Russia and the outside world. The Chechen struggle against Russian rule captured the imagination of Leo Tolstoy and Mikhail Lermontov, who wrote admiringly of the fierce Chechen spirit and dogged determination. Tsarist Russia campaigned for nearly two decades to subdue the Chechens, and finally gained full control over the region in 1859 after the rebel leader Imam Shamil finally surrendered. (Despite popular belief, Shamil was not actually a Chechen but an ethnic Avar from neighboring Dagestan.)²⁴² Traditional Chechen society is organized much like others of the Caucasian nations: due to the mountainous topography of the region, the relatively isolated and self-contained communities situated in mountain valleys form closely-knit clan affiliations. Each clan is effectively a subunit of the national group, and is extremely protective of their territory and people.

Theories abound as to why Chechens in particular have such a strong independent streak, but those are better left to ethnographies and histories. Following Russia's subjugation of the North Caucasus in the latter part of the 19th century, the tsarist government attempted to pacify the "mountain tribes" by co-opting elements of their Islamic faith. Chechens, like many other Caucasian nations, traditionally integrated threads of local custom and Islamic belief to follow unique and localized forms of Sufism. Sporadic revolts and repression still followed, but when the tsarist Russian Empire collapsed in the October Revolution, the peoples of the North Caucasus thought their chance for freedom had finally come.²⁴³ The short-lived "Mountain Republic" was proclaimed in May 1918 comprising most of the northeastern Caucasus region,

²⁴² Sebastian Smith, *Allah's Mountains: The Battle for Chechnya* (New York: I.B. Tauris, 1998) 32.

²⁴³ *Ibid.*, 54.

but was soon liquidated by the Red Army.²⁴⁴ By 1922, the region was firmly consolidated as part of the Soviet Union.

The Chechens and other groups lived up to their rebellious reputations during the interwar years by vigorously resisting forced Soviet collectivization and secularization. At the advent of WWII, many Chechens volunteered for Red Army service and fought bravely in the ensuing battles. The paranoia of Josef Stalin knew no bounds, however, and he accused the Chechen and Ingush people of collaborating with the invading German forces. Chechens and Ingush were deported *en masse* on accusations of “mass treason” although evidence of such collusion with the Nazis was dubious at best - German forces never even reached Chechnya.²⁴⁵ About 500,000 people were collected on trains starting on February 22, 1944.²⁴⁶ Lack of food, toilets, or washing facilities led to an outbreak of typhoid on the journey, and coupled with harsh winter conditions at the Kazakh destination, nearly a quarter of the deportees had perished within five years of their arrival.²⁴⁷ The deportation has become a defining part of the national identity of Chechens and Ingush – “an event which quietly dominates both the individuals’ lives and the nation as a whole.”²⁴⁸

Khrushchev officially “rehabilitated” the Chechen and Ingush people in 1957 and they were finally allowed to return to their homes. They returned to a devastated landscape, where entire villages, graveyards, and religious centers were completely destroyed. Many found their homes already occupied by families unwilling to make way for the “returnees.” Even though their existence was at least now certified by the state, Chechens subsequently endured intense

²⁴⁴ Ibid., 55-56.

²⁴⁵ Matthew Evangelista, *The Chechen Wars: Will Russia Go the Way of the Soviet Union?* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2002) 14.

²⁴⁶ Ibid.

²⁴⁷ Ibid.

²⁴⁸ Sebastian Smith, *Allah’s Mountains: The Battle for Chechnya*, 60.

Russification by the Soviet authorities. School instruction of most Caucasian languages, including Chechen, was abolished in the late 1950s.²⁴⁹ Chechnya underwent a fair degree of industrialization and development during the long Soviet period, with its considerable oil resources successfully exploited and its capital, Grozny, expanding from a small provincial outpost to a modern Soviet city of half a million residents.

As the Soviet Union dissolved in 1991, Chechnya took advantage of the disorganization in Moscow and Chechen President Dzhokhar Dudayev declared the republic's independence. Nearly three years of autonomy followed until Russian President Boris Yeltsin decided to bring Chechnya back into the Russian fold. Chechnya's descent into total war will be addressed in the following section.

Ingushetia

Ingushetia occupies a narrow sliver of land sandwiched between Chechnya and North Ossetia. The Ingush are closely related both ethnically and linguistically to Chechens and the recent histories of the two peoples converge closely as well. Most of historical Ingushetia was joined to Chechnya by the Soviets in 1934, but the Ingush-populated district of Prigorodny was ceded to North Ossetia.²⁵⁰ The Soviet government purposefully designed internal borders to divide nations and include large minority pockets in each administrative unit. This “divide and conquer” tactic was repeated in the formation of the Central Asian soviet republics as well. The Soviet government made no distinctions between Chechen and Ingush during the mass deportations during and after WWII, and 92,000 Ingush were deported along with the Chechens in February 1944.²⁵¹ The vast majority of Ingush remained in exile up until 1957.

²⁴⁹ Sebastian Smith, *Allah's Mountains: The Battle for Chechnya*, 67.

²⁵⁰ Johanna Nichols, “The Ingush: Background Information,” *University of California Berkeley Ingush Project*, Feb. 1997, 19 Feb. 2007 <http://ingush.berkeley.edu:7012/ingush_people.html 2/19>.

²⁵¹ Sebastian Smith, *Allah's Mountains: The Battle for Chechnya*, 59.

Following Chechnya's declaration of independence from Russia in 1991, Ingushetia was reinstated as a republic of the Russian Federation in 1992. Newly autonomous Ingushetia was overwhelmingly rural, with "absolutely no industry and few economic prospects."²⁵² The Ingush had a much lower standard of living than the better-off North Ossetians, and this disparity was a major source of resentment since the Prigorodny district had been their only industrial center. Eager to reestablish a reinvigorated Ingush homeland and to rectify a perceived historical injustice, armed paramilitary groups of Ingush clashed with the armed forces of North Ossetia over control of Prigorodny. Sporadic violence flared into a full-blown conflict with the use of heavy weaponry on November 1 and 2, 1992. According to official sources, 600 people were killed, 3,500 homes were destroyed, and 50,000 Ingush were expelled from North Ossetia.²⁵³ North Ossetian forces had the overt backing of Russia, and by most accounts Russian forces participated in putting down the Ingush rebellion and were complicit in forcing Ingush civilians from their homes in Prigorodny.²⁵⁴

Large numbers of Prigorodny refugees were resettled in Ingushetia, making conditions in the already impoverished republic worse. Most refugees were forced to live in very poor conditions, and the problem has only grown - Ingushetia has accepted a further 150,000 Chechen refugees since the start of the First Chechen War.²⁵⁵ The compound effect of these experiences on the Ingush has been profound. Stalinist deportation, joint Russian-Ossetian ethnic cleansing, and a brutal war against their Chechen ethnic kin have driven some Ingush to desperate measures. At least six members of the terrorist group that perpetrated the Beslan crisis have been identified as Ingush, some of them refugees from the 1992 Prigorodny expulsion.

²⁵² Alexei Arbatov, et al., *Managing Conflict in the Former Soviet Union: Russian and American Perspectives* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1997) 29.

²⁵³ Ibid.

²⁵⁴ Ibid., 30.

²⁵⁵ Matthew Evangelista, *The Chechen Wars: Will Russia Go the Way of the Soviet Union?*, 134.

Ingushetia has been the site of substantial spillover from the Chechen wars. Russian forces have launched several raids on suspected rebel hideouts located within the republic. Conversely, Russian military targets in Ingushetia are frequently attacked by Chechen rebel groups taking advantage of porous borders and ineffective checkpoints. Prior to Beslan, in June 2004, Basayev led hundreds of rebels in a nighttime raid on Ingushetia, briefly taking control of main town Nazran and setting up their own checkpoints.²⁵⁶ Scores of police and security officers were included in a casualty count that numbered at least 90 people.²⁵⁷

Dagestan

The most ethnically and linguistically diverse of Russia's Caucasian republics, Dagestan's two million people are divided into at least 34 nations (unofficial estimates put the number at over 100).²⁵⁸ The poorest and least-developed of Russia's republics (after Chechnya), Dagestan's economy is largely agrarian, with farmers and herders eking out a subsistence existence in the republic's semiarid mountains. Dagestani society is highly atomized, comprised of a village-based clan structures and Sufi brotherhoods.²⁵⁹ Always considered a lawless corner of Russia, Dagestan is wracked by political and clan rivalries, and organized crime is blamed as frequently as Islamic militants for much of the violence perpetrated in the past ten years. Bombing and firefights are now common occurrences across the republic, but much of the violence stems from Chechen rebel leader Shamil Basayev's invasion of Dagestan in August 1999.

²⁵⁶ Peter Baker and Susan Glasser, *Kremlin Rising*, 19.

²⁵⁷ Ibid.

²⁵⁸ Sebastian Smith, *Allah's Mountains: The Battle for Chechnya*, 7.

²⁵⁹ Sebastian Smith, *Allah's Mountains: The Battle for Chechnya*, 84-85.

Dagestan's Muslims, "for whom Sufism combined with local tradition is the main faith, have generally been anxious to avoid the conflict that has afflicted Chechnya."²⁶⁰ Wahhabist missionaries entered Dagestan in the early 1990s, eventually gaining influence in some areas. Some villages embraced their fundamentalist tenets, introducing shari'ah law, and by August 1999, a radical Islamic body declared an independent state in western Dagestan and called for jihad against Russia.²⁶¹ Basayev took this as an invitation and invaded Dagestan, with the goal of liberating the republic from Russian control and joining it to a greater Islamic caliphate that would eventually stretch across the northern Caucasus. Basayev's lofty ambitions were thwarted as he was met by heavy resistance from Dagestani villagers.

Basayev's fundamentalist brand of Islam was rejected by the majority of Dagestanis, who successfully fought off Basayev's invasion alongside Russian armed forces. After clashes lasting several weeks, Basayev was finally routed by an influx of Russian ground forces that followed the defeated rebels back into Chechnya. Russia launched a corresponding aerial bombing campaign against Chechen targets.²⁶² A string of apartment bombings in late August and early September of the same year rocked Moscow, Volgograd, and the Dagestani town of Buynaksk. Putin blamed Chechen terrorists for the bombings and used these and the invasion of Dagestan as the justifications for leading the country into the Second Chechen War.

Chechen terrorists have taken responsibility for subsequent terrorist attacks in Dagestan, including a military parade bombing in May 2002 which killed 41 individuals.²⁶³ Smaller-scale

²⁶⁰ "Regions and territories: Dagestan," *BBC News*, 19 Feb 2007, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/country_profiles/3659904.stm> .

²⁶¹ Ibid.

²⁶² Matthew Evangelista, *The Chechen Wars: Will Russia Go the Way of the Soviet Union?*, 2.

²⁶³ "Chechnya-based Terrorists," *Council on Foreign Relations*, 19 Feb 2007, <<http://www.cfr.org/publication/9181/#1>>.

attacks have followed, with ten killed by a bomb blast in July 2005, and several more killed in shootings and explosions in 2006.²⁶⁴

North Ossetia

The North Ossetian town of Beslan lies barely thirty miles from Chechnya. Yet prior to the attack, the town was a quiet backwater seemingly far-removed from the fighting and turmoil raging such a short distance away. The most prosperous and economically-developed of the North Caucasian republics, North Ossetia enjoyed a relative degree of stability and close ties with Moscow. Ossetians are overwhelmingly Orthodox Christian and speak a language unrelated to Ingush or Chechen, so North Ossetia attracted far fewer Chechen refugees than its neighboring republics. Vladikavkaz, the republic's capital, is the region's largest city and transportation/commercial hub. The city was founded by Russian forces in the 18th century and served as the launching point for the subsequent military campaigns that eventually subdued the entire region.

The traditional Ossetian homeland is currently divided by the international border between Russia and Georgia. (Josef Stalin, an ethnic Georgian and so well aware of the region's heterogeneous mix of restive peoples, creatively delineated the borders of the Caucasian republics to neutralize nationalistic threats.) The Russian government has won the loyalty and favor of many Ossetians by strongly backing the breakaway region of South Ossetia lying within Georgia. The close relationship between Moscow and Vladikavkaz was further cemented during the bloody conflict between North Ossetia and Ingushetia in 1992, when Russia clearly conducted a pro-Ossetian policy.²⁶⁵

The Chechen Wars

²⁶⁴ "Regions and territories: Dagestan," *BBC News*, 19 Feb 2007,

²⁶⁵ Alexei Arbatov, et al., *Managing Conflict in the Former Soviet Union: Russian and American Perspectives*, 30.

First Chechen War

In December 1994, Russia launched major air strikes on Grozny after Dudaev's government failed to disarm and accept Moscow's authority. Yeltsin ordered the attacks, expecting a quick victory and intimidating show of Russian power. A ground offensive rolled into Chechnya on December 11, with peaceful protests often blocking the path of the invading tanks.²⁶⁶ By the end of the month, Russian forces had advanced to Grozny, which at this point was already heavily damaged by aerial bombing. The first major battle of the war took place on New Year's Day 2005, with Russian troops sustaining hundreds of casualties. The Red Army was humiliated and this initial victory did much to raise the morale of Grozny's Chechen defenders. Russian forces continued their attempt to take Grozny and the campaign lasted several bloody weeks. Chechen forces used guerilla tactics to harass the Russian troops ringing the city, while Grozny sustained unrelenting bombardment. The city was largely deserted by civilians, who poured into refugee camps in neighboring Ingushetia. By late January, some 40,000 Russian forces finally succeeding in taking an utterly devastated Grozny. Many reports claim there wasn't a singly building in the city standing intact.

With Grozny occupied by Russian forces, Chechen fighters retreated to the deep valleys and mountains of southern Chechnya, drawing Russian forces into a quagmire. Chechen insurgents had a clear advantage in this second stage of the conflict, possessing intimate knowledge of the rugged terrain. Heavy Russian artillery was bogged down and rendered ineffective, and Russian casualties soared as Chechens picked off thousands of soldiers in countless ambushes and guerilla attacks.²⁶⁷ With no end to the conflict in sight, Chechen leader Basayev carried the war outside of Chechnya, capturing a hospital in Budennovsk (located in

²⁶⁶ "In Pictures: War in Chechnya," *BBC News*, 12 Feb 2007, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/shared/spl/hi/picture_gallery/04/europe_war_in_chechnya/html/1.stm>.

²⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

Russia's Stavropol Region) and taking over a thousand people hostage. Moscow accepted many of Basayev's demands, beginning negotiations with separatist leaders and providing safe passage for him back to Chechnya.

At this time, however, Russian authorities were desperate to end what was becoming a highly-unpopular war and ordered the notorious "cleansing" operations across Chechnya. Known as "zachistki," Russian forces would sweep entire areas of Chechnya in house-to-house searches, detaining and often killing suspected insurgents, which were basically any male of fighting age.²⁶⁸ In July, Chechen and Russian leaders finally reached a cease-fire which collapsed several months later. Dudaev was assassinated by a Russian rocket in April 1996, and was succeeded by vice president Zelimkhan Yandarbiyev. In August 1996, Basayev led a successful attack on Russian forces, recapturing Grozny and forcing Russian General Alexander Lebed to sign a cease-fire. With the war in Chechnya lost, Lebed signed a peace agreement with Yandarbiyev in November 1996. The Khasavyurt Accords demanded a Russian withdrawal from Chechnya and put off the question of Chechen independence for another five years. In January 1997, Chechen military commander Aslan Maskhadov was elected president of the renamed "Chechen Republic of Ichkeria."

Second Chechen War

Basayev's summer foray into Dagestan served as the catalyst for renewing the Chechen war in 1999. Subsequent scores of mysterious apartment bombing across Russia were blamed on Chechen separatists and new Prime Minister Vladimir Putin vowed to bring the Chechens to justice once and for all. Putin would not accept the "Yugoslavization of Russia" and considered

²⁶⁸ "Conflict in Chechnya: Russia's Renegade Republic," *PBS Online NewsHour*, 18 Feb 2007, <http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/europe/chechnya/timeline_2.html>.

Yeltsin's peace accord with the Chechens a humiliating defeat for Russia.²⁶⁹ With some Russian troops already in Chechnya pursuing Basayev, Putin amassed 20,000 and 30,000 additional forces on the Chechen border in anticipation of another major campaign.²⁷⁰ As part of "Operation Foreigner," Putin's government expelled 15,000 mostly Caucasian people from Moscow and forced another 60,000 to register with authorities in a comprehensive "anti-terrorism" campaign.²⁷¹

In September, Russian forces began bombing Grozny after a lull of four years, and ordered all civilians out of the city by December 11 as it launched its first full-scale attack of the Second Chechen War.²⁷² Russian troops reentered Grozny the following month and Putin (now President) declared the end of major combat operations in the spring of 2000. Fierce fighting still raged in southern Chechnya, however, and another flood of refugees poured back over the border into Ingushetia. Putin's campaign was remarkable in its ferocity; determined to crush the Chechen insurgency, the Russian military was given a free hand to execute war crimes and extensive human rights violations.²⁷³ *Zachistki* were carried out with a vengeance, and women became targets of the raids this time around as well. The indiscriminate killing of Chechen civilians (including women, children, and the elderly) was denounced in West, with United Nations Human Rights Commissioner calling Russian human rights abuses "so consistent and so serious" that the government should take immediate action to curb them.²⁷⁴ The Russian government dismissed such recommendations and warned the international community to stay well out of its internal affairs. Following the 9/11 terrorist attacks in the United States, Putin

²⁶⁹ Matthew Evangelista, *The Chechen Wars: Will Russia Go the Way of the Soviet Union?*, 2.

²⁷⁰ "Conflict in Chechnya: Russia's Renegade Republic," *PBS Online NewsHour*, 18 Feb 2007, <http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/europe/chechnya/timeline_2.html>.

²⁷¹ Ibid.

²⁷² Ibid.

²⁷³ Ibid.

²⁷⁴ Ibid.

cannily reframed the Chechen war as part of the global war on terror and nearly all Western government criticism of Russian tactics in Chechnya evaporated overnight.

Chechen leaders became desperate to call attention to the brutality and lawlessness of Russia's armed forces, and sought to shake the Russian public out of its complacency and willful ignorance. In October 2002, Chechen insurgents struck the heart of Russia, seizing a theater in central Moscow and taking over 800 people hostage. This event did not shake the resolve of Putin, who responded with excessive force. At least 130 hostages and 41 terrorists were killed in the rescue attempt. Chechen insurgents increasingly began targeting civilians in order to publicize their cause, most famously using "Black Widow" suicide bombers in a campaign of terror across Russia. Military installations were also targeted across the Caucasus. A North Ossetian military hospital was destroyed by Chechen bombers in August 2003, killing at least 52 soldiers.²⁷⁵ A comprehensive list of attacks perpetrated by Chechens separatists and their sympathizers follows:

²⁷⁵ "Conflict in Chechnya: Russia's Renegade Republic," *PBS Online NewsHour*, 18 Feb 2007, <http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/europe/chechnya/timeline_2.html>.

Major Terrorist Attacks

Date	Location	Act	Deaths*	Perpetrators
6/1995	Budennovsk	Hospital hostage siege	130+	Basayev
1/1996	Dagestan	Hospital hostage siege	50-100	
1/1996	Trabzon, Turkey	Ferry hijack	0	Pro-Chechen Turks
9/1999	Moscow, Buynaksk, Volgodonsk	Apartment & shopping center bombings	260+	Chechens deny involvement
7/2000	Chechnya	Russian security bases attacked by suicide bombers	50+	Suicide bombers
3/2001	Turkey	Russian airliner hijacked to Saudi Arabia	3	Chechens
5/2002	Kaspiysk, Dagestan	Bomb at military parade	41	Chechens
10/2002	Moscow	Dubrovka Theater siege	170	Basayev
12/2002	Grozny	Dual suicide attack on government buildings	83	
7/2003	Moscow	Concert bombings	17	Suicide bombers
8/2003	Mozdok, N. Ossetia	Military hospital truck bombing	52	
12/2003	Yessentuki, Russia	Train bombing	46	
2/2004	Moscow	Suicide bomb	6	
5/2004	Grozny	Assassination of Kadyrov by bomb	5	
6/2004	Ingushetia	Raids carried out by Chechen rebels	At least 92	Basayev
8/2004	Moscow, Rostov-on-Don	Passenger plane bombings	89	Suicide bombers
8/2004	Moscow	Metro suicide bombing	10	Suicide bomber
9/2004	Beslan	School siege	330	Organized by Basayev
10/2005	Nalchik	Chechen raid/street fighting	85+	

* Includes terrorists

Sources:

<http://www.cfr.org/publication/9181/#1> – 2/19

http://www.economist.com/world/displaystory.cfm?story_id=E1_PTSNSDQ – 2/19