

American Foreign Policy Council

RUSSIA

QUICK FACTS

Population: 142,500,482

Area: 17,098,242 sq km

Ethnic Groups: Russian 79.8%,
Tatar 3.8%, Ukrainian 2%,
Bashkir 1.2%, Chuvash 1.1%,
other or unspecified 12.1%

Religions: Russian Orthodox 15-
20%, Muslim 10-15%, other Christian 2%

Government Type: Federation

GDP (official exchange rate):\$2.053 trillion

Map and Quick Facts courtesy of the CIA World Factbook (Last Updated May 2013)



Muslims comprise the Russian Federation's second largest confessional group, numbering some 15 million (10 percent of the overall population), and are divided by geography, history, ethnicity and confessional differences.¹ Although Islamic institutions were largely destroyed and believers forced underground under Soviet rule, Islam has experienced a quick, vibrant, variegated but still ill-defined revival since the collapse of the USSR, with various tendencies competing for the support of society and state. Since the late Soviet era of Mikhail Gorbachev's reformist restructuring, or perestroika, the number of Islamic communities in Russia has grown exponentially. Among Russia's Muslims, the explosion of ethno-nationalism sparked by the USSR's implosion in the late 1980s and early 1990s has been replaced to a considerable degree by religious identification. However, only a small portion of Russia's Muslims have Islamist tendencies, and a fraction of those have been drawn to a violent Islamism or jihadism since the period between the first and second post-Soviet Russian-Chechen wars.

ISLAMIST ACTIVITY

The Caucasus Emirate

The main *jihadist* group, a network of *jihadist* cells (or *jamaats*) spread across the North Caucasus called the “Imarat Kavkaz” or “Caucasus Emirate” (CE), evolved through the radicalization of the Chechen national separatist movement community.

The CE and its predecessor organization evolved from the Chechen separatist movement that emerged as the Soviet Union began to collapse in the early 1990s. Although there were some radical political Islamic elements within Chechen society and first Chechen president Dzhokar Dudaev did implement elements of *sharia* law, the Chechen movement was a predominantly nationalist movement through the first post-Soviet Russo-Chechen war in 1994-1996. However, following the 1996 Khasavyurt peace agreement signed between Russian President Boris Yeltsin and Dudaev’s successor, Aslan Maskhadov, the quasi-independent Chechen Republic of Ichkeria (ChRI) devolved into a state of permanent chaos, criminality, and civil strife. The political vacuum was used by a small number of internal Islamist-oriented wartime field commanders and foreign *jihadist* elements, including al-Qaeda, to establish a *jihadi* bridgehead in the form of indoctrination and terrorist training camps.

As early as 1996, Osama bin Laden’s chief deputy, Ayman al-Zawahiri, attempted to visit incognito and establish a presence in Russia, but he was discovered and deported. In a subsequently published book, he targeted Russia for *jihad* and the establishment of an expansive southern Eurasian caliphate.² At about the same time, Shamil Basaev, then a Chechen field commander, visited Afghanistan and received training there.³ Thereafter, al-Qaeda operative Abu Ibn al-Khattab arrived in Chechnya, and amid the inter-war lawlessness established camps where perhaps several hundred foreign *jihadi* fighters as well as locals trained in terrorist tactics. These units spearheaded the August 1999 invasion of Dagestan organized by Basaev and Khattab and aimed at creating an Islamist enclave there—an offensive which set off the second post-Soviet Chechen war.⁴

As during the first Chechen war, Russia deployed a brutal offensive, and by 2002 had defeated the militants in conventional war, driving the bulk of the ChRI government and parliament into foreign exile, with many finding refuge in places like Washington, London, Istanbul, Baku, the United Arab Emirates, and Qatar. The more die-hard extremist elements retreated into the mountain forests in southern Chechnya and Georgia, where the ChRI began a classic guerilla insurgency campaign punctuated by occasional large-scale attacks. With the national separatists isolated abroad, the *jihadists* gradually

consolidated power over the movement over the next five years.

In the summer of 2002, an expanded emergency meeting of the underground remnants of the ChRI government and armed forces convened in the mountains of Chechnya. This “shura” was attended by President Maskhadov, internationally-wanted terrorist Shamil Basaev, the ChRI’s leading field commanders, and several foreign *jihadists* and al-Qaeda operatives. The meeting was a *coup d’etat* of sorts; as a result, a *sharia*-based order was adopted, with the goal of expanding the insurgency across the North Caucasus.⁵

Thereafter, Basaev began to travel across the Caucasus seeking out young radicals and establishing a network of combat *jamaats* in Ingushetia, Dagestan, Kabardino-Balkaria, and Karachaevo-Cherkessia.⁶ The results of Basaev’s organizational activity soon produced a series of terrorist incidents. The most prominent was the Dubrovka theater hostage-taking in October 2002, which ended in 130 deaths when Russian forces stormed the theater. In 2003, there was a series of suicide attacks in Moscow that killed and wounded over 100.⁷ 2004 saw a summer of terror, including the June 2004 attack on Nazran’s MVD building, the bombing of an outdoor concert, and suicide bombings (most notably the simultaneous mid-air explosions of two airliners). This terror offensive concluded with the seizure of School No. 1 in Beslan in early September—a terrorist incident in which 333 people, including 186 children, were killed. Since then, however, *jihadi* terrorist activity has been confined to the North Caucasus’s Muslim republics, in particular Ingushetia, Chechnya, Dagestan, and Kabardino-Balkaria, where *mujahideen* have carried out 200–400 attacks per year on civilian, police, security and military officials and servicemen.⁸

In March 2005, Russian forces apprehended ChRI president Maskhadov, and his bodyguards reportedly killed him so he would not fall into enemy hands. He was succeeded by Sadulaev, who quickly institutionalized the broader Caucasus *jihad*, creating Caucasus and Dagestan Fronts that encompassed Ingushetia, Kabardino-Balkaria, and Karachaevo-Cherkessia as well. The following months included an upsurge in *jihadist* violence, most prominently an October 2005 attack by approximately two hundred *mujahideen* in Kabardino-Balkaria’s capitol, Nalchik, that killed 47 and wounded more than one hundred.⁹ Then, in early 2006, Basaev called for the establishment of a council of Islamic scholars (*ulema*) who would be charged with selecting the emir of the Caucasus. In May 2006 ChRI president/amir Sadulaev declared the formation of Urals and Volga Fronts, institutionalizing his occasional calls for the liberation of all “Muslim lands” on Russian territory. Sadulaev in turn was killed by Russian forces in June 2006, and was succeeded by Doka Umarov, who appointed Basaev to the posts of premier and vice pres-

ident, making him Umarov's *de facto* top deputy and designated successor. But with Basaev's subsequent death, and because of some Russian successes and policy adjustments (among them a broad amnesty from September 2006 to January 2007, and the creation of a national and regional antiterrorism committees), the ChRI *mujahideen* witnessed a major downturn in their fortunes.¹⁰ However, in Spring 2007, the ChRI rebounded thanks to a number of internal changes, from the retargeting of its operations from Chechnya to Ingushetia to a fundraising campaign conducted on Arab language sites.¹¹

In summer 2007, Ingushetia became the spearhead of the Caucasus *jihad*, with more insurgent terrorist attacks occurring in that republic than in any other in summer and fall 2007, in 2008 (372 attacks total, 138 in Ingushetia), and 2009 (511 attacks, 175 in Ingushetia).¹² However, since April 2010 the Veliyat Dagestan (DV), the CE's network in Russia's Republic of Dagestan, moved into the operational vanguard, where it remained through 2012, outpacing the Ingush *mujahideen* and all other veliyats every month through at least June 2012. Thus, the DV carried out 267 of the CE's total of 583 attacks in 2010, 315 of 546 attacks in 2011, and 140 of 214 in the first six months of 2012.¹³

The CE functions as a decentralized network, consisting of local combat *jamaats* loosely tied together and subordinate to sectors, which are in turn subordinated to the CE's virtual 'provinces,' referred to by the *mujahideen* in the Arabic as *veliyats*, and fronts. Subordination is indicated by the taking of the Islamic loyalty oath (*bayat*). The CE includes six known *veliyats*: Veliyat Nokchicho (Chechnya); Veliyat Gyalgyaiche (Ingushetia and Ossetia); Veliyat Dagestan; the United Veliyat of Kabardia, Balkaria, and Karachai (the KBR, the KChR, and probably Adygeya); and Veliyat of the Nogai Steppe (Krasnodar Krai and Stavropol Krai). The CE's new structure and organization is a complete break with the nationalist separatism of the past.¹⁴ An *emir* who has taken the Islamic loyalty oath or *bayat* to the CE chief heads each *veliyat*. The CE's military structure includes: Caucasus, Dagestan, Volga, and Urals Fronts. Combat *jamaats* are allowed to design and undertake small-scale operations independently, but larger operations in theory require approval from a higher-ranking *emir*.¹⁵

The size of the CE's network is extremely difficult to estimate. *Jihadi* sources are silent on the subject, except to refute the accuracy of official Russian estimates. The most reliable, recent, official estimates from the security and law enforcement bodies put the number of active fighters in a range from 400-1,500.¹⁶ Politicians put the numbers much lower and absurdly so, with Chechen President Ramzan Kadyrov having claimed victory over the *jihadists* several times over, and putting their numbers in Chechnya at just

50-60.¹⁷ The CE's operational capacity, reflected in the number of attacks and other indicators, suggest membership may be closer to the higher end of law enforcement's estimates. It is reasonable to assume that there may be more than 1,000 CE fighters, and thousands of additional facilitators.¹⁸

The CE retains the late ChRI's goals of establishing a *sharia*-based Islamist state across the Caucasus and eventually liberating all Muslim lands in Russia. The CE has retained the Urals and Volga Fronts, which target Tatarstan, Bashkortostan, and perhaps other regions where Muslim khanates existed in the past and Muslim populations survive into the present in the Urals and Volga areas. In late 2004, then-field commander and ChRI security council chairman Doku Umarov called for the liberation of Siberia, where a Tatar khanate once existed, and the Far East, and outlined a plan for the creation of three new, large sectors, mega-sectors or zones—Western, Siberian, and Far Eastern—in order to extend war and terror to Russia's "economic heart."¹⁹ In a February 2010 interview, Umarov vowed to liberate once-Muslim lands in Krasnodar Krai, Astrakhan and the Volga.²⁰

In 2010-11, *jihadi*ism emerged in Bashkortostan and Tatarstan as well, with several clashes between *mujahideen* and security forces.²¹ In 2012 a CE-loyal Idel-Ural Veliyat based in Tatarstan and perhaps Bashkortostan as well openly declared itself by video.²² Its amir claimed responsibility for the first major *jihadi* terrorist attacks in Tatarstan history: the simultaneous attempted assassination of Tatarstan's chief mufti and the successful assassination of his first deputy in July 2012.²³ These attacks were followed by several failed attacks and a shootout in October 2012 in Kazan between police and three *mijahideen* who were killed.²⁴

Ultimately, the CE's conceptualization of "Muslim lands" in Russia is indefinite. Thus, a map of the future "Caucasus Emirate" that CE-affiliated websites circulate shows the entire North Caucasus region from the Black to the Caspian Seas, including non-Muslim republics like Krasnodar and Stavropol kraia and North Ossetia, to be CE territory. Moreover, all Russian territory "proper" to the north of the North Caucasus as well as the Transcaucasus (Georgia, Armenia, and Azerbaijan) to the south are labeled as "Muslim lands occupied by infidels and apostates."²⁵ *Jihadi jamaats* have allegedly been uncovered outside Russia's titular Muslim republics, including Astrakhan, Novosibirsk, and elsewhere in western Siberia.²⁶

In his declaration of the CE's creation, its *emir*, Doku Umarov, also declared *jihad* against all those fighting against *mujahideen* in Iraq, Afghanistan, Palestine, or anywhere in the world—a statement tantamount to a declaration of war against the U.S., Great Britain, Israel, and their allies.²⁷ The CE's

ideology finds its inspiration in the same ideological and theological works that permeate the global *jihadi* movement.²⁸ In short, the CE has ideologically and politically allied itself with the most virulent elements of the global *jihadist* movement, including al-Qaeda, the Taliban, Islamic Jihad, Hezbollah, and others, and repeatedly posts articles in support of their respective *jihads*.

Beginning in 2010, the CE was involved in at least four foreign plots uncovered by foreign intelligence sources, and two more allegedly uncovered by Russian (and Ukrainian) intelligence. In November 2010, a “Shariah4Belgium” cell and terrorist plot aimed at attacking NATO targets in Belgium and supplying the CE with finances and materiel, was uncovered in Belgium and a series of other countries. In April 2011, a cell from the Dagestan Vilaiyat (DV), the CE’s network in Russia’s Republic of Dagestan (now the leading network in the CE *jihad*, carrying out 65 percent of the group’s operations), was uncovered in the Czech Republic. In April 2012, Azerbaijani security forces discovered a major DV plot to assassinate President Ilham Aliiev and attack targets in Baku and elsewhere in Azerbaijan, bordering southern Dagestan. In August 2012, Spanish and French police foiled an AQ plot by two Chechens—Eldar Magomedov and Mohamed Ankari Adamov—and a Turk, Cengiz Yalcin, to drop bombs on British and U.S. targets in Spain, France and/or elsewhere in Europe during the London Summer Olympic Games.

In late February 2012, Russian and Ukrainian authorities claimed to have uncovered a CE plot to assassinate then Russian Prime Minister and presidential candidate Vladimir Putin. Details have been sketchy and at least the timing of the Russian government’s announcement of the plot seemed to be designed to affect the impending March 4th presidential election. Also in 2012, Russian authorities announced they had uncovered a CE plot being organized from Abkhaziya to attack the 2014 Olympic Games in Sochi, claiming that Georgia’s secret services were involved in the plot.²⁹

The CE’s globalization is also evident in the Syrian civil war, as several CE-tied groups joined the *jihadists* fighting for the Syrian rebels against the Bashar Assad regime. A Chechen *jamaat* of some 40 fighters under amir Abu Omar al-Shishani (al-Chechen) was fighting in Aleppo and carried out a number of joint operations with AQ’s affiliate in Syria, “Jabkhat al-Nusrah,” in summer and fall 2012.³⁰ A combat *jamaat* from the CE’s OVKBK, the “Jamaat Katibatu mukhadzhirin,” was fighting in Syria around Sham at the same time and issued two video statements.³¹ An ethnic Tatar group, the “Bulgar Jamaat,” has reportedly left Waziristan to fight in Syria while deciding whether or not to return to Tatarstan and help extend the CE’s reach to

Russia's Volga and Urals areas.³²

The CE is composed of members from each of the Muslim ethnic groups in Russia, as well as members of non-Muslim ethnic groups. Chechens, Ingush and various Dagestani (Avars, Dargins, Kumyks, Nogais, Tabasarans, etc.) predominate, but the Muslim Alans (Karachais and Balkars) and Circassians (Kabards, Cherkess, and Adygs) are also well represented. In short, the CE puts into practice the *jihadi* principle that Islam is universal; that the “lifting of Allah’s word above all others” countenances no ethnic or national boundaries.

During the first Russo-Chechen war and in the period thereafter, the ChRI received funding from elements of the Chechen mafia, narcotics trafficking, illicit oil exports, and the lucrative hostage-taking industry run by Chechen field commander and Moscow mafia chief, Khozh-Akhmed Nukhaev.³³ For the most part, these sources were cut off with the onset of the second war, the displacement of the ChRI leadership abroad, and a more aggressive international and Russian effort to combat money-laundering as a source of terrorist financing.

There is little original source material regarding the CE’s current sources of financing. It remains likely that Arab and other foreign Islamic governments, businesses, and philanthropists still provide funds, despite the Russian authorities’ efforts to put an end to such activity. It is believed that elements in local government and criminal circles, including narcotics traffickers, provide budget and illicit funds, respectively, to the CE by way of money laundering and other activities.³⁴ According to both the Russian authorities and the *mujahideen* themselves, the local population provides limited financial support in the form of the Islamic zakat and considerable logistical and other material support, such as weapons, safe houses, and food provisions.³⁵

The declaration of the CE has coincided with an upsurge in *mujahideen* operations. In 2008, the first full year of the CE’s existence, its *mujahideen* executed 372 attacks/incidents, 370 of them in the North Caucasus.³⁶ The CE’s capacity since has strengthened significantly in potency if not in reach, with 511 attacks/incidents in 2009, 583 attacks in 2010, 546 attacks in 2011, and 214 in the first six months of 2012.³⁷ Thus, by the five-year anniversary of its October 2007 founding, the CE had carried out approximately 2,300 attacks and violent incidents. Moreover, in 2008-09 Umarov and the CE revived the late Basaev’s unit for suicide martyrdom operations, the “Riyadus Salikhin” Martyrs Battalion. Thus, among the CE’s some 2,300 attacks/incidents since 2007, were 46 successful suicide bombing attacks: 2 in 2008, 16 in 2009, 14 in 2010, 6 in 2011, and 8 in 2012.³⁸

Other Jihadist Groups

In the past, likely al-Qaeda operatives such as Khattab, Abu Walid, Abu Havs and now Abu Seif and Muhannad have joined the ChRI/CE, but there is no open source evidence that al-Qaeda or other foreign *jihadist* groups operate in Russia independently from the CE. Russian law enforcement occasionally claims that al-Qaeda operatives number among killed and captured CE *mujahideen*, but such claims are never documented. The only other *jihadist* organization recently reported to be active in Russia is the Uighur-Bulgar Jamaat (UBJ), members of which went on trial in April 2009 pursuant to their arrest the previous August after a shootout with Bashkir police in Salavat, Bashkortostan. According to Bashkir authorities, the Uighur-Bulgar Jamaat operates along the Afghanistan-Pakistan border and was founded by Pavel Dorokhov, a native of Bashkiriya's Baimak district, who was trained in al-Qaeda and Taliban camps.³⁹ The UBJ may or may not be one and the same organization as the apparently ethnic Tatar 'Bulgar Jamaat' currently fighting in Afghanistan.⁴⁰

Despite being banned in Russia, HuT maintains a presence. Many alleged HuT members are arrested annually occurring mostly in Tatarstan and Bashkortostan. By 2012 HuT and other Islamists had penetrated many autonomous mosques and official Islamic institutions in Tatarstan, was carrying out public demonstrations in tandem with nationalist groups, and organized several automobile caravans flying the HuT flag.⁴¹

Other domestic groups

Several small Tatar groups have Islamist tendencies but are at least equally or predominantly national separatist in nature, confining their activity to Tatarstan and, to a lesser degree, Bashkortostan. They include: Azatlyk, Ittifak, Mille Mejlis, and elements within the All-Tatar Public Center.⁴² In the past year, these organizations continued to confine themselves to occasional declarations, conferences, and small demonstrations, but now do so in alliance with radical Salafi elements such as HuT. Some of their official statements and documents are sent to North Caucasus *mujahideen* websites.⁴³

ISLAMISM AND SOCIETY

Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, Islam has undergone a revival among its traditionally Muslim ethnic groups. According to Russia's leading mufti, Chairman of the Council of Muftis of Russia (CMR) Ravil Gainutdin, the number of mosques in Russia grew from 150 in 1991 to some six thousand by October 2005.⁴⁴

Russia's Muslims are divided by geography, history, ethnicity, and divergent confessional movements (Sufis, Sunnis, and Shi'ites) and legal schools (*maskhabs*). The overwhelming majority of Russia's Muslims are Sunni. Shi'a are predominantly located in the southern North Caucasus, particularly among Dagestan's rather small ethnic Lezgin population. Sufism predominates in the North Caucasus, consisting mostly of Naqshbandi and Qadiri *tariqats* (brotherhoods or orders). There are some 15 such brotherhoods in the Republic of Dagestan alone. Brotherhoods tend to be mono-ethnic, or nearly so. Each Islamic school of jurisprudence, or *maskhab*, is represented in Russia, but almost all of Russia's Muslims adhere to the Hanafi interpretation. There is, however, a significant Shafi presence in the North Caucasus. Tatarstan's Muslims and the Tatar internal diaspora, meanwhile, are experiencing a revival of the Islamic reformist or *jadidist* school of Islamic thought.

Although Muslim communities can be found all across the length and breadth of the vast federation, the largest concentrations of ethnic Muslims (ethnic groups that traditionally have adhered in overwhelming numbers to the Islamic faith) are found in the North Caucasus's Muslim republics—Chechnya, Ingushetia, Dagestan, Adygeya, Kabardino-Balkaria (KBR), and Karachaevo-Cherkessia (KChR)—and in the Volga and Urals republics of Tatarstan and Bashkortostan. There are also large Muslim populations in Moscow and St. Petersburg, but these are more Russified, urbanized, and secularized than those in other regions, especially the North Caucasus. The Muslims of the North Caucasus remain largely rural, traditionally religious, and indigenously ethnic or clan-oriented.

The North Caucasus's Muslims are divided into three linguistic groups (Turkic, Persian, and Ibero-Caucasian) and some 40 traditionally Muslim ethnic groups. The ethnic groups are themselves divided by various administrative-territorial borders and strong sub-ethnic clan allegiances.

Russia's other main ethnic Muslim groups, Tatars and Bashkirs, are concentrated to a great extent in the Tatarstan and Bashkortostan Republics. Tatars make up a slim majority in Tatarstan, while ethnic Russians outnumber Bashkirs in Bashkortostan (Bashkiria). Both Tatars and Bashkirs are better integrated into Russian life than are the North Caucasians. In recent years, some historically non-Muslim ethnic groups are seeing some of their members convert to Islam, including ethnic Russians.⁴⁵ Ethnic Russian Muslims have organized their own socio-political organization, the National Organization of Russia's Muslims (NORM), which purports to have 2,500-3,000 members.⁴⁶ In late 2012, NORM established an alliance with the Salafi-tied nationalist Azatlyk group in Tatarstan.⁴⁷

Russia's Muslims are not strongly self-organized. Rather, they are well-organized "from above" by the Islamic clergy and the Russian state. Muslim communities must be registered with the government, and each is then incorporated into a regional Muslim Spiritual Administration (MSA), every one of which in turn is included under one of the three main Muslim umbrella organizations: the Council of Muslims of Russia (CMR), the Central Muslim Spiritual Administration (CMSA), and the Coordinating Council of the Muslims of the North Caucasus (CCMNC). The CMR at present is the most influential of the umbrella organizations, with its leader, the ethnic Tatar mufti Ravil Gainutdin, on good terms with the Kremlin. Two smaller umbrella organizations—the MSA of the European part of Russia and the MSA of the Asian part of Russia—are subordinated to two of the abovementioned. In all, there are known to be approximately 60 regional MSAs, all of which are included under one or another of the umbrella organizations.⁴⁸ These various structures help organize the travel of Muslims to the *hajj* and to study abroad, support Islamic universities and *madrassas* in Russia, and recruit and train Islamic clergy. The various Muslim spiritual councils (*Dukhovnyie Upravlenii Musulman* or DUM in Russian) receive state funding for muftis' salaries, university and madrasa development, and the building of mosques. Independent Muslim communities and mosques persist but are illegal and are usually discovered by the authorities and incorporated into the official administrations. Typically, these have manifested Islamist tendencies, and some have produced *jihadist* terrorist organizations, leaders, and cadres.⁴⁹

With regard to political ideology, Russia's Muslims are divided among democrats, conservatives, Eurasianist and Islamist reactionaries, much as ethnic Russians are divided among democrats, conservatives, Eurasianist and Russian nationalist reactionaries. However, since under Russian law political parties based on any communal identification are forbidden from participating in elections, it is difficult to attain a detailed picture of Muslims' distribution on Russia's political spectrum.

Political Islam, however, is in evidence at both the official and unofficial levels. Media controlled by official Islamic structures carry numerous articles on introducing elements of *sharia* law in Russia, including the introduction of Islamic banking and insurance.⁵⁰ Also, there are strong anti-American, anti-Western, anti-Israeli, and even anti-Semitic tendencies not just among Russia's Islamists but among Russia's traditional Muslims as well.⁵¹

Generally, however, there is very limited support for Islamism in both Russia's Muslim and non-Muslim populations. The country's Islamic clergy feels threatened and virulently opposes manifestations of political Islam, and Isla-

mists have found limited support in the Muslim community. That said, many young Muslims are increasingly fascinated by—and sympathetic toward—radical trends, including Islamism as represented by charismatic *mujahjideen* like Caucasus Emirate rising star Said abu Saad Buryatskii. Perhaps because of this lack of support, Muslim communities in the North Caucasus have tended to radicalize quickly, evolving into *jihadist* groups.⁵²

ISLAMISM AND THE STATE

The Russian state, federal and/or local, depending on the region, pays some part of official muftis' salaries and finances the building of mosques, *madrasas*, and Islamic universities and centers. The Russian state's alliance with the official Islamic clergy is complicated by generational and demographic factors, however. Many official muftis and imams hail from the Soviet era and may be tainted by cooperation with the atheist regime and poor knowledge of Islam. These factors and corruption, both real and perceived, among officials and allied official clergy serve to discredit both, especially in the eyes of younger Muslims. High fertility rates in places like the North Caucasus relative to the rest of the country make this a demographic critical for overall Russian political stability, and containment of the *jihad* that has characterized politics in the North Caucasus for two decades.⁵³

Both the Russian state and official Islamic clergy are strongly opposed to and greatly fear any manifestation of Islamism. As a result, the state has banned political parties based on religion (as well as on ethnicity and gender), and the Islamic clergy cooperates closely with the state apparatus in combating independent Islamic or Islamist groups and supporting reformist, Euro-Islamic, and other more secularized Islamic trends as an antidote to Islamism. The leading mufti Gainutdin, as well as the leadership of the Republic of Tatarstan, has led in this effort.⁵⁴

Past experience has taught Russian authorities to treat Islamists severely, and they move quickly and often illegally to put them away for long terms. Arrests of Islamists in non-violent but illegal organizations such as HuT and Tablighi Jamaat are often accompanied by official charges of conspiracy to commit terrorist attacks and claims that searches produced not only extremist literature but also weapons and explosives.⁵⁵

The extent to which these policies and practices lead to significant violations of Muslims' civil, political, and human rights, creates a tendency of Muslim youth to leave for the forest, mountains, and *jihad*. Putin-era amendments to Russia's laws "On Extremism" and "On Combating Terrorism" give the Federal Security Service (FSB), the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MVD), Justice Ministry, and General Prosecutor's Office broad leeway in holding

suspects and determining what constitutes “extremist literature.” Searches are conducted on shaky pretexts, detention can often result in beating, and some convictions are based on trumped up charges. These practices are more prevalent in the North Caucasus, especially in Chechnya under President Ramzan Kadyrov, where authorities have even carried out extra-judicial retribution against the families of suspected and actual terrorists, including the abductions of relatives and the burning of homes. It needs to be stressed that some of this extra-legal law enforcement activity, especially in Chechnya, is carried out by special battalions comprised of former separatist fighters and is driven by local Caucasus customs of blood revenge.

Federal counter-*jihadism* policy in recent years has emphasized more soft power than ever before. Moscow has targeted and increased federal budget contributions to budgets in republics hit hardest by the CE. In 2008, Ingushetiya was the recipient of greater budget transfers, and since 2009-10 Dagestan has been the main beneficiary. In addition, Moscow initiated a federal program to invest and attract investments for the development of a cluster of tourist ski resorts across the North Caucasus that will provide employment for the youth vulnerable to radical propaganda.

Each of the North Caucasus Muslim republics has carried out its own often very different policies to counter *jihadism* in the region. While Chechnya’s Kadyrov has carried out a more brutal policy, Ingushetiya’s President Yunus bek Yevkurov pioneered a continuous amnesty or “adaptation” policy that seeks to draw *mujahedeen* out of the forest and back to their families and civilian life by offering reduced or suspended sentences and educational and work opportunities. In 2010, Dagestan established an adaptation commission, which engages in the same work, and in 2011 Kabardino-Balkariya followed suit. In 2012 in an effort to isolate, divide and rule radical Muslims, Dagestan’s authorities helped establish a dialogue between the official Sufi-oriented Muslim Spiritual Administration of Dagestan and the republic’s growing Salafi community, the main recruiting pool for the CE. These local policies have the potential to mitigate the political effect of excesses perpetrated by the police and *siloviki* (security forces) and to help drain the pond from which the CE recruits in order to compensate for the rapid attrition among the ranks of its *mujahideen*.

ENDNOTES

[1] Calculated in Gordon M. Hahn, *Russia's Islamic Threat* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2007), 9, from data produced by Russia's 2002 census on the number of Russian citizens belonging to ethnic groups that are traditionally Muslim.

[2] Faisal Devji, *Landscapes of Jihad: Militancy, Morality, and Modernity* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2005), 130-131; Dore Gold, *Hatred's Kingdom: How Saudi Arabia Supports the New Global Terrorism* (Washington, D.C.: Regnery, 2003), 137; and Hahn, *Russia's Islamic Threat*, 36-37.

[3] Michael Reynolds, "False Comfort on Afghanistan," *Middle East Strategy at Harvard*, August 31, 2009; Mike Bowker, "Western Views Of The Chechen Conflict," in Richard Sakwa, ed., *Chechnya: From Past to Future* (London: Anthem Press, 2005), 235.

[4] Hahn, *Russia's Islamic Threat*, 37-39 and 104-110.

[5] "Aslan Maskhadov: 'My sozdamim polnotsennoe Islamskoe Gosudarstvo,'" *Kavkaz-Tsentr*, March 8, 2010, www.kavkazcenter.com/russ/content/2010/03/08/71101.shtml; See also "Prezident ChRI Sheik Abdul-Khalim. Kto On?" *Kavkaz-Tsentr*, March 12, 2005, www.kavkazcenter.com/russ/content/2005/03/12/31285.shtml; "Abdallakh Shamil Abu-Idris: 'My oderzhali strategicheskuyu pobedu,'" *Kavkaz-Tsentr*, January 9, 2006, www.kavkazcenter.net/russ/content/2006/01/09/40869.shtml; and Paul Murphy, *The Wolves of Islam: Russia and the Faces of Chechen Terrorism* (Dulles, VA: Brassey's Inc., 2004), 171-75.

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[7] A detailed discussion of the 2003 suicide bombing campaign can be

found in Yossef Bodansky, *Chechen Jihad: Al Qaeda's Training Ground and the Next Wave of Terror* (New York: Harper, 2007).

[8] Hahn, *Russia's Islamic Threat*, 49-53.

[9] "Godovshchina myatezha v Nal'chike: versii proizoshedshego sil'no raznyatsya," *Kavkaz uzel*, October 13, 2006, www.kavkaz.memo.ru/newstext/news/id/1078940.html.

[10] Ibid.

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[12] See Gordon M. Hahn, "Russia's Counter-Terrorism Operation in Chechnya Ends – the Jihadi Insurgency Continues," *Russia – Other Points of View*, May 11, 2009, www.russiaotherpointsofview.com/2009/05/russias-counterterrorism-operation-in-chechnya.html; See also Gordon M. Hahn, "The Caucasus Emirate's 'Year of the Offensive' in Figures: Data and Analysis on the Caucasus Emirate's Terrorist Activity in 2009," *Islam, Islamism, and Politics in Eurasia Report* 7, January 18, 2010, www.miis.edu/media/view/19071/original/iiper_7.doc; Gordon M. Hahn, "Comparing the Level of Caucasus Emirate Terrorist Activity in 2008 and 2009," *Islam, Islamism, and Politics in Eurasia Report* No. 8, February 5, 2010.

[13] See Gordon M. Hahn, *Islam, Islamism and Politics in Eurasia Report* Nos. 33, 55, and 61, <https://csis.org/node/33013/publication>.

[14] "Dokka Umarov podpisal Omra o sozdanii Shury IK i uprazdnenii Vilaiyata Iriston," *Kavkaz-Tsentr*, May 11, 2009, www.kavkazcenter.com/russ/content/2009/05/11/65571.shtml; "Amir Imarat Kavkaz uprazdnil Kabinet Ministrov i Parlament byvshei ChRI," *Kavkaz-Tsentr*, December 10, 2007, www.kavkazcenter.com/russ/content/2007/12/10/54917.shtml.

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[19] Paul Tumelty, "Chechnya: A Strategy for Independence," Jamestown Foundation *North Caucasus Analysis* 6, iss. 30, August 3, 2005, [http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews\[tt_news\]=2989](http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews[tt_news]=2989).

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[22] Hahn, *Islam, Islamism, and Politics in Eurasia Report* No. 59, July 23, 2012, https://csis.org/files/publication/120723_Hahn_IIPER_59.pdf and "Na karte Rossii mozhet poyavitsya novaya 'goryachaya tochka,'" *Novyi Region* 2, December 7, 2012, www.nr2.ru/ekb/415495.html and "DJHIKHAD. V lesakh Idel'-Urala deistvuyut bashkirskie modzhakhedy," *Kavkaz tsentr*, December 7, 2012, 21:25, www.kavkazcenter.com/russ/content/2012/12/07/94788.shtml.

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[39]^v Bashkirii 'shyut' delo 'Uiguro-Bulgarskogo dzhamaata,'" Islam.ru, April 29, 2009, www.islam.ru/rus/2009-04-29/.

[40] For the Bulgar Jamaat's Russian-language website, see <http://tawba.info> or <http://jamaatbulgar.narod.ru>.

[41] See Gordon M. Hahn, *Islam, Islamism and Politics in Eurasia Report* Nos. 43, 45, 47, 48, 58 and 60, <https://csis.org/node/33013/publication>. On the HuT's penetration of official Islamic structures, demonstrations, and automobile caravans in 2012 see, for example, Rais Suleimanov, "Al'yans vakhkhabizma n national-separtizma v Tatarstane i 'russkii vopros' v regione," RISI, www.kazan-center.ru/osnovnye-razdely/13/279/ and Rais Suleimanov, "Islamskii terrorizm v sovremennom Tatarstane: vakhkhabizm na praktike," *Agentsvo politicheskikh novostei*, July 25, 2012, www.apn.ru/publications/article26923.htm; See also "V Kazani islamisty proekhali avtokolonnoi s razvernutyimi flagami," Regnum.ru, October 26, 2012, www.regnum.ru/news/fd-volga/1586886.html.

[42] Hahn, *Russia's Islamic Threat*, 213-214.

[43] For such contacts before 2005, see Hahn, *Russia's Islamic Threat*, 205-206.

[44] Neil Buckley, "Russia's Islamic Rebirth Adds Tension," *Financial Times*, October 28, 2005.

[45] Although there are no exact figures on the number of converts, it is clear that a Russian/Slavic Islamic community is emerging. According to one report, almost 50 thousand people, mostly ethnic Russians and young women, converted to Islam in the city of Moscow alone from January 2002 to October 2004. This figure comes from a posting on a Qatar-based website IslamOnLine citing an anonymous source from the Council of Muftis of Russia cited in "S 2002 Islam v Moskve prinyali pochti 50 tys. chelovek," Islam.ru, October 7, 2004, www.islam.ru/press/rus/2004/10/07/. An ethnic Russian Muslim community emerged in Omsk in 2004. Aleksei Malashenko, "Shadow of Islam over Europe," *International Affairs* (Moscow) 50, no. 5 (September-October 2004), 70.

[46] Aleksandr Ignatenko, "Krovavaya doroga v rai," *Nezavisimaya gazeta-religiya* 12, July 16, 2003, 1, and Dmitrii Sokolov-Mitrich, "Russkii Ben Laden," *Izvestiya* (Moscow), January 21, 2005, www.izvestia.ru/conflict/1043323_print. Another organization, 'Direct Path,' is headed by Muslim journalist and ex-Orthodox priest Ali Polosin. Dagestan has set up a committee for converts to Islam. Just as the Afghan war produced Soviet converts to Islam, there are cases of Russian soldiers who fought in Chechnya converting to Islam.

Malashenko, "Shadow of Islam over Europe," 70.

[47] "Russkie musul'mane poshli na soyuz s Tatarskimi national-separatistami," Regnum.ru, 10 December 2012, 21:03, www.regnum.ru/news/fd-volga/tatarstan/1602928.html.

[48] Shireen Hunter, *Islam in Russia: The Politics of Identity and Security* (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 2002), 54-55.

[49] A. Zhukov, "Kabardino-Balkariya: Na puti k katastrofe," *Kavkaz-uzel*, n.d., www.kavkaz-uzel.ru/analyticstext/analytics/id/1231255.html.

[50] See, for example, Rinat Bekkin, "Esly by ne krizis... R. Bekkin o roste interesa k islamskim finansam v Rossii," Islam.ru, n.d., www.islam.ru/pressclub/gost/esbikaznu/. Islam.ru is affiliated with the MSA of Dagestan and frequently carries articles and interviews on the subject, in particular those of a key lobbyist for the introduction of Islamic financing in Russia, Rinat Bekkin.

[51] Gordon M. Hahn, "Anti-Americanism, Anti-Westernism, and Anti-Semitism Among Russia's Muslims," *Demokratizatsiya* 16, no. 1 (Winter 2008), 49-60.

[52] Zhukov, *Kabardino-Balkariya: Na puti k katastrofe*.

[53] Hahn, *Russia's Islamic Threat*, 8-12.

[54] Ravil Gainutdin, *Islam v sovremennoi Rossii* (Moscow: Fair Press, 2004), 264-297; Hahn, *Russia's Islamic Threat*, 183-186.

[55] "Rodnym obvinyaemykh v chlenstve v 'Khizb ut-takhrir' prishlos' proryvat'sya v zal suda," Islam.ru, February 27, 2009, www.islam.ru/rus/2009-02-27/; "V Chelyabinskoi oblasti predstanut pered sudom 5 'khizb ut-takhrirovtsev,'" Islam.ru, August 17, 2009, www.islam.ru/rus/2009-08-17/#27984.