The Russia and Chechnya Conflict: Through Chechnya's Eyes

Meghan McDonald
St. John Fisher College

How has open access to Fisher Digital Publications benefited you?
Follow this and additional works at: http://fisherpub.sjfc.edu/intlstudies_masters

Recommended Citation

Please note that the Recommended Citation provides general citation information and may not be appropriate for your discipline. To receive help in creating a citation based on your discipline, please visit http://libguides.sjfc.edu/citations.

This document is posted at http://fisherpub.sjfc.edu/intlstudies_masters/23 and is brought to you for free and open access by Fisher Digital Publications at St. John Fisher College. For more information, please contact fisherpub@sjfc.edu.
The Russia and Chechnya Conflict: Through Chechnya's Eyes

Abstract
The intention of this paper is to provide an explanation for the issues that Russia currently faces as a result of the horrific human rights violations during its war with Chechnya. The argument asserts that the terrorist issues that Russia currently faces with Chechen Muslims are in direct response to its brutal treatment of the Chechen people within the last few decades. Russia's former President, Vladimir Putin, unfoundedly places Russia in the same category of victims of terrorist attacks as the United States on September 11th, 2001. The chaos and destruction that Russia created in the Republic of Chechnya has created an opportunity for Islamic extremists to recruit the people of Chechnya in their global jihad. The component of Islamic extremists has taken this war to a highly complex level and has given it a whole new meaning. What was once a regional conflict is now be an international concern in preventing the spread of Islamic terrorists.

Document Type
Thesis

Degree Name
M.S. in International Studies

Department
International Studies

This thesis is available at Fisher Digital Publications: http://fisherpub.sjfc.edu/intlstudies_masters/23
St. John Fisher College

The Russia and Chechnya Conflict: Through Chechnya’s Eyes

A Master’s Thesis submitted to

The Faculty of the Master of Science in International Studies Program

In Candidacy for the Degree of

Master of Science in International Studies

By

Meghan McDonald

Dr. John Roche, Advisor

Dr. David MacGregor, Second Reader

Dr. David Baronov, Program Director

Rochester, New York, the United States of America

December 2008
Abstract

The intention of this paper is to provide an explanation for the issues that Russia currently faces as a result of the horrific human rights violations during its war with Chechnya. The argument asserts that the terrorist issues that Russia currently faces with Chechen Muslims are in direct response to its brutal treatment of the Chechen people within the last few decades. Russia's former President, Vladimir Putin, unfoundedly places Russia in the same category of victims of terrorist attacks as the United States on September 11th, 2001. The chaos and destruction that Russia created in the Republic of Chechnya has created an opportunity for Islamic extremists to recruit the people of Chechnya in their global jihad. The component of Islamic extremists has taken this war to a highly complex level and has given it a whole new meaning. What was once a regional conflict is now be an international concern in preventing the spread of Islamic terrorists.
# Table of Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Historical Background</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Violations of Human Rights</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role of Islam</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Terrorist Attacks</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International Involvement</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Next Steps</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bibliography</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Introduction

The conflict between Russia and Chechnya has a long history. The most recent conflict began when Chechnya declared their independence from Russia when the Soviet Union collapsed in 1991. Although this recent conflict started over the Republic of Chechnya being independent from Russia, it has since evolved into a much more complex and brutal confrontation than neither side could have imagined. The harsh, brutal and indiscriminate treatment that the Russian military used against the people of Chechnya, paved the way for Islamic extremists to have a strong influence in the region. They gained influence through providing these people a promise of independence from Russia’s rule, justice for their murdered or missing loved ones and the hope for a secure and prosperous future. The horrific and vile human rights violations the people of Chechnya had to endure are beyond comprehension. Even with all the chaos and destruction that resulted from Russia’s ruthless tactics, I do not believe they ever expected it to evolve into such a complex phenomenon.

While no conflict is entirely one sided, the strategies employed by the Russian military only worsened and complicated an already intense situation. These Islamic extremists, who have come to Chechnya, have been linked with Al Qaeda. With the
growing influence and power of these extremists, this conflict is taking on an entirely new meaning and purpose. This battle between Russia and Chechnya is no longer about Chechnya becoming independent from Russia, but about the spread of the international jihad.

As the world learned on September 11th 2001, one of the prominent fighting tactics used by Islamic extremists is terrorist attacks. With these Islamic extremists taking over this conflict, Russia has itself become a victim to several terrorist attacks. The problem is no longer regional but an international concern and needs to be addressed by the international community. Preventing the further growth in strength and number of these terrorist organizations should be a top priority for world leaders.

Russia has done a great job keeping a tight lid on the details of their conflict with Chechnya, but the international community needs to work together to prevent further human right abuses and the spread of the international jihad. All countries have the common goal of protecting their international security. When combating against international terrorist organizations, the only way to succeed is to combine military strength and intelligence. Russia needs to see the West as their ally rather than their competition. When this can finally be achieved, our alliances will be no match for these international terrorist organizations. This paper discusses the historical background of this conflict, the human rights violations that have occurred throughout the war, the role of Islam in this situation, the terrorist attacks that have occurred, what the international community has done and what the next steps are to achieve security on a global level. It is a complex and deeply rooted situation, and while a resolution is not simple, it is also not impossible.
Chechnya is a republic of Russia and is located in the Northern Caucasus. Russia and Chechnya have a long record of conflicts. The conflict between the two territories date all the way back to the 18th Century. Reports of struggle between the czarist Russian forces and the Muslim tribes in the region began as early as 1722.¹ By the middle of the century, Russian troops had occupied much of the area but Sheikh Mansur unified the Chechen tribes and declared a holy war on the czar and his army and defeated the Russian forces in 1785.² Russia responded to their defeat through dispatching more troops with the purpose of occupying the region. The continuation of this battle brought about another Muslim military leader, Imam Shamil. Imam Shamil led a resistance using guerrilla warfare tactics for decades.³ He was captured by Russian forces in 1859 and

² Ibid.
³ Ibid.
Russia annexed the region later that same year and forced thousands of Shamil's supporters to flee to other areas, including the Ottoman Empire. The treatment of the Chechen people has been nothing short of unfair. This treatment of the Chechens during the 1850's was seen first hand by a Russian novelist who served with czarist troops in Chechnya, Leo Tolstoy. After witnessing the destruction of a Chechen village and repression of the people he explicitly described the feelings of the Chechens towards Russia. Tolstoy wrote that,

No one spoke of hatred for the Russians, the feeling which all Chechens felt, both young and old, was stronger than hatred. It was... such a revulsion, disgust and bewilderment at the senseless cruelty of these beings, that the desire to destroy them, like a desire to destroy rats, poisonous spiders and wolves, was as natural as the instinct for self-preservation.5

Even with such strong animosity towards Russia, the Chechen Republic managed to remain stable for about another fifty years. When the Bolshevik revolution occurred in 1917, Chechnya decided to take advantage of the complete chaos Russia was facing and make another attempt to become an independent North Caucasus state.6 The Soviets ended up with full control of Moscow and exerted more power in the Caucasus and forcibly subdued the resistance in the 1930's.7 Russia offered the Chechens a nominally independent republic in 1936 in a submission to end the violence, the Chechens then joined with neighboring Ingushetia in 1934 to form a joint republic that was later named the Chechen-Ingush Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic.8

4 Ibid.
5 Ibid.
6 Ibid.
7 Ibid.
8 Ibid.
The situation in Chechnya seemed to be under control with Russia, though the peace did not last long. Less then a decade later, Stalin did not think the Chechens could be trusted. In 1944 Stalin deported thousands of Chechens to Siberia and Kazakhstan, suspecting they were collaborating with Germany in WWII. Stalin deported nearly all the people of Chechnya, more than 50,000 men, women and children as well as deporting the population of the neighboring republic of Ingushetia. The date of Stalin's deportation orders, Feb. 23, 1944, is one that still remains a touchstone in Chechen history.

It was not until after the threat of Stalin was gone indefinitely that the people of Chechnya and Ingushetia were able to come back to their homeland. After Stalin’s death in 1953 the Soviet Union reduced their restrictions and four years later, they began to return to the region, minus the 200,000 Chechens that died while in exile. Although their limited republic was restored, they still were not completely free. The Soviet Union continued to restrict their ability to practice Islam, and several of the region’s mosques were not rebuilt until well into the 1970s. Even though the people of Chechnya were back in their homeland, they lacked the freedom and security that one associates with the concept of “home.”

In the years to follow, the republic of Ingushetia separated from Chechnya to form there own autonomous republic. After the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, Chechnya once again seized the opportunity to declare itself independent of Russia.

---

10 Banville, Lee. “Conflict in Chechnya: Russia’s Renegade Republic.”
11 Ibid.
12 Ibid.
13 Ibid.
However, surprisingly, the Ingush objected, preferring to keep their ties with Moscow.\textsuperscript{14} Chechnya’s claim of independence from Russia, once again led to events of the past. The Chechnya independence movement evolved into a guerilla war between the Russian army and militant separatists in the conquest of ending more than 150 years of Russian rule.\textsuperscript{15} This is the conception of the current bloodbath between these two rivaling territories.

With the collapse of the Soviet Union, fourteen regions became independent nations. The leaders of Chechnya saw themselves as no different and declared there independence from Russia as well.\textsuperscript{16} Dzhokhar Dudayev was elected president of Chechnya and declared the new state to be the Republic of Ichkeria, which is a name that is still used by the rebels.\textsuperscript{17} The president of Russia during this time was Boris Yeltsin. Yeltsin refused to recognize Chechen independence and in 1994 Moscow invaded the republic to reassert its sovereignty.\textsuperscript{18} When the Soviet Union collapsed, so did Russia’s standing as a world power. Russia was not going to loose their control of Chechen territory. While neither side was willing to give up this very bloody fight, five years after the fall of the Soviet Union and the declaration of Chechnya’s independence, there was finally a glimpse of hope that a resolution between the two entities may be achieved.

The first Chechen war ended with a ceasefire in 1996, known as the Khasavyurt Accords.\textsuperscript{19} This appeared to be an encouraging movement leading towards the end of the controversy. The preamble of the declaration declared that both Russia’s leader, Yeltsin and the Chechen Chief of Staff to the Chechen resistance forces, Maskhadov, shared the

\textsuperscript{14} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{15} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{17} Johnson and Brunner, “Timeline of Key Events in Chechnya, 1830-2006.”
\textsuperscript{18} Matveeva, Anna. “Chechnya: Dynamics of War and Peace.” p. 4.
\textsuperscript{19} Ibid., p. 4.
same desire to create “mutually acceptable preconditions for a political solution of the armed conflict.”20 The accords detailed measures from normalizing the situation in Chechnya’s capital, Grozny, and envisioned the withdrawal of all federal forces from Chechnya by December 31, 1996.21

The concept behind a diplomatic agreement sounds great in theory, but it is naive to believe that lifetimes of fighting will be resolved with a simple political agreement. Although the accords were signed, both signatories had completely disregarded the document.22 There was a fundamental issue missing from the accords, which could have been the primary reason they were never implemented. This war between Russia and Chechnya began because Chechnya wanted their independence from Russia and wanted to be recognized as the Chechen Republic Ichkeria. The accords never even addressed the controversial issue of Chechen independence. The former OSCE mission head, Tim Guldemann, when referring to the Khasavyurt Accords stated that,

The Khasavyurt agreement has been interpreted, including by some international experts, as proof of the Russian recognition of Chechnya’s independence. I would not read such a thing in this agreement. The wording was not that clear. There were some references of dealing with each other according to international law, but that in itself does not mean that recognition of independence.23

I would agree with Guldemann, that it is fair to assume that Chechnya was never going to be completely independent from Russia. With that said, it does not discredit the fact that this was a step in the right direction.

---

21 Ibid.
The accords were successful in opening the doors between Russia and Chechnya for further agreements. In November of 1996, Yeltsin and Maskhadov signed an agreement on economic relations and on the payment of compensation to the people of Chechnya who had been affected by the 1994-1996, First Chechen War. Just six months after the signing of this treaty, Maskhadov, who was elected Chechen president in January 1997, traveled to Moscow to sing a formal treaty, “on peace and the principles of Russian-Chechen relations”, which he envisioned would demolish “any basis to create ill-feelings between Moscow and Grozny.” Maskhadov wanted to obtain a peaceful resolution for Chechnya and Russia and he put forth every effort to succeed in doing so. Yet, achieving peace between the two areas was not going to be as simple as he would have hoped. Despite all he had achieved and had hope for, there were Chechens who were not so forgiving on past events and would not settle for anything less than being independent from Russia. They were not interested in any agreements that were not set out to achieve this objective.

Several of Maskhadov’s former comrades-in-arms set out to undermine his authority and transform Chechnya into a state based on Islamic law. The radicals were lead by field commander, Shamil Basayev, who launched their ill-fated incursion into Daghestan in the summer of 1999. Russia responded with an incursion into Chechnya in October of 1999 stating that their objectives were limited to subduing bandits hiding in Chechnya’s mountains. This was the start of the Second Chechen War. Terrorist bombs

---

24 Ibid.
25 Ibid.
26 Ibid.
27 Ibid.
were set off in Moscow and other Russian cities and Russian authorities placed blame on Chechen paramilitary commanders. With the Chechen insurgents entering the neighboring Russian territory of Dagestan to help Islamic fundamentalists seeking to create a separate nation, any progress made by the Khasavyurt Accords was no longer applicable. The role of Islam and terrorist attacks will be further discussed later in the paper, as it is an extremely important component in the evolution of this conflict.

Guldemann argued that the Khasavyurt agreement led to a politically unstable situation in Chechnya after the total withdrawal of Russian military forces. Although the accords were disregarded the simple fact that it did not even address the issue of Chechnya’s independence is the reason I believe it caused an unstable situation. Without addressing the issue of Chechnya’s independence in the accords, the people of Chechnya developed no faith in a diplomatic resolution. The belief that their struggles went without achievement and their voices unheard developed into an unstable, chaotic and desperate situation.

Guldemann also argues that the agreement made the maximum of what was realistically possible and although it left open certain questions, it would be wrong to say that the agreement would have lasted if it had been better drafted. Guldemann is accurate when referring to Chechnya as politically unstable; however where we disagree is when he states the agreement would not have lasted even if it had been drafted better.

---

29 Johnson and Brunner, “Timeline of Key Events in Chechnya, 1830-2006.”
30 Ibid
31 Fuller, Liz. “Analysis: Chechen Warlord Wards of New Terrorist Attacks”
32 Ibid.
The effort put forth by both leaders needs to be acknowledged and recognized as a positive movement forward, yet the accords were doomed to fail. Guldimann points out that the accords did leave open certain questions, however he completely disregards that the accords left out the most important issue, Chechen independence. The biggest failure of the accords was that they did not address the root cause of why these two territories began fighting in the first place. Had the accords addressed the desire of independence for Chechnya, their may have been a much higher approval rating and acceptance for the accords by the Chechen radicals, or maybe not. It is hard to say what would have happened, had Chechnya been granted some form of sovereignty in the agreement. By this time in the conflict, the people of Chechnya had endured years of horrific human right violations. Islamic radicals from around the world saw the opportunity in Chechnya to expand their international Jihad, and used their sought after independence as an alias for their real involvement in the war. This will be discussed much more in-depth later in the paper, yet it is important to note that by this point in the war, the chaos that was in Chechnya left the region as easy prey for the jihadists, and they seized the opportunity.

It is not unclear as to why Chechnya has a strong desire to be independent from Russia. Russia has provided them with a history of countless examples of unfair and unjust treatment at the hands of the Russian’s. Tolstoy unequivocally portrayed how the Chechen people are not seen as equals to the Russian people. Russia has little regard for the welfare of the people of Chechnya. Their desire for independence has been refuted for political and economic reasons that serve Russia.

The conflict between Russia and Chechnya has been on and off throughout their history. There is a deep distrust and dislike on both sides of the border. There are many
new elements in this current war that have been brought in by outside factors, yet understanding their background is a critical element to get a true understanding as to why neither side will not give up without a fight. This conflict has spiraled into a battle that has become bigger and much more complex than Russia could have imagined. Russia is now faced with the repercussions of their heinous human right violations. The region has evolved into a recruiting station for Islamic extremists. Russia’s vicious tactics have turned this local conflict into one that should now be the concern for the international community to protect against the further spread of Islamic extremists.
Violations of Human Rights

Human rights violations in Chechnya have been a constant occurrence throughout their history, and this current battle is no different. In the First Chechen War the Russian Military destroyed the capital of Chechnya, Grozny. The Russian military aircraft bombed both military and civilian targets in Grozny.\(^{33}\) In late December 1994, following major Chechen resistance, there was enormous aerial and artillery attack of the capital city resulting in a heavy loss of civilian life and hundreds of thousands of internally displaced persons.\(^{34}\) These heavy air strikes continued through the month of December and into January, resulting in extensive damage and heavy civilian casualties.\(^{35}\) According to press reports, there were up to 4,000 detonations an hour at the pinnacle of the winter campaign against Groznyy.\(^{36}\) In addition to the large amounts of innocent human life that was lost, most residential and public buildings including hospitals and an


\(^{34}\) Ibid.

\(^{35}\) Ibid.

\(^{36}\) Ibid.
orphanage were destroyed.\textsuperscript{37} These measures were denounced as major human rights violations by Sergey Kovalev, President Yeltsin's Human Rights Commissioner, and by human rights NGO's.\textsuperscript{38} Russian armed forces used arbitrary and disproportionate force in attacks on other Chechen towns and villages.\textsuperscript{39} After federal forces captured several major cities and towns in the Chechen Republic, Chechen fighters employed guerrilla and terrorist tactics against forces of the Ministries of Defense and Internal Affairs, as well as against Russian civilians in the town of Budennovsk.\textsuperscript{40} The tactics used at the start of the First Chechen War set the stage for further human rights violations over the course of the next few years.

Yet, many of what the world knows about the problems between Russia and Chechnya today is completely one sided. Russia is the fountain of information in this crisis and has shaped the story line successfully by portraying the struggle as a war against terrorists and Islamic fanatics and by linking the militants with Al Qaeda.\textsuperscript{41} Since the attacks of 9/11, this vision has played particularly well in Washington, with the criticisms of Russia's brutal war subsiding and President Putin viewing President Bush as more of an ally in the war on terrorism. The vision of Chechnya as terrorists is not entirely false; they are indisputably committing terrorist attacks against innocent Russian civilians, which will be discussed later in the paper as well as the role of Islam. However the portrayal of Chechnya as a straightforward case of terrorism has stuck, which is a distorted perspective. The picture Putin has painted for the world is drastically different.

\begin{thebibliography}{9}
\bibitem{}\textsuperscript{37} Ibid.
\bibitem{}\textsuperscript{38} Ibid.
\bibitem{}\textsuperscript{39} Ibid.
\bibitem{}\textsuperscript{40} Ibid.
\bibitem{}\textsuperscript{41} Council on Foreign Relations. “Bombings Aren’t the Whole Story: Chechen terrorist attacks grab the headlines, but Russia’s brutality also fuels this nasty war”
\end{thebibliography}
from reality. Russian forces have bombed and shelled resident areas arbitrarily and disproportionately.\textsuperscript{42} This careless and brutal action has caused thousands of deaths of innocent Chechens. Human Rights Watch has stated that there is compelling evidence of at least three sets of massacres, where at least one-hundred and twenty two unarmed civilians were summarily executed, many of which were women and elderly.\textsuperscript{43} Russian forces have looted abandoned Chechen homes, raped women and arrested hundreds of men, women and children civilians, suspecting they are aiding rebel fighters.\textsuperscript{44} The arrested civilians that are sent to “filtration camps” for questioning are routinely beaten and tortured.\textsuperscript{45}

There is no question that Chechnya has certainly come to resemble hell, but the nature of Russia’s campaign, which features arbitrary detentions, late-night abductions, torture, executions, rape, theft and bribery, is a major reason why.\textsuperscript{46} On top of the fact that these human rights violations are occurring, the Russian judicial system has discredited itself with its appalling record of bringing to justice the soldiers who are involved in such brutal treatment of the Chechen people.\textsuperscript{47} Human Rights Watch has estimated that sixty Chechens, most of whom are young men, are abducted each month.\textsuperscript{48} Russian officials deny playing a role in these abductions and blame Chechen extremists, however the argument that bands of masked men drive unhindered through territory

\textsuperscript{43} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{44} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{45} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{46} Council on Foreign Relations. “Bombings Aren’t the Whole Story: Chechen terrorist attacks grab the headlines, but Russia’s brutality also fuels this nasty war”
\textsuperscript{47} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{48} Ibid.
controlled by Russian forces to carry out late-night kidnappings is absurd.\(^{49}\) Of those who are abducted, very few ever return. Forty-nine mass graves containing a total of three-thousand bodies have been discovered as of 2003, and that number is even higher today.\(^{50}\)

The Russian military does not want to accept responsibility for their horrific behavior, yet the facts cannot be denied. Russian soldiers come through the villages of Chechnya to check documents, to ensure that the people are Chechen civilians. With a complete disregard to human life, the soldiers execute these innocent civilians. One example is on February 5\(^{th}\) in the year 2000; Russian forces executed at least sixty civilians in the Aldy district of Grozny as they were simply waiting on the streets in their own personal yards for soldiers to check their documents. These people were doing exactly what they were supposed to do, trying to avoid any conflicts with the Russian military. It is hard to imagine how coldhearted a person can be until you read eye witness account’s to such an event.

Andrew Meier was a Moscow correspondent for *Time* from 1996-2001. During his time in Chechnya he heard first hand from the innocent people in the republic just how devastating their experiences have been with the Russian military. Meier gives great detail of the brutality of the “kontraktniki”, Russian contract soldiers. Russian soldiers who are referred to as “kontraktniki” or contract soldiers are older and more experienced and are fighting for the money, versus the “srochniki” who are conscripts and just barely over the age of eighteen.\(^{51}\) Meier travels around Chechnya to hear people’s stories of

\(^{49}\) Ibid.

\(^{50}\) Ibid.

their own experiences and they are honest and trust him because he travels with a local Chechen, called Rusik.

The detail of the stories that the Chechens tell to Meier that have occurred throughout the years demonstrate how engrained they are in their minds, and that they will never be forgotten. The first story is from an invasion in the village of Aldy that took place on February 5th of 2000.52 Two brothers, Lom-Ali and Musa pleaded with the soldiers who only screamed back at them asking “Don’t you want to be in the action film?”53 Their was no cellar at the house the brothers were at, so the soldiers brought them to the cellar next door and forced them into it and threw a grenade in the cellar.54 Lom-Ali was the younger of the brothers, in his late thirties, and he threw himself on top of the grenade and the shrapnel tore him into so may parts that the force of the explosion threw his older brother against the wall which knocked him unconscious.55 Musa finally came to, he looked for his brother and crawled out of the basement, only two find complete chaos in his village.56

The Russian military was clearly on a mission, but checking the validity of people’s documents was not on the to-do list. Chechen civilians came out to the middle of the street to show the soldiers their documents, and the soldiers encircled them and yelled and screamed orders such as, “Get out of your houses!” and “Go collect your bodies!”57 During all of this, one man was inside of his house, making tea, there was no food for breakfast, but he could put the kettle on for tea. His name was, Avalu Sugaipov and he

---

52 Ibid., p. 54.
53 Ibid., p. 56.
54 Ibid., p. 56.
55 Ibid., p. 56.
56 Ibid., p. 56.
57 Ibid., p. 57.
had some guests at his house that morning, two strangers from Grozny who thought they
would be safer there in the village of Alydy, and a woman, Kaipa, and her nine year old
daughter who came from the town of Djalka, where the shelling had become unbearable
and she had been separated from her seven other children.58 As Avalu was pouring the
tea, they all heard the screams from the street. Kaipa ran outside and the men rushed after
her to stop her, as she stepped into the courtyard, the soldiers lowered their guns and shot
her twice, once in the head and once in the chest.59 The soldiers then came after the men.
Both of the men from Grozny were shot in the face, Avalu was standing at the threshold
of his house holding the little girl, and told her to run back into the house and as she
turned around she saw Avalu’s body leap into the air and fall backward into the house.60
The little nine year old child, Leila, ran into the house to the farthest corner and hid
behind a sack of onions as two soldiers entered the home. The soldiers poured themselves
a cup of tea and then one asked the other, “But where’s the girl?”61 Leila came out and
said, “Don’t kill me” and one of the soldiers picked her up and covered her eyes with a
scarf and carried her out of the house, while stepping over the bodies.62 Under the scarf,
Leila looked down and saw her mother lying facedown in a circle of blood, the soldiers
told two Chechen women watching the scene to take her and he then returned to the
courtyard of the house, which they had already set on fire.63 For several weeks, Leila
needed a shot of sedatives every single night just to be able to go to sleep.64

58 Ibid., p. 57.
59 Ibid., p. 57.
60 Ibid., p. 58.
61 Ibid., p. 58.
62 Ibid., p. 58.
63 Ibid., p. 58.
64 Ibid., p. 58.
The people of Russia were well aware of such an invasion. Whether they were aware of the brutality of it is debatable, but they knew it was happening. After the carnage in Aldy took place it was broadcasted on the news. The liberal news radio station of the Gusinsky media empire, Ekho Moskvy, broadcasted on the radio that in the settlement of Aldy on the southern edge of Grozny a “zachistka” was underway. To the Russians, a “zachistka” was a positive term meaning, “a little cleanup” that “they’re cleaning out the “bandits.” To the Russians, a “zachistka” was a house to house search for members of the armed opposition, the evening news showed it as a similar scene from an American crime show. The Russian news showed soldiers moving from house to house in search of bandits, similar to the show “Cops”, with their guns drawn. Yet the difference between the show “Cops” and the Russian military is that, the police officers on “Cops” are the good guys, whereas the Russian military are without a doubt, the bad guys.

The uncontrolled behavior of the Russian military continued throughout all of Aldy. Innocent Chechens were shot and then thrown in their basements which were then set on fire. One seventy-six year old was walking out of his house to show his passport and was shot in his knee, chest and forehead; he died with his passport clutched in his hand. A seventy-two year old, Magomed Gaitaev was found dead in his yard. A bullet had pierced the base of his neck and torn his left cheek open as it exited his body.

---

65 Ibid., p. 61.
66 Ibid., p. 61.
67 Ibid., p. 61.
68 Ibid., p. 61.
69 Ibid., p. 62.
70 Ibid., p. 63.
71 Ibid., p. 63.
Magomed’s chest pocket was open which held his passport, and his glasses hung on the top of the gate to his house.  

Some people of Chechnya had too much faith in soldiers to listen to the warnings to leave before they came through the towns. Khasmagomed, who was a proud grandfather and who had a failing health did not want to leave the Chechen land that he had been tied to for seven generations. He did not think the Russians would do anything, he told his family that, “they’ll just come and check our passports.”  

Him and his wife lost their house in the first war and re-built it from the ground up. He believed that the Russians would bring order and he was not worried about their arrival, he and his son hung white sheets in front of the house and on the fence he wrote in white paint, “zachistka done.”  

This was not enough to deter the Russians. His cousin found their bodies, in their burning home that Khasmagomed thought would keep his family safe. Khasmagomed, at age sixty-seven, his thirty-seven year old son, Khozh-Akhmed, and his twenty-nine year old wife, Toita, who was eight months pregnant, and their one year old son, Khassan and Khasmagomed’s fifty year old cousin Saidakhmed Masarov were found dead.  

Khasmagomed and his son laid in the yard side by side, with Khasmagomed shot in the chest several times with his empty wallet on the ground, their corpses were burned.  

Toita and her young son, Khassan, were found under the awning in the courtyard on the concrete floor, she was shot in the chest and stomach and her rings and

---

72 Ibid., p. 63.  
73 Ibid., p. 64.  
74 Ibid., p. 65.  
76 Meier, Andrew, Chechnya: To the Heart of a Conflict, p. 64.
earrings were gone. The house and the family car had been set ablaze and the bodies were burnt but still recognizable with visible bullet wounds. The Russian military did not discriminate against age or gender. It is clear from these horrific occurrences, all Chechens were at equal risk of being a victim.

The killing went on all day until the late afternoon. When the soldiers finally left, the list of the dead was at least fifty-two men and eight women. To the people in the United States, this type of loss of human life in such of horrifying and reckless fashion would be labeled as a massacre. That simply is not the case in Russia. The Russian military command and the investigators, who later exhumed the bodies, persisted in calling this event a “zachistka.” The Russian military command likes to translate the term “zachistka” as a “mop-up operation”, yet the word derives from the verb, “chistit”, which means to clean or to cleanse. To the people of Chechnya, it had a different meaning; it meant state-sponsored terror, pillage, rape and murder.

The killing continued. Although Russia’s President, Putin, concluded “that the operation to liberate Grozny is over”, it clearly was not. Chechnya was now under Moscow’s arbitrary rule and the sweeps continued and with them the cases of extrajudicial reprisal. Along with the new reports of extortions, rapes, beatings and

---

77 Ibid., p. 64.
78 Ibid., p. 64.
79 Human Rights Watch. “Russia Condemned for Chechnya Killings.”
80 Meier, Andrew, Chechnya: To the Heart of a Conflict, p. 66.
81 Ibid., p. 66.
82 Ibid., p. 66.
83 Ibid., p. 66.
84 Ibid., p. 66.
85 Ibid., p. 67.
summary executions, for the young male Chechen, the greatest fear was detention.\textsuperscript{86} The best case scenario for these young men facing detention was a very rough form of intelligence gathering, but for most, their bodies were later found dumped at an empty corner of town.\textsuperscript{87}

For women, the fear of rape is just as great. One woman named, Aset, was afraid of being raped and she expressed this fear to her brother, Timur.\textsuperscript{88} Timur’s response to Aset was, “Don’t worry, tape a grenade to your body, and if anyone comes at you, pull the plug.”\textsuperscript{89} This type of defense is not out of the ordinary. Chechens will sometimes carry things hidden on their bodies that blow up when a Russian soldier gets to close.\textsuperscript{90} It is easy to see how this could be portrayed as a Muslim suicide bomber; however it is not that simple of an explanation. These people in Chechnya have seen their mothers, fathers, sisters, brothers, cousins, neighbors and friends mutilated, tortured, burned and raped. These Russian soldiers are associated with such horrific treatment, because very few have shown otherwise. It is easy to understand the choice of a quick and easy death, when a slow painful and torturous death is walking towards you. For these women, it is to die quickly or die and be raped and tortured. It is not a difficult choice to take. Both result in death, yet blowing themselves up will prevent being raped tortured and mutilated.

In addition to the “mop-up operations” the Russian military has used other means to clear out the towns and villages of Chechnya. Not only are the Russian authorities committing these human right violations, but they also are using harsh military actions. Military operations during both of the Chechen wars saw an excessive and non-selective

\textsuperscript{86} Ibid., p. 67.
\textsuperscript{87} Ibid., p. 67.
\textsuperscript{88} Ibid., p. 70.
\textsuperscript{89} Ibid., p. 70.
\textsuperscript{90} Ibid., p. 70.
use of force of Russian forces. During the first stages of the second war, federal troops resorted to massive aerial bombardment and shell attacks, causing the deaths of thousands of unprotected civilians.\textsuperscript{91} When conducting counter-insurgency operations, Russian armed forces showed little regard for the lives of innocent civilians who were trapped in the line of fire.\textsuperscript{92} It is through these massive bombing’s that Chechnya’s capital was brought down to rubble.

In waging a war that has brutalized civilians in such an appalling way the Russian government has encouraged the terrorist attacks. The Russian government has cultivated an endless supply of cold-eyed individuals capable of suicide bombings.\textsuperscript{93} A study of suicide attacks on Russia has brought facts to this perception. In a study of Chechen terrorist attacks, twenty-three out of a total thirty-six attacks occurred from June 2002 to June 2004, resulting in the most casualties by suicide bombings for a total of four-hundred and ninety eight killed and one-thousand nine-hundred and twenty three injured.\textsuperscript{94} The Chechens term them “shahid” or religious martyr attacks and the Russians call them “suicide-shahid.”\textsuperscript{95} The study indirectly provides evidence of a strong correlation between the escalation of Russian abuses against civilians in Chechnya, which surged in 2002, and the trend in suicide bombings.\textsuperscript{96} During this time period of 2002-2004, there were more than seven-hundred civilian killings and more than five-hundred disappearances attributed to Russian forces and their militias and the suicide bombings

\textsuperscript{92} Ibid., p. 699.
\textsuperscript{93} Council on Foreign Relations. “Bombings Aren’t the Whole Story: Chechen terrorist attacks grab the headlines, but Russia’s brutality also fuels this nasty war”
\textsuperscript{95} Ibid., p. 300.
\textsuperscript{96} Ibid., p. 300.
increased from two incidents in 2002 to twelve in 2003.\textsuperscript{97} When the brutal treatment of the Chechen people surged in 2002 at the hands of the Russian military, the suicide terrorist bombings that consisted of primarily women, dramatically increased. Causation cannot be stated indefinitely, yet I confidently believe that there is a strong correlation between the two, the harsh devastating treatment leading to a last resort of revenge with suicide bombers. Suicide bombers, terrorism and religion will be discussed later, yet it is important to briefly state this correlation between the human rights violations Russia has committed against the people of Chechnya, and terrorist attacks with the role of Islam in this conflict.

As mentioned, many men fear the risk of being detained. To get a true appreciation for this fear, descriptive examples of real situations must be discussed, because one’s mind simply cannot do justice in imagining what these people have endured. The truth is much more horrifying.

One of the demonstrations of torture is from a Chechen who in April of 2006. The name the victim goes by for the purposes of his testimony is Khamid Kh, which is altered for his protection. Khamid’s testimony of his experience is,

\begin{quote}
They started kicking me, and then brought an “infernal machine” to give me electric shocks. They attached the wires to my toes and kept cranking the handle to release the current. I couldn’t bear it. I was begging: “Give me any paper- I’ll sign it, I’ll sign anything.”
\end{quote}

Other testimonies are too graphic to put in word for word, however they consist of rape, the threat of having to watch a family member be ripped apart and with the victim

\textsuperscript{97} Ibid., p. 300.
begging to just be killed and the response was that they will not be killed right away, but very slowly.\textsuperscript{99}

Other victims were not so lucky to live through their ordeal. In March 2001, at least sixty bodies were found in an abandoned summer cottage village of Dachny, which is less than a kilometer from Khankala military base.\textsuperscript{100} The majority of the bodies found were male and ranging from the age of eighteen to fifty years old and were dressed in civilian clothes, they had their hands tied behind their backs and had gunshot wounds.\textsuperscript{101}

In February 2001, two women met while looking for their sons and exchanged information on how their sons were dressed on the day they “disappeared.” A few days later, the one mother informed the other that she saw a corpse that matched the clothes of her son in Dachny village. The next day the mother went to the site and found her son’s corpse along with two others lying uncovered on the ground.\textsuperscript{102} Due to the cold weather, the corpses were in pretty decent shape, but it was clear they had been tortured.\textsuperscript{103} Their bodies were blue with marks of beating, their heads had been beaten, most likely with rifle butts, and their bones on the extremities of their arms and legs were broken, and two of her son’s fingers had been cut off.\textsuperscript{104} All of the men were shot in the stomach area, there were wounds on their shoulders, in the heart area and all had been shot in the head, with their hands tied behind their back and their eyes were bound.\textsuperscript{105} The search was halted due to two mines exploding.\textsuperscript{106} It is difficult to obtain information regarding a

\textsuperscript{99} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{101} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{102} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{103} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{104} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{105} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{106} Ibid.
person’s loved ones whereabouts when many of the bodies have been booby trapped with mines and family members are reluctant to go to these places of mass graves in the first place for fear of being shot or detained because they are so close to the military base.\textsuperscript{107}

In January 2001, the relatives of Akhmed Zaurbekov and Khamzad Khasarov heard about these two young men’s discovery on the same day. Both of their bodies showed signs of severe torture. The extremities of the fingers of both men had been cut off or severely pounded, both ears were missing from both bodies and they had burn marks from cigarette butts above their eyes, on their cheeks and on their necks.\textsuperscript{108} Both of their arms, elbows and shoulder blades were broken and there were ten to fifteen centimeter long black bruises on the fronts and backs of the rib cages.\textsuperscript{109} Zaurbekov’s right cheek and the right side of his neck had been skinned, and he had a bullet wound above his left eye with an exit wound at the back of his head with his hands tied behind his back with wire, so tight that it cut into his skin.\textsuperscript{110}

It is hard to completely grasp the unimaginable horror these people have endured on a daily basis. Yet, there is one further example that stood out above the rest that really shows the brutality endured by the innocent people of Chechnya. In April of 2000, a villager in Ingushetia witnessed a young man being thrown from an army helicopter. The body was later identified as twenty-four year old Rustam Temirsultanov, and according to the investigator Rustam was alive when he was thrown from the helicopter.\textsuperscript{111} His back was badly bruised and dead bodies do not bruise, and according to the investigator,

\textsuperscript{107} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{108} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{109} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{110} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{111} Ibid.
Rustam died of shock caused by the pain and internal bleeding. As if being thrown from a helicopter alive wasn’t torture enough, the forensic investigator told Human Rights Watch that he found Rustam’s left eyeball in his throat. According to the examiner, his captors tore his left eyeball out of its socket and put it in his mouth before throwing him out of the helicopter. It also should be noted that according to the investigator, Rustam was most likely a civilian, because he did not have calluses on his hands or shoulders that are considered characteristic of combatants. This young Chechen man lost his life in such a horrific and unimaginable manner for no apparent reason whatsoever, other than for the simple fact he was Chechen.

The Russian government has termed the operation in Chechnya as an “anti-terrorist” operation. There are undoubtedly terrorist attacks against Russia, however it is not as completely one-sided anti-terrorist operation as Russia would like the world to think. Yet, they have been successful with this portrayal because, they have been able to keep a tight lid on the horrific acts they have been committing against the Chechen people on a daily basis. Russia had terminated the Chechen mission of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and it continues to throw up obstacles to keep United Nations observers out. Western human rights organizations are denied permission to operate in Chechnya as well. Journalists have tried to get the full story in Chechnya and they either get kicked out or murdered by the Russian authorities, to keep the truth from coming out.

112 Ibid.
113 Ibid.
114 Ibid.
115 Ibid.
116 Council on Foreign Relations. “Bombings Aren’t the Whole Story: Chechen terrorist attacks grab the headlines, but Russia’s brutality also fuels this nasty war”
117 Ibid.
As previously stated, Russia has gone to great lengths to keep the truth of what is actually going on in Chechnya a secret. The horrific human rights violations previously discussed are absolutely horrific and demonstrate why Islamic radicals were able to achieve such influence through false promises with the people of Chechnya. Yet the world also has fallen victim to the distorted picture Putin has painted of Russia being victims of terrorists. It is the rare information that has leaked out by brave journalists who have given their lives to give these people a voice.

Nadezhda Chaikova was a journalist from “Obshchaia gazeta” on assignment in Chechnya and was executed with a bullet to her head, with her mutilated body showing signs of torture, with her hands tied behind her back, and was found by elders in the village of Gekhi in April 1996.\(^{118}\) Shortly after her death, her colleagues at “Obshchaia Gazeta” later received a letter from Chaikova that stated, “In case I am killed or wounded, you should blame the Russian army or the Russian security services. Please do not put blame for this on the so-called Dudaev’s fighters.”\(^{119}\) Another example involved an American. Just a year earlier, Fred Cuny, a U.S. citizen visiting Chechnya on a humanitarian mission for the Soros Foundation, was killed along with his team of two Russian Red Cross doctors and interpreter, by Chechen fighters who were “tipped off” by the Russian FSB that he was a spy.\(^{120}\) Both of these examples show the Russian authorities being responsible for all of these innocent people being murdered. The colleagues of Chaikova discovered that in the last weeks of her life, she was fearful of


\(^{119}\) Ibid., p. 48.

\(^{120}\) Ibid., p. 48.
being killed after she refused to become an informant for the FSB.\textsuperscript{121} She did manage to leave a tape, which was later smuggled out of Chechnya, where on camera she revealed how the FSB had been trying to turn her into a spy among the Chechen resistance, and how she repeatedly had refused to comply.\textsuperscript{122} With her continuing to refuse being a spy for the FSB, threats on her life began, and within a few days she was executed.

The most recent example is the 2006 murder of the journalist, Anya Politkovskaya. In Chechnya, torture, rape, disappearances, and killings of civilians have occurred everyday at the hands of both the Russian forces and the militiamen of the pro-Moscow Chechen president, Ramzan Khozyrev.\textsuperscript{123} Anya was trying to get the story out of the victims of these horrific human right violations. Anya was working on an article that told the story of a man, tortured with electric shocks and threatened with rape by soldiers, who confessed to three murders he had not committed.\textsuperscript{124} Very likely, the same man whose testimony was previously discussed.

Mysterious deaths are not uncommon in Chechnya for Chechens themselves and journalists trying to tell their story. Independent journalists continue to die in mysterious circumstances, keeping civil society silent by severe government laws and regulations.\textsuperscript{125} Anya was a Russian journalist who was not afraid to speak for the Chechen people whose voices have been kept silent for over a decade. Anya spoke about the torture and rape in Chechnya and paid the ultimate price for it, her life. There is nothing more dangerous than telling the truth in today’s Russia.\textsuperscript{126}

\textsuperscript{121} Ibid., p. 48.  
\textsuperscript{122} Ibid., p. 48.  
\textsuperscript{123} Ibid., p. 50.  
\textsuperscript{124} Ibid., p. 50.  
\textsuperscript{125} Ibid., p. 50.  
\textsuperscript{126} Ibid., p. 51.
The Role of Islam in Chechnya

The conflict between the two territories began as a fight for independence, however as the battle evolved it began to take on a whole new meaning, bringing this conflict to an entirely new complex and dangerous level. One Chechen mujahaddin sums up this transformation on their website stating that, "In the first war, we fought under the banner of 'freedom or death.' In this war we are fighting under the banner of 'Islam.'"  

The Second Chechen War has turned into an Islamic war. A main component of this alteration was the miserable conditions and complete chaos that the Russian government produced in Chechnya throughout the First Chechen War. It was through the awful treatment against the Chechens from the Russian military and the unlivable conditions brought on through the destruction of their homes that provided the soil in which the plant of jihadism took root.

The leaders of this religious transformation in Chechnya were the Islamist extremists, Khattab and Basayev. Khattab was the leader of the militants from outside of

---


128 Ibid.
Chechnya and Basayev was the Chechen field commander. Khattab led the foreign volunteers and was described as the charismatic one. With his shoulder-length hair and black Kalima ("There is no God but Allah and Mohammad his prophet") beret, he looked like a Muslim Che Guevara. Khattab arrived in Chechnya during the first war, and was influenced by Osama bin Laden in adhering to the extremist version of Wahhabism that calls for everlasting war against "false Islam" and the "enemies of Islam." Khattab did not waste anytime in converting this war into a religious battle. When he moved from Chechnya in 1995, after fighting in Afghanistan and Tajikistan, he set up a number of training camps from where he launched his attack on the Russian brigade in Dagestan in December of 1997. It was at this point he attracted Basayev. Khattab and Basayev may have met each other when Basayev was in Afghanistan at one of bin Laden's training camps, and they teamed up in the struggle against the enemies of Islam. Basayev led the native Chechens and was described as a cowboy, reckless and flamboyant. Together, Basayev and Khattab were a strong and powerful force in this transformation based on religious extremism. They were present throughout both of the Chechen Wars, yet it was not until the Second Chechen War they started to have a following due to the chaos and devastation that Russia brought to the people of Chechnya in the first war.

Although they were both strong religious warriors fighting in the name of their god, they were still only mortal and both Khattab and Basayev became casualties of

---

129 Ibid.
131 Ibid.
132 Armstrong, “How to Turn a Local War into Part of the International Jihad.”
133 Ibid.
134 Ibid.
135 Hechtman, “Friendless Chechens shield Taliban despite Vast Differences in Beliefs.”
warfare. Khattab was killed in 2002 when he was delivered a letter that was carrying poison by a carrier who was sent by the Russian government and Basayev was killed in 2006 when a truck blew up that was loaded with explosives.\textsuperscript{136} Although both of these leaders have since perished, it was through their leadership and influential in the second war that this conflict took on new intentions.\textsuperscript{137}

For both Basayev and Khattab, Chechnya’s independence was not by any means the end of the struggle, and in their eyes no longer even a primary reason for the conflict, if even a motivation at all. Basayev had stated that, “Jihad will continue until Muslim’s liberate their land and re-establish the Khilafah (Caliphate Islamic state).”\textsuperscript{138} The motivation behind this war has undoubtedly metamorphosed into this abstruse phenomenon that is based on completely irrational thinking that it is almost impossible to defeat. This war in Chechnya is no longer about Chechnya’s freedom; it is about expanding the jihad.

Although Russia’s brutal treatment and utter destruction in Chechnya was the gateway that Islamic extremists needed to take advantage of this destitute situation, other Muslim countries did not. Prior to Khattab playing an active role in this war, Chechen leaders had continually called for support from the Islamic world but Muslim countries had minimal interest in responding.\textsuperscript{139} Islamic countries had no desire to help Chechnya

\textsuperscript{137} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{138} Armstrong, “How to Turn a Local War into Part of the International Jihad.”
and cared very little about their independence. There are several reasons as to why other Muslim countries are not eager to help Chechnya.

John C.K. Daly, a Caucasus expert at the Middle East Institute in Washington, D.C. argues that the main reason why Muslim countries are reluctant to become involved in this Chechen conflict is because of their longstanding political or trade relations with Moscow. The trading relationships these Muslim countries have with Russia are much more important than Chechnya’s independence, even for the most radical states. Daly sums up this interesting perspective through this statement,

There has not been an official recognition of Chechen independence by not only any Islamic state but any state worldwide. The radical Arab regimes that might be interested in doing this as a generalized anti-Western gesture such as perhaps Libya, nonetheless have trading ties with the Russian Federation that far override helping a nation of less than a million people, a nation with virtually no exports, no industry, no international trade.

Even the most radical Muslim states are not willing to officially support Chechnya and the Muslim people within the country as it could compromise their own economic status or national security.

As mentioned previously, the Muslims in Chechnya practice a different form of Islam than most other Muslim countries and it is for this reason that Daly argues that Muslims feel little religious solidarity with Chechnya. The religious practices between the radical Muslim countries and the Muslims in Chechnya are uniquely different. The Chechens practice a mystical version of Islam known as Sufism, which is characterized by the veneration of local saints and by brotherhoods that practice their own rituals.

140 Ibid.
141 Ibid.
142 Ibid.
which wins little sympathy from Sunni and Shi’a establishments in most Muslim
countries.\textsuperscript{143} Daly states that,

The prevalent form of Islam as practiced in the North Caucasus is
Nakshbandi Sufism, which is not favored in Saudi Arabia—[which is] of
course a Wahhabi regime—and is not favored in Shi’a Iran, either. And
there are no Islamic states which regard themselves as officially Sufi. So
the Chechens, through a combination of a kind of mystical version of
Islam which is popular in their homeland, combined with economic issues,
have dropped below the level of Islamic solidarity that one might expect
from other Islamic countries.\textsuperscript{144}

Between the politics of Muslim countries and their trade relationships with Russia and
the distinct differences between their versions of Islam, Muslim countries do not feel it
necessary to stick their neck out for the people of Chechnya. However, that is not the
same for militant Islamic groups, as we have seen with Basayev and Khattag. The chaos
in Chechnya caused by Russia has created the perfect situation for Islamic militant
groups to continue their international Jihad.

Pakistan is an example of a Muslim country not officially siding with Chechnya,
but whose largest Islamist militant group is choosing sides. Lashkar-e-Tayyaba is the
largest Islamist militant organization in South Asia and is based near Lahore, Pakistan
where they run several militant training camps.\textsuperscript{145} The United States has listed Lashkar-e-
Tayyaba as a terrorist organization linked to Al Qaeda.\textsuperscript{146} In November of 1999 Lashkar-
e-Tayyaba, drew about thirty thousand men to a conference near Lahore to rally support
for Islamic fighters in Chechnya, Afghanistan, Kashmir as well as other locations.\textsuperscript{147} In

\textsuperscript{143} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{144} Ibid.
http://www.nationmaster.com/encyclopedia/Lashkar-e-Tayyaba
\textsuperscript{146} Badkhen, Anna. “States within States.” GlobalSecurity.org 30 July 2006. Online. Available:
\textsuperscript{147} Recknagel, Charles. “Islamic Countries Unlikely to Help Chechnya.”
the end, around fifty thousand men signed up to fight in the holy wars anywhere in the world. Even without the official support of Muslim countries, Muslims are seizing the opportunity to use Chechnya's dire situation in their efforts to achieve an international jihad. Situations such as this demonstrate the strength of the religious component of these wars. Chechnya did not start out as a religious war, but the events that transpired in Chechnya provided the perfect excuse for Muslims extremists from around the world to take on an active role in this conflict.

Today there are Muslims from around the world that have came to support Chechnya not in their struggle for independence but to fight in a holy war. However, although they have come to fight in the name of Islam, there are vast differences between their Muslim beliefs. These differences in the forms of Islam can cause a difficult relationship between the Chechens and the militants. Many of the militants are evangelical and practice very austere forms of Islam that are far removed from the Chechens mystical Sufism. This is particularly true for the militants who adhere to Wahhabism, which is a form of Islam that is practiced in Saudi Arabia. John C.K. Daly, in further discussing these differences, states that,

Wahhabism is a very austere form of religion, whereas, in contrast, Sufism has a very pronounced reliance on spiritual guides [or saints], and after their death their graves frequently become sites of pilgrimage. [In] Wahhabism, on the other hand, there are to be no images, no worship of saints, indeed, there is no such thing as saints, and this has brought at least some of the Arab Wahhabi elements which are in Chechnya into direct conflict with the Chechen authorities and the Chechen people themselves.

---

148 Ibid.
149 Ibid.
150 Ibid.
151 Ibid.
However, even with these vast differences, Daly argues that the religious friction is largely offset by the fact that the militant groups, which are well financed, bring much needed money into the Chechen economy.\textsuperscript{152}

It is without dispute that the war in Chechnya began for the republic to gain its independence from Russia, yet it has since then evolved into a holy war. There are four ways that a local war is transformed into an international jihad. International jihads provide money, as well as leadership, and an ideology that justifies “martyrdom” and promises a better life.\textsuperscript{153}

Money is a very important aspect in how these local wars are transformed into an international holy war for Islamist militants. In regards to Chechnya, they were able to finance their first war, from 1994-1996, from proceeds of rackets and illicit oil wells.\textsuperscript{154} Although this was helpful, much of Chechnya was destroyed due to the excessive force of the Russian military. When Khattab came to join the Chechens in their battle, he had access to a reliable supply of millions of dollars from donors.\textsuperscript{155} Due to the extreme use of force and destruction from the Russian military, Chechnya became a very impoverished area. Money was an indispensable weapon in Khattab’s arsenal and gave him the power he needed to be in control.\textsuperscript{156} Part of obtaining this money from donors requires continual propaganda. Khattab making and distributing videos became an important element of the money-raising efforts.\textsuperscript{157} These videos also brought more attention to his cause from other Muslims around the world to join the fight.

\textsuperscript{152} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{153} Armstrong, “How to Turn a Local War into Part of the International Jihad.”
\textsuperscript{154} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{155} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{156} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{157} Ibid.
In regards to leadership, it was already pointed out that Khattab was a very charismatic leader. Khattab was a strong fighter who led from the front and had many years of experience. He had been fighting the international jihad for ten years, and he was a very strong organizer.\textsuperscript{158} Khattab joined with Basayev, were a powerful force that was successful in rallying militants together and inspired them to fight to the death for Islam.

Religious ideology is the strongest factor in how this war was transformed into an international jihad. Khattab’s rhetoric is exactly the same as Osama bin Laden’s in regards of the meaning from “jihad” to “war” and death as a gateway to paradise, which is a concept that bin Laden has made the world very familiar with today.\textsuperscript{159} The idea of death being the gateway to paradise was a new concept for the Chechens. In the first Chechen war, the Chechens fought very bravely, however they were not by any means suicide fighters.\textsuperscript{160} The concept of suicide fighters and terrorist tactics did not come until after Khattab started taking on a much stronger and more active role in the Second Chechen War.

The last pillar of how a local war is transferred into an international jihad is through civil ideology. The jihadists in Chechnya promised that after victory they know exactly what sort of state to erect.\textsuperscript{161} The jihadists present a clear objective and methodology in life and religion that gives both a purpose and a justification to these very desperate people of Chechnya.\textsuperscript{162} After the Russian government almost completely destroyed Chechnya and brought their capital of Grozny down to ruble, the concept of the confident Wahhabi version of the rule of Islamic law is very attractive to these people.

\textsuperscript{158} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{159} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{160} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{161} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{162} Ibid.
who forgot what it is like to have order and stability as a part of their everyday life. For decades these people have been living in fear, chaos and destruction. Any promise of order and stability is a concept that has been so far removed from there reality, that it is easy to see why they will follow this path that claims to be able to achieve stability and order.

It is argued that Chechnya can be used as an excellent case study to demonstrate how a local war can be so quickly transformed into an international jihad. It shows how the Wahhabi jihadists infiltrate an existing struggle and twist it to its purpose through money, leadership and religious and civil ideology.\textsuperscript{163} The jihadists have no regard in the local aims of the people; this war has a much larger purpose than the people of Chechnya would have ever imagined.

The chaos and destruction that Russia caused in Chechnya allowed for the perfect opening for jihadists to become such active players in this war. This war has spiraled out of control and has become more complex and involved than Russia could have ever imagined. With the fight for Chechnya’s independence being the cover up for this international jihad, Russia is now involved in a war where both sides are going to play dirty. Especially since the events of September 11\textsuperscript{th} 2001, the world is all too familiar with the primary strategy of Islamic fundamentalists who are fighting this jihad. No terrorist attack is ever justified and it is shame that innocent Russians have become victims of these attacks. With this new religious component in this battle, the Russian government is dealing with an unexpected consequence from their harsh tactics.

\textsuperscript{163} Ibid.
**Terrorist Attacks**

Terrorist attacks are an important component of the radical Muslim's fight to achieve their international jihad and Chechnya is no different. Along with suicide bombers, terrorist attacks have taken on an important role in this conflict between Russia and Chechnya. Terrorist attacks did start to take on a role as a military strategy until the Second Chechen War, when Islamic militant leaders took over. In the summer of 1999, the radicals, led by Basayev, launched an ill-fated incursion into Dagestan.\textsuperscript{164} This was the beginning of the second Chechen war. Terrorist bombs were set off in Moscow and other Russian cities and Russian authorities placed blame on Chechen paramilitary commanders.\textsuperscript{165}

In addition to the 1999 terrorist attacks previously discussed with bombs exploding in Moscow and other Russian cities, there were several more that followed. In May of 2002, a bomb blast killed at least forty-one people, including seventeen children during a military parade in the southwestern town of Kaspliisk. Later that same year, the Special Purpose Islamic Regiment, led by Shamil Basayev, attacked the Dubrovka


\textsuperscript{165} Johnson and Brunner, “Timeline of Key Events in Chechnya, 1830-2006.”
Theater in Moscow.\textsuperscript{166} On October 23, Chechen rebels seized the theater, and detained seven-hundred and sixty three people, including three Americans.\textsuperscript{167} The rebels were armed and wired with explosives and demanded that the Russian government end the war with Chechnya.\textsuperscript{168} The event came to an end when Russian government forces stormed into the theater and released an opium-derived gas, which killed not only all the rebels, but more than one-hundred and twenty hostages.\textsuperscript{169} In December of 2002, there was a dual suicide bombing attack on the headquarters of Chechnya’s Russian-backed government in the Chechen capital, Grozny, which killed eighty-three people.\textsuperscript{170} During 2003, there were eleven bomb attacks against Russia, all believed to be organized by Chechen rebels.\textsuperscript{171} In May 2003, Akhman Kadyrov, Chechnya’s Moscow-backed leader was killed in a bombing, in August 2004 two nearly simultaneous plane crashes in Russia killed ninety passengers, and later that same month a Chechen terrorist attack at a Moscow subway killed ten people.\textsuperscript{172} It is clear that the Chechen rebels were relentless in trying to use terrorist attacks to get Russia out of Chechnya. Even with all these devastating attacks on Russia, the worst terrorist attack was yet to come.

The terrorist attack at Beslan in 2004 is the worlds forth deadliest terrorist attack after the September 11th terrorist attacks in the United States in 2001 killing almost three thousand, the 2007 multiple car bombings in Al-Qataniyah and Al-Adnaniyah in Iraq killing five-hundred and twenty, and the 1978 arson of a theater in Abadan, Iran killing

\textsuperscript{167} Johnson and Brunner, “Timeline of Key Events in Chechnya, 1830-2006.”
\textsuperscript{168} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{170} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{171} Johnson and Brunner, “Timeline of Key Events in Chechnya, 1830-2006.”
\textsuperscript{172} Ibid.
four-hundred and seventy seven people. The attack began when more than thirty militants, most of them ethnic Chechens crossed the border between Chechnya and the republic of Ingushetia and drove seventy miles to Beslan, without Russian authorities stopping the attackers at any of the checkpoints along the way. Of the thirty-two militants, all but three or four were non-Chechens and their order was to attack a school in Beslan. The militants herded more than twelve-hundred people into the school’s gymnasium and larger classrooms and issued demands that Russian forces leave Chechnya. The hostages in the school consisted of young schoolchildren, teachers and parents. A bomb inside the school accidentally detonated and the hostages began to flee, the militants then set off more bombs and opened fire on the fleeing adults and children, leaving three-hundred and thirty-five dead, including one-hundred and eighty six children.

Several innocent and young lives were lost that day in Beslan and some argue Russian authorities played a role in the large death toll. Not only did the Russian authorities fail to stop the rebels at several checkpoints, which is an astounding point with their history of terrorist attacks during this time, but the way the situation was handled was not in an effective manner. The Russia and/or local officials used rocket-propelled incendiaries and tank fire, which almost certainly contributed to the collapse of the school

176 Ibid.
177 Ibid.
gymnasium and fire, which caused many of the casualties. There was also a lack of coordination between the military element and local authorities. The security forces failed to control the scene adequately, there was no effective perimeter set up and the area was not cordoned off. What is really surprising is that some of the hostage’s relatives arrived on the scene with their own weapons and were permitted to remain and even take up positions alongside the security forces. When the initial explosion occurred, complete chaos erupted. Without proper planning and coordination between the security forces, many hostages were cut down in the crossfire between the militants and security forces.

The purpose of pointing out the flaws is to show that adequate measures and planning for these situations did not take place. It is shocking to think that with the history of several terrorist attacks prior to this one in Beslan that the Russian authorities would not be more cautious at their checkpoints, and have at least some general protocol for handling a hostage situation, seeing as how the similar hostage situation with the Dubrovka Theater happened just a few short years prior. Knowing that the gas used by the Russian authorities killed many of the hostages, one would think that Russia would learn from their mistakes to ensure a similar situation is properly handled should it occur again, and it did.

Chechen rebel leader Basayev has taken responsibility for the attack on the school in Beslan. Basayev implied that he believed that Moscow would comply with the hostage

---

180 Stratfor. “Beslan: the Peril of Ignoring History”
181 Ibid.
182 Ibid.
takers demand for withdrawal of Russian forces with Chechnya. Basayev explained, “I thought I was doing the Russians a favor by showing them the way out of a blind alley.” The leader of the rebels stated that he does regret that “so many children died at the hands of the Russians” but that he does not regret the seizure of the school. Basayev believed that by taking the school hostage, he was giving the Russian government a way out of Chechnya while still saving face. Instead of pulling out for defeat, they would be pulling out to protect their people and children. Basayev warns Russia that as long as they continue to violate the Geneva Conventions, his fighters will do the same. He states that, “it is the enemy who sets the limits to our actions, and we are free to resort to the methods and actions that the enemy first employed against us.” Basayev argues that he would prefer to have the war fought fairly. He states that, “We are ready, and want to wage war according to international law, it is even in our advantage to do so in terms of protecting the civilian population. But unlike President Maskhadov, we do not want to be the only side to espouse those tactics.” What Basayev is referring to is the horrific human right violations and atrocities that the people of Chechnya have been victim to for the past decade at the hands of Russian authorities.

The Beslan terrorist attack was the worst of its kind in Russia’s history, however it was not the last. On October 13th 2005, Chechen rebels launched simultaneous attacks on police and government buildings in the Russian city of Nalchik. Dozens of men reached their breaking point of frustration by the harassment of Muslims and the closing

---

183 Fuller, Liz. “Analysis: Chechen Warlord Wards of New Terrorist Attacks”
184 Ibid.
185 Ibid.
186 Ibid.
187 Ibid.
of mosques. The number of militants involved ranged from sixty to three-hundred people and the attacks began with heavy arms fire and explosions, with sporadic shooting continuing for hours afterwards. A total of sixty three people lost their lives, fifty were militants, ten were police officers and three were civilians.

Terrorist attacks are never justified, anytime an innocent life is lost, it is a tragedy. But the treatment that the Chechen people have endured by the Russian military and Moscow loyalists’ part of Chechen militia called “Kadyrovsky” because of their loyalty to Russia’s puppet president, Akhmad Kadyrov, is breeding terrorists. There is no evidence that Russia’s harsh tactics in Chechnya have discouraged Chechens from joining the Islamist networks, it is actually the contrary. The most recent group is the “black widows” who are the widows, mothers and sisters of Chechen men who have been killed by the Russians. These women are out to seek revenge for their loved ones that have died an excruciating death. Chechnya may be lacking in many things, but bitter widows and scorned loved ones are two things that Chechnya has an abundance of.

190 Associated Press. “63 Dead as Russian Forces Battle Chechen Rebels,”
191 Ibid.
193 Ibid.
194 Ibid.
International Involvement

Chechnya is not a topic you hear on the evening news or see people with banners trying to get the word out like you see for the situation in Darfur. This may be because not many people are aware of the conditions and the events that transpire in Chechnya. Yet, unlike the common person, world leaders are very aware of the horrific situation. Chechnya is a shameful example of western leaders refusing to confront another government on human rights abuses and war crimes.\textsuperscript{195} This is because, in the end, strategic and political issues matter more to western leaders.\textsuperscript{196} As mentioned previously, Russia has made it extremely difficult and almost impossible for information, to escape the borders of Chechnya. They led the world to believe this was a conflict under control and it was a Russian issue, comparative to a civil war. From the sections above, we know this is not the case. This war has spiraled out of control and it is now breeding terrorists and has allowed for the expansion of the international jihad. For that reason alone, it is now an international concern and turning a blind eye is no longer acceptable.

\textsuperscript{195} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{196} Ibid.
International organizations cannot claim to be ignorant on the events that have transpired in Chechnya. Even though information and evidence was difficult to gather, it was not impossible and the stories of the brave journalists that were previously told prove that. International organizations found the mass graves and were aware of the dire situation. Their reaction was both disappointing and inexcusable. The international community reacted to the finding of the mass dumping ground and spoiled investigations with a deafening silence.197 Critical opportunities were missed that should have been utilized.

The Council of Europe missed the chance to use its unique position as the only international organization with a field presence in Chechnya to press authoritatively for an effective investigation.198 The staff of the Council had the unique opportunity to visit the grave site, view the bodies and scrutinize the investigation.199 Yet they did not. Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights, Alvaro Gil-Robles, visited Chechnya from February 27th through the 29th in the year 2001.200 He visited Znamenskoe, Guderemes and the Khankala military base, but he did not visit Dachny village or view any of the sixteen bodies that were on display during the time of his visit.201 Gil-Robles had what he believed to be a justified reason for not visiting the bodies and Dachny village. Gil Robles explained that he had pressed for Vladimir Kalamanov, the President of the Russian Federation for Human Rights in Chechnya, to visit the mass dumping ground.202 He believed that by having Kalamanov visit these

198 Ibid.
199 Ibid.
200 Ibid.
201 Ibid.
202 Ibid.
areas, it would strengthen his authority to inspect other sites of human rights violations and create the precedent that would be followed in any future cases of atrocities.\textsuperscript{203} As his visit of being a layman with no expertise in forensic matters would not set the same precedent.\textsuperscript{204} Other experts of the Council of Europe who have visited Chechnya during this time all felt that because they were not experts in forensic matters, their would be little gained by their visit to view the bodies and the mass dumping ground at Dachny.\textsuperscript{205} These reasons are poor excuses for not doing taking proper action in this investigation. Human Rights Watch points out that the significance of such a visit to these areas is a signal of the importance demonstrating that this is a serious investigation, as simple observers they would have been able to confirm basic information about the condition of the bodies.\textsuperscript{206} It does not take a forensically trained eye to be able to make simple and critical observations that some human rights violations were being committed. They would be able to document that the hands and legs were tied, or that the face had been blindfolded, whether there were gunshot wounds or not, and whether most of the victims' bodies wore civilian clothes or camouflage uniforms.\textsuperscript{207} These are simple observations that are a critical piece to the puzzle of this human rights violations investigation. These observations would have helped the Council of Europe reach an independent conclusion about whether those found had been victims of extrajudicial executions.\textsuperscript{208} Through talking directly to forensic examiners and investigators about progress that is being made on the investigation, they would be able to decide whether or not initial steps in the

\textsuperscript{203} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{204} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{205} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{206} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{207} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{208} Ibid.
investigation are consistent with international standards.\textsuperscript{209} A visit to Dachny Village and to the bodies could have led to a more authoritatively insist on a thorough and transparent investigation in meeting with top Russian officials and to make the investigation a priority issue.\textsuperscript{210} These all could have been important steps that this international organization could have taken in this fight to end human rights violations in Chechnya that were missed. Yet, they are not the only international organization that is guilty of taking advantage of such crucial steps.

The European Union also does not have the perfect track record in taking important steps to end the current situation in Chechnya. To their credit they did make an attempt to address the issues in Chechnya, but it was poorly implemented. The European Union and several associated countries issued a statement on the discovery of the mass grave that urged a meticulous and transparent investigation.\textsuperscript{211} The statement was not widely circulated and it had very little impact, even among European Union agencies and outposts.\textsuperscript{212} To show how little the impact of this statement was, several European Union diplomats in Moscow and capitals did not know even know of the statements existence.\textsuperscript{213} In addition to the lack of advertisement of the grave to make people aware of its discovery, the European Union did not follow through with any steps in the investigation process. Human Rights Watch states that as far as they are aware, the European Union did not offer any technical assistance to the Russian government to investigate the mass dumping ground. This type of action, or rather in-action, is not acceptable. The fact that a prestigious and respected international organization such as

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{209} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{210} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{211} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{212} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{213} Ibid.
\end{flushright}
the European Union was aware of the finding of a mass grave and did next to nothing about it is part of the reason this conflict has yet to be resolved.

The United Nations, who is widely known for the efforts in protecting human rights, has made attempts to address the violations that are occurring in Chechnya. Yet these actions have also been less than effective. On April 20th 2001, the United Nations Commission on Human Rights adopted a resolution condemning human rights violations in Chechnya committed by federal forces, citing “forced disappearances, extrajudicial, summary and arbitrary executions, torture, and other inhuman and degrading treatment.” This resolution is the second of its kind in two years and it called on Russia to “ensure that both civilian and military prosecutor’s offices undertake systematic, credible and exhaustive criminal investigations and prosecutions” of all violations of international human rights and humanitarian law. It reiterated its requirement for Russia to establish a “national broad-based and independent commission of inquiry” into abuse, with a view of bringing perpetrators to justice and preventing impunity. Russia failed to create such a commission or to ensure effective prosecutions after this 2001 resolution, which is no surprise, but the United Nations Commission on Human Rights declined to call for the creation of an international commission of inquiry. This once again demonstrates a lack of following through on these important measures that can make a very big difference, if acted upon.

---

214 Ibid.
215 Ibid.
216 Ibid.
217 Ibid.
In March 2001, The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Mary Robinson, called for a thorough investigation of the mass grave site.\textsuperscript{218} In a statement to the 57\textsuperscript{th} session of the U.N. Commission on Human Rights, Robinson stated that “cases such as the mass grave in Zdrorovie discovered earlier this year, less than a kilometer from the main military base in Chechnya, must be followed up and thoroughly investigated.”\textsuperscript{219} Robinson expressed concern over the problem of impunity in that same statement, yet neglected to mention the fact that numerous “disappearances” continue to take place.\textsuperscript{220} Failing to mention such important information gives a distorted perspective to the truth of this situation, and one that is a critical element of these violations. Not acknowledging that disappearances are continuing to take place is ignoring the heart of the problem. If these “disappearances” are no longer occurring, then it means ultimately less people are being taken away never to be heard of again only for their loved ones to find their mutilated bodies months later in a mass grave. Only addressing the mass graves found is like skipping to the last chapter of a book, it neglects to tell the whole story of how and why this person ended up there to begin with.

Russia cannot be trusted with the promise to take action to end these human right violations. This could not be more apparent with the events that transpired when the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, OSCE, attempted to get involved with this conflict. The OSCE is the world’s largest regional security organization and serves as a primary warning instrument for early warning, conflict prevention, crisis

\textsuperscript{218} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{219} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{220} Ibid.
management, and post conflict rehabilitation in its area. The OSCE has 19 missions or field operations in South-Eastern Europe, Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia and deals with three dimensions or security, the politico-military, the economic and environmental and the human dimension. It addresses a wide range of security-related concerns, including arms control, confidence- and security-building measures, human rights, national minorities, democratization, policing strategies, counter-terrorism and economic and environmental activities. The OSCE established the Assistance Group to Chechnya on April 11th 1995. The groups mandate, which was explicitly reaffirmed by all OSCE member states, including Russia, at the November 1999 Istanbul Summit, provides that it will “promote respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms,” and “facilitate the delivery to the region by international and nongovernmental organizations of humanitarian aid for victims of the crisis, wherever they may be located.” The group enjoys “all possible freedom of movement on the territory of the Chechen Republic and also on the territory of neighboring subjects of the Russian Federation, if so required for the performance of its tasks.” This appears to be exactly what is needed to prevent further human rights violations from occurring in Chechnya, having an international group right in the midst of the heart of the conflict would be witness to the events that transpire. Yet, it is simply not the way it worked. When the Second Chechen War broke out in 1999, the OSCE Assistance Group fled the region. Since the group left in 1999, the Russian government has impeded the group’s redeployment insisting on control over

---

222 Ibid.
223 Ibid.
225 Ibid.
226 Ibid.
227 Ibid.
the group’s security arrangements and on inspection of all local and expatriate staff.\textsuperscript{228} There is a reason Russia does not what the OSCE Assistance Group in its region. They want to be able to handle this war the way they see fit and not to be regulated by international laws requiring them to abide by basic human rights.

The European Court of Human Rights has taken promising steps in the right direction. The European Court of Human Rights found Russia responsible for serious human rights abuses in Chechnya in eight recent landmark rulings.\textsuperscript{229} The court found Russia guilty of executions, torture, enforced disappearances and for failing to properly investigate these crimes, and confirmed the systematic nature of human rights abuses in Chechnya.\textsuperscript{230} These eight historic acts of justice are hopefully just the beginning. As of May 2007, more than 200 cases from Chechnya were pending before the European Court.\textsuperscript{231} These judgments obligate the Russian government to both rectify the violations in individual cases and make meaningful policy changes to prevent further abuses.\textsuperscript{232} Yet Russia has to be willing to make these changes and prosecute those who are guilty of the crimes. The international community therefore should pressure Russia to take these crucial steps. It will be only with this pressure that the persistent pattern of abuses will cease.\textsuperscript{233}

The judgments of the European Court are a significant step in the right direction. It provides the victims and their families in Chechnya with justice, accountability, vindication, hope and the potential to end the abuses all around. These court decisions

\begin{footnotes}
\item[228] Ibid.
\item[230] Ibid.
\item[231] Ibid.
\item[232] Ibid.
\item[233] Ibid.
\end{footnotes}
provide victims and their families with the only chance to achieve some measure of justice as they oblige the Russian government to undertake effective investigations and award monetary compensation to the victims or their relatives.\textsuperscript{234} Even though the European Court is not a criminal court and cannot investigate or arraign perpetrators of the human rights abuses recognized in its judgments, the court holds the Russian government responsible for the human rights abuses committed by its forces and liable for failing to conduct adequate investigations into the abuses.\textsuperscript{235} The court decisions compel the Russian government to investigate and prosecute the crimes in individual cases and reform its investigative and judicial structures to put an end to impunity for its forces.\textsuperscript{236} The families and victims get vindication through these rulings because for years Russia denied that its forces were guilty of human rights abuses in these and other cases from Chechnya.\textsuperscript{237} These rulings from the European Court provided independent vindication of abuses in these specific cases and of the lack of liability for the perpetrators.\textsuperscript{238} These rulings provide the hope to the thousands of other victims of these human right abuses that someday they may also find justice.\textsuperscript{239} Russia is a party to the European Convention on Human Rights and is therefore obligated to implement the final judgments of the court.\textsuperscript{240} In order to prevent future abuses, the government must adopt general measures to eliminate the causes of the abuses identified by the court, which may include improving the legal and regulatory framework governing the activities of security

\textsuperscript{234} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{235} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{236} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{237} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{238} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{239} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{240} Ibid.
forces and ensuring that the investigative and judicial system in Chechnya is available to all victims and is capable of responding to abuses.\textsuperscript{241}

While these court rulings demonstrate that the international community acknowledges that Russia is guilty of such horrific violations, it is not enough. In order for the situation to be corrected, Russia needs to abide by what the European Court and other international institutions are asking of her, yet it has a track record of not cooperating. Putin is insistent that the situation in Chechnya is “normalizing”, yet the human rights violations still being committed today by the Russian security forces and pro-Moscow Chechen forces, known as “Kadyrovtsy” tell a different story.\textsuperscript{242} The majority of the cases documented are of tortured detainees who have been kept in unlawful secret detention facilities in order to extract confessions or testimony about alleged rebel forces.\textsuperscript{243} These patterns of detention, torture, and enforced disappearance have changed very little since the beginning of this crisis.\textsuperscript{244}

There is no doubt that Russia’s behavior is a root problem in this situation. The widespread patterns of abuse in Chechnya persist primarily due to the continuous lack of accountability for the perpetrators.\textsuperscript{245} The Russian government has continuously failed to investigate and prosecute crimes committed by state agents, not a single person has been held accountable for enforced disappearances.\textsuperscript{246} Russia has to be an active player and want to make this wrong situation, right. The human rights situation in Chechnya will

\textsuperscript{241} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{242} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{243} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{244} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{245} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{246} Ibid.
improve only if Russia fully implements the European Courts judgments by addressing individual abuses and taking meaningful actions to prevent further abuses.\textsuperscript{247}

It is clear that what has been done has not worked. Human rights violations are still being committed today in Chechnya at the hands of the Russian military and pro-Moscow Chechen forces. More needs to be done, and more forceful action has got to be taken on Russia if that’s what it takes to get them to cooperate. With the Islamic fundamentalists in the region expanding their international jihad, this is no longer a regional war; it is a threat to the security of the international security and must be addressed.

\textsuperscript{247} Ibid.
Next Steps

The world can no longer sit back and do nothing, or expect Russia to rectify this situation because an international court said they were guilty. This conflict is no longer just Russia’s problem; it has grown into an international jihad. Now is not the time to point fingers at who is to blame, because at the end of the day nobody did enough to put an end to this situation years ago, and therefore all are somewhat responsible for this war escalating into the complex situation that it is today. Russia no longer has a right to tell the world this is not their concern and they will handle it. It is now an international concern; terrorism and the spread of Islamic extremism are justification enough for the world to become more actively involved, Russia’s blessing is not required.

In consequence to Russia’s brutality, this war is no longer a regional problem. Radical Islamists turned this local war based on independence into an international jihad. It is now an international issue that has become the business of the international community. A radical and impoverished Islamist state in Europe, on the doorstep of Russia and the weak South Caucasus states would unquestionably be dangerous. The threat of Chechnya becoming a “Caliphate” state run by terrorists, with an education system that brainwashes its youth to kill “sinners” and infidels needs to be addressed.

---

immediately. The United States knows the threat of terrorism all too well due to the horrifying events of September 11th, 2001. The threat of international security through terrorism at the hands of Islamist extremists is justification enough for the involvement in Russia and Chechnya’s conflict, yet human rights violations should be another driving factor.

While this war has escalated far beyond the desire for Chechnya’s independence, it is still the pseudonym that the rebels are fighting under. Russia will never let Chechnya be independent, this is a fact. Russia is afraid more republics would follow, resulting in a significant loss of control of their surrounding territory. In addition to loss of territory, losing control of Chechnya would be a loss of one of Russia’s sources for valuable resources. Chechnya enables Russia to control the flow of natural resources, primarily oil and gas, from its former Soviet republics. The mountainous region of Chechnya sits astride a critical pipeline that links the oil-rich republics of Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan, on the landlocked Caspian Sea, with the Russian port of Novorossiysk on the Black Sea. Russia has negotiated foreign deals with Central Asian states that border Chechnya totaling nearly twenty-eight billions dollars. With Russia no longer the economic power it once was, it is easy to see why granting Chechnya their long sought after autonomy is a route that Russia simply will not take.

The end to this conflict is clearly not going to be granting Chechnya sovereignty, but to stabilize and establish order in the region. Making Chechnya secure and stable are going to be the answers to this conflict reaching its demise. In order to achieve this,

249 Ibid.
251 Ibid.
252 Ibid.
Russia needs to be on board. Russia cannot be allowed to continue the tactics that they have grown accustomed to. The root cause that all these major problems have stemmed from is Russia’s unnecessary brutal force. The Russian military is corrupt and are causing more problems with their behavior than resolving them. It does not take a military specialist to know that the events that transpired when Russian soldiers invaded Chechen villages were not appropriate tactics or use of force for any military to use on innocent and defenseless civilians.

Russian soldiers and their commanders are undisciplined, unprofessional and irresponsible as well as corrupt and therefore cannot be trusted. Russian soldiers are underpaid, if paid at all in some cases and because of this they try to make money on the side. This results in kidnapping of Chechens as “terrorist suspects” for ransom by Russian military personnel, who also collect bribes from anyone passing a checkpoint and take part in illegal extraction and export of oil in Chechnya. Russia needs to make paying their soldiers a priority and it is up to the international community to make sure that they do. Whether this involves shifting where the money goes to in their budget or borrowing from another country, it should be a priority to help with the corruption.

While making sure soldiers are properly compensated for their work through a regular paycheck, there needs to be repercussions for any inappropriate actions. As previously mentioned, soldiers who commit these horrific acts against the civilians are not be prosecuted on a consistent basis. This does not give the people of Chechnya any incentive to work with Russia or begin to trust them if soldiers are going to be able to commit these crimes and not be punished for doing so. Consequences deter people from

---


254 Ibid.
committing crimes. If there was no punishment for robbing a bank, then more people would do it when they need money because there would be no consequences. Some people lack the moral judgment and need the possibility of being punished to prevent them from committing an action that is wrong. The international community must make a much stronger effort in finding out who the perpetrators are and start pressuring Russia to prosecute them. If Russia will not punish the guilty parties, then Russia will be faced with the consequences.

The obligations that the European Court has stated for Russia to do, to turn this situation around is a great starting point and will make a significant difference if Russia goes along with it. The international community needs to make sure that Russia will comply fully with the judgments in order to rectify the abuses suffered by the victims and their relatives.255 Russia needs to pay in full the compensation and expenses determined by the court, provide family members with all information as to fates and whereabouts of any persons that have “disappeared,” reopen or open meaningful investigations to identify and prosecute the perpetrators of the violations identified by the court, and provide families with any and all information to the process of the investigations.256 The international community needs to insist that Russia cooperate fully with the European Court of Human Rights in all cases by supplying all requested investigative files, documents and other materials in a timely manner.257 Russia needs to conduct an in-depth inquiry into the conduct of investigations into abuses committed by Russian military servicemen, police and intelligence officials, and other forces in the Chechen Republic to

255Human Rights Watch. “Justice for Chechnya: The European Court of Human Rights Rules against Russia.”
256Ibid.
257Ibid.
establish why these investigations are so ineffective. Russia needs to review and revise their domestic legislation and regulations regarding the use of force by military or security forces to ensure their compliance with human rights laws. All secret detention facilities need to be closed or guarantee regular access to all places of detention to both Russian and international monitoring. Russia needs to undertake an investigation to determine by what means secret detention has been allowed to occur under and determine what people were responsible for instigation, executing or condoning this practice and prosecute them to the fullest extent of the law.

The international community should also implicate Putin and his top military chiefs in war crimes that are in direct violation of the Geneva Conventions. Putin is guilty of war crimes and should be prosecuted. No man is above the law. Should Russia not comply with these stipulations, then they should be removed from the prestigious international group, the G-8. The G-8 should be reserved for developed countries who are role models for other countries to strive for. Having Russia a member of the G-8 when they are guilty and unwilling to rectify such horrific human rights violations that could be compared to similar treatment under Hitler, Stalin and Saddam Hussein is unjustifiable. If they do not cooperate with the international community on immediately ending these human rights violations and start prosecuting the members of their military who are guilty of committing such offenses, then this is a consequence that the international community should heavily consider.

---

258 Ibid.
259 Ibid.
260 Ibid.
261 Ibid.
Should none of these efforts make Russia inclined to cooperate with the international community, then force may be a last resort. The force does not necessarily have to be sending in tanks or troops from the Western allies, but it could also be in the form of arming the Chechen rebels so they have the materials necessary to defend themselves against the Russian military if necessary. I recognize that this would be putting weapons in the hands of possible terrorists, but hopefully it would not come to that, and Russia would cooperate with the demands previously stated. Other forms of force that may be considered is a no fly zone for Russia over the area of Chechnya and a European Union peacekeeping force being placed in the area to ensure that Russia is abiding by the international requirements set for them.

Another way to persuade Russia is to threaten their economic security. Russia is no longer a strong global economic player like it used to be after World War II. The threat of economic sanctions would be devastating to Russia, particularly when referring to oil and the possibility of going after the personal bank accounts of government officials. If Russia is unwilling to pay the victims of these wars in Chechnya, then perhaps the international community should take some of Putin’s own personal money, as well as other government and high military officers to pay the retributions to these victims. One way or the other justice will be served.

It does not have to all be negative action though. To stop harsh treatment, incentives can be thrown at Russia to make sure that soldier’s do not commit any further abuses and those who do are prosecuted. Russia’s military should also help prevent any further abuses at the hands of Moscow backed Chechen rebels. Such incentives could be to help Russia economically with various programs to make them an economic leader
once again. Also, because there are terrorists that are a threat to the international community in Chechnya, the Western allies can work with Russia to prevent any further terrorist attacks from these Islamic rebels in Chechnya and work with the Russian military to capture and remove these Islamic extremists from the area. This will ensure the security of Russia as well as the global community. The situation between Russia and Chechnya clearly needs to be resolved. Having a third party mediate the situation and working with both sides to come up with a resolution that both Russia and Chechnya can agree to would be ideal. Russia will never let Chechnya be independent, but if a neutral party stepped in and helped mediate an agreement, then there would actually be a foundation and an outline for moving forward. Russia cooperating with the international community should be rewarded, and if they make a legitimate effort to change their ways and rectify this situation, then it would show they understand their mistakes of the past and are ready to move forward towards a more positive future.

The international community cannot afford to wait another year or two for Russia to decide to cooperate. The time is now. Fighting terrorism is a long difficult battle, and the longer the world waits to get involved with this conflict the stronger the Islamic extremist will become. The sooner Chechnya becomes under control with no more human rights violations, with victims and their families getting justice and vindication, the harder it will be for Islamist extremists to recruit rebels because these people will have what they have not had in decades, hope for a secure and promising future. The reason Chechens joined the jihad was because they promised them hope and security and justice to what had been done to them. If the international community shows the people of Chechnya that they too will offer the same promises, without having to sell your soul to
the devil, the Islamist recruiters will have an extremely difficult time persuading any young man to join their cause.

The international world cannot afford to let this conflict get more out of control than it already has. This conflict has expanded into an international security and is right along with the West’s fight in this war on terrorism. Timing is everything, fixing the situation in Chechnya and restoring order will provide security in the region that will decrease the likely hood of terrorists emerging from there. Ignoring this Russian caused problem of the expansion of an international jihad is detrimental to the West’s security and must be addressed.
Conclusion

The dire situation in Chechnya is the result of Russia's brutal force, harsh tactics and complete disregard for human life. Russia turned a local conflict that could have been resolved, into an extraordinary opportunity for Islamic extremists to expand their international jihad. This local conflict that Putin claims is under control has evolved into a threat to international security. The larger and more widespread Al Qaeda and other Muslim extremists terrorist organizations become, the more difficult it is to conquer terrorism throughout the world. Putin has created a situation where terrorists are being bred.

When reading about the stories of the human rights violations in Chechnya, one can't help be reminded of such brutalities from the Holocaust, Stalin and Saddam Hussein. The simple fact that these horrific events are occurring today is almost incomprehensible. The world practically turning a blind eye to these atrocities is inexcusable. It needs to be stopped. As if the human rights violations that Russia has committed weren't enough reason, now that it evolved into the expansion of the
international jihad it is a security threat to other countries, primarily the Western allies who are in the midst of this great battle against terrorism.

If the international community gets tough and stern with Russia, then significant progress can be made. In order to gain control of the area and stop the recruiting of further terrorists, order and stability must be achieved in Chechnya. The only way to achieve this order and stability is to stop Russia from committing these atrocities and indiscriminate killing in Chechnya, bring the perpetrators to justice and restore hope and a sense of security for the people of Chechnya. Islamist extremists are successful at recruiting people because Russia has destroyed Chechnya and have made the people distrusting, hopeless and bitter towards Russia.

The international community has the ability to stop Russia from committing such horrific actions on mankind that create an unstable and insecure future for the world. With the capabilities and justifications for becoming involved in this conflict, there is no reason not to. Russia has proved that they cannot be trusted to tell the truth, abide by international rules or work with international organizations. Putins objections to international involvement are irrelevant. Hitler, Stalin and Saddam Hussein all objected to international involvement, that's what evil dictators do, they do not want to be controlled and abide by international law. It is not okay for these crimes to be committed and the international community knows about them and is not doing more to stop them. It is absolutely unacceptable. A precedent needs to be set that this behavior will not be tolerated, regardless of the country who is committing the violations. It needs to end, and it needs to be today.
Bibliography


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


Stratfor. “Beslan: The Peril of Ignoring History,” 28 December 2005. Online. Available: http://www.stratfor.com/search?terms=Beslan&exclude_content_types%5BSf_sitrep%5D=sf_sitrep&date_range=custom&begin_date%5Bmonth%5D=12&begin_date%5Bday%5D=3&begin_date%5Byear%5D=2005&end_date%5Bmonth%5D=12&end_date%5Bday%5D=31&end_date%5Byear%5D=2005&order_by=relevance. Accessed on 11 November 2007.