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ecoi.net-Themendossier zur Russischen Föderation: Sicherheitslage in Dagestan & Zeitachse von Angriffen

English version

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Overview

"Dagestan has clearly become the most violent republic in the North Caucasus. This is partly because Dagestan is the largest republic in the region, with a population of about 3 million." (Jamestown Foundation, 31 October 2012)

"Russian authorities are trying to dramatically change the situation in Dagestan. The strategically important North Caucasian republic has a 150-kilometer (93-mile) long border with Georgia and a 315-km (196-mile) long border with Azerbaijan. The republic also has 530 km (329 miles) of coastline on the Caspian Sea." (Jamestown Foundation, 28 June 2012)

"A region of high mountains, lowlands and steppes, the North Caucasus has a small, diverse population of 9.86 million. [...] The most homogeneous republics are Chechnya and Ingushetia, the most diverse region is Dagestan, with over 30 distinct ethnic groups." (ICG, 19 October 2012a, p._3)

Religious conflict

"Значительное влияние на разные стороны общественной жизни Дагестана оказывает ислам. [...] Традиционно население здесь исповедовало различные тарикаты (,пути') суфийского направления в исламе. До сих пор большинство верующих в республике придерживаются именно этого направления. [...] С 90-х годов прошлого века в республике начало активно распространяться новое для Кавказа религиозное течение — салафизм, или фундаменталистский ислам." (Метогіаl, 4 September 2012, p. 8)

"Islam is the majority's religion, especially in Dagestan, Chechnya and Ingushetia, where the internal factors of the umma (Islamic community) have an increasingly profound impact on society. Most of the region's Muslims follow a form of Islam perceived as 'traditional' in the region because it is deeply interwoven with local customs, practices and beliefs. The east has a strong tradition of Sufism, whose brotherhoods (tariqas) have been in conflict with the Salafis for over a decade. [...] Traditional Muslims are more successfully integrated into the Russian secular system and recognise its institutions and law; their religious boards have become semi-government institutions." (ICG, 19. October 2012b, p. 2)

"Салафиты, которых часто неточно называют ваххабитами, не признают святых и учителей, считая их наличие нарушением принципа единобожия в исламе. Они не признают вкраплений в религиозную практику народных традиций, выступают за упрощение обрядности и буквальное толкование Корана. [...] В Дагестане, в отличие от Чечни, где конфликт начинался как сепаратистский, раскол был изначально как политическим, так и религиозным. [...] В 90-х годах XX века конфликт, тогда еще не вооруженный, происходил как внутри исламских общин в населенных пунктах, так и между представителями духовенства: Духовного управления мусульман Республики Дагестан с одной стороны и лидерами салафитов – с другой. Одновременно нарастало давление на салафитов со стороны государственных силовых структур." (Метогіаl, 4 September 2012, р. 8-9)

"The state generally supported traditional Muslims and in effect banned Salafism, deepening the sectarian schism. It saw the 'hunt for Wahhabis' as part of an anti-terrorist struggle, especially after the August 1999 incursion of Chechen insurgents into Dagestan." (ICG, 19. October 2012b, p._4)

"В августе и сентябре 1999 года из Чечни в Дагестан под лозунгом ,помощи братьям по вере' вторгались крупные вооруженные отряды под командованием Шамиля Басаева. Вторжение было отбито, неподконтрольные республиканским властям анклавы ликвидированы в ходе серьезных боев. [...] После событий 1999 года государство стало привлекать к уголовной ответственности участников и пособников нападения на Дагестан. Тогда же Народное Собрание РД приняло закон 'О запрете ваххабистской и иной экстремистской деятельности на территории Республики Дагестан'. Внятного определения 'ваххабизма', да и 'экстремизма', в этом законе нет. В правовом смысле его последствия ничтожны. Однако этот закон создал предпосылки для репрессий: фактически каждый, кто по субъективной оценке сотрудника правоохранительных органов мог быть причислен к приверженцам ,ваххабизима', становился жертвой милицейского произвола. Произошло смешение уголовно-правового и религиозного понятий: борьба с терроризмом фактически превратилась в борьбу с приверженцами ,ваххабизма' как религиозного течения." (Метогіаl, 4 September 2012, р. 9-10)

"For almost a decade after the second Chechen war began, Dagestan authorities made no distinction between moderate and radical, violence-oriented Salafis, which contributed to radicalisation of the entire community." (ICG, 19. October 2012b, p.9)

"Весной и летом 2012 года начался диалог и между находившимися в конфликте суфиями и салафитами." (Memorial, 4 September 2012, p. 5)

"The most thorough attempt, after years of violence, to bring Salafis into a dialogue with the state and Sufi leaders, is in Dagestan. The insurgency itself is not interested in dialogue and seeks to undermine it with new terrorist attacks, while the security services also disrupt the process by further heavy-handed measures. [...] The dialogue may have come close to its end with the killing of Sheikh Said Afandi, the most influential sheikh in the North Caucasus, by a newly converted Islamist in his home on 28 August 2012. [...] When the moderate Salafi organisation condemned the killing and called for continuation of dialogue, insurgents threatened its leaders. The leader of the Caucasus Emirate (Imarat Kavkaz), Doku Umarov, made a video asserting that Sufis who do not cooperate with the authorities are 'brothers in Islam' and invited them to join jihad." (ICG, 19. October 2012b, p. 3-12)

"Unter Abdulatipow ist der unter seinem Vorgänger Magomedsalam Magomedow erfolgreich installierte Dialog zwischen traditionellen Sunniten und einem gemäßigten Flügel der Salafisten zum Erliegen gekommen. Stattdessen nimmt die staatliche Repression zu." (AI, October 2013)

"Over the past few months most Salafi civic activity in Dagestan has been pushed underground. Moderate leaders have been harassed; some have fled the republic and their projects been closed. The Salafi human rights group 'Pravozashchita', which publicised abuses, was targeted, its leaders detained or placed under surveillance and an activist's home searched. Its outspoken representative in Buynaksk was arrested and, human rights groups said, a criminal case fabricated against her. Since late 2013, the police have been detaining Salafis en masse from cafés, mosques, and homes. [...] Arrests of men with beards or women wearing a hijab have become routine. They are usually released after their documents have been checked and they have been interrogated and fingerprinted. Such practices have visibly radicalised previously moderate believers. [...] Abdulatipov has encouraged the creation of militias to combat extremism. In some cases these are made up of Sufis and have reportedly been involved in inter-confessional violence." (ICG, 30 January 2014, p. 7-8)

North Caucasus Conflict

Development of the insurgency in Dagestan

"First, since 'Islamist terrorism' was widely recognized as a primary threat to national security in 1999-2001, thousands of mostly young Dagestanis, accused of terrorism and 'Wahhabism', have been taken into custody by local authorities where they were often subjected to Soviet-style interrogation. Deep religiosity has been considered especially suspicious by the authorities, which

have been waging full-scale war against real and alleged 'Wahhabis' and their sympathizers. [...] As authorities have lacked enough evidence to put alleged 'Wahhabis' in jail, these were eventually set free following a few months of torture. Many of them never made peace with what was done to them in prisons, and have turned to violence to retaliate the humiliation. In case someone's relative was killed or seriously wounded, their brothers, sons or cousins have pledged oaths to take revenge for the sake of family honor. As it is difficult for individuals to combat authorities on their own, many young Dagestanis have joined the insurgent movement in the mountains, where there were exposed to the basics of Salafism. [...] Likewise, many Dagestanis have joined the insurgency in protest of the societal sins, be it corruption, erosion of traditional values, inability to realize themselves professionally or in search for a better, Islamic, future for their homeland." (CACI, 29 September 2010)

"Chechen separatism is the most prominent case of mobilisation based on memories of grievances, suppressed by the Soviet regime and channelled by nationalist leaders into demands for full independence. The resulting conflict has had a profound effect on the entire North Caucasus, particularly on Ingushetia and Dagestan where there was a direct spillover of displaced persons, combat and security operations. The secessionist conflict has now largely been superseded by an Islamist insurgency that continues in Chechnya and has spread to its neighbours." (ICG, 19 October 2012a, p. 9)

"The Republic of Dagestan has become the principal scene of all the North Caucasian resistance movement in the past two years. Not only does the republic have the largest number of jamaats operating on its territory in the North Caucasus, but it also boasts of having the largest group of people there who are literate in Islamic theology and adhere to the ideas of an all-out jihadism in the region." (Jamestown Foundation, 17 May 2012)

"Diese ehemals in Tschetschenien aktiven Gruppen hätten sich, so hieß es, überwiegend nach Dagestan, Inguschetien und Kabardino-Balkarien zurückgezogen." (Universität Bremen, 20 May 2011, p. 3)

"The structure of the insurgency allows the militants to cover all of Dagestan's territory—from Derbent in the south to the Nogai steppes in the north, from the Caspian shores to the mountainous areas. The overall number of militant groups in Dagestan is estimated to be between 20 to 30 groups. The total number of militants, meaning people who went to the forests to wage armed struggle against the government, is believed to be at least several hundred." (Jamestown Foundation, 8 November 2013)

"In Dagestan, meanwhile, the insurgents are closely linked to both political clans and mafia groups, in a bewildering three-way war between Islamists, local politicians and Russian troops." (IWPR, 25 October 2010)

"Die höchste Gewaltdichte wurde in der größten Teilrepublik Dagestan registriert. Maßgebende Faktoren regionaler Instabilität sind terroristische Gewalt, Spannungen zwischen Volksgruppen, der Zustand der Rechtsschutzorgane und sozialökonomische Probleme wie hohe Jugendarbeitslosigkeit." (SWP, June 2012, p. 3)

"A survey in Dagestan has found that 20 percent of the republic's youth consider themselves moderate Salafis. Only 10 percent of the respondents referred to themselves as Sufis – traditionally

the main Muslim branch in Dagestan. The most educated among those who identified themselves as moderate Salafis said they were in favor of mimicking the experience of such countries as Brunei, Qatar, Bahrain and Oman in bringing norms of sharia into governance in Dagestan. The survey also found that 12 percent of the respondents favor the radical methods of struggle adopted by the North Caucasus militants. It is especially striking that young people openly stated support for rebels in the republic. According to a Dagestani expert on Islam, Ruslan Gereyev, the survey was conducted only in cities, and support for the rebels would have been even higher had the interviews been conducted in rural areas of the republic (www.kavkaz-uzel.ru, December 9)." (Jamestown Foundation, 14 December 2011)

"In mid-March, a massive redeployment of military personnel from Chechnya to Dagestan took place. According to unofficial sources from Dagestan, up to 20,000-25,000 troops were moved to the neighboring republic. A military column including large amounts of armored fighting vehicles set out from Khankala, a military base to the east of Grozny, to the Karabudakhkent district of Dagestan on the outskirts of the capital city of Makhachkala. Rationalized by the authorities as another move to improve the deteriorating situation in the Caspian republic, the move has caused serious concern both within and outside Dagestan." (CACI, 4 April 2012)

"Starting in early October, troops of the Russian Ministry of Defense are again participating in the counterinsurgency campaign in the North Caucasus. [...] In fact, Moscow is actively strengthening its military presence in the region, with a particular focus on Dagestan. In the spring months of 2012, it deployed up to 25,000 MVD police units to Dagestan, the majority of which had previously been stationed in Chechnya. The recent decision to deploy army units to Dagestan seems to have been made in August or September and confirms that the success of the MVD troops has been limited. Indeed, the police units recruited from all over the Russian Federation and deployed to Dagestan for only a few months have proven incapable of grasping the peculiarities of local counterinsurgency warfare. In addition, the death toll on MVD troops deployed in the Dagestan campaign has increased steadily in recent months." (CACI, 14 November 2012)

"Against the backdrop of multiple killings of young members of the jamaats, Salafi ideology will attract more young people who regard the teaching as the only way of resisting the local authorities who work under Moscow's auspices. Salafism in contemporary Dagestan has become a serious counterweight to official Sufism, as the latter has undermined its authority by close cooperation with the government. Sufism's loss of authority is directly linked to the young people's drift toward joining the ranks of the jihadists." (Jamestown Foundation, 10 January 2013)

"Some republics sought to develop non-repressive responses to the threats posed by armed groups. Commissions for Adaptation were established in Dagestan and Ingushetia with the aim of encouraging the surrender and re-integration into society of former members of armed groups. The Dagestani authorities adopted a more tolerant attitude towards Salafi Muslims." (AI, 23 May 2013)

"Hopes for improvement of the security situation in Dagestan gradually dissipate as attacks intensify in the republic. In spite of an anti-corruption campaign introduced by Dagestan's new acting president, harsher government tactics appear to be matched by more exasperated attacks by the militants, while new anti-insurgency jamaats are formed to avenge the casualties of terrorist attacks." (CACI, 26 June 2013)

"On June 24, the acting head of Dagestan, Ramazan Abdulatipov, said an amnesty for militants in the republic who want to return to civilian life could be announced. Abdulatipov made the surprise comments in an interview with Russian TV Channel One (Pervy Kanal). "We should learn how to forgive each other," Abdulatipov said, striking perhaps the most conciliatory tone to date (http://www.1tv.ru/sprojects/si=5756)." (Jamestown Foundation, 8 July 2013)

"Bei einem Runden Tisch zum Thema 'Grundzüge der neuen Politik in Dagestan: Erste Erfolge und gefährliche Tendenzen' diskutierten im Juli in Moskau russische Menschenrechtler über das Vorgehen von Ramasan Abdulatipow. Er bekämpfe zwar in Dagestan die Kriminalität und die Korruption und biete der Jugend neue wirtschaftliche Perspektiven, hieß es dort. Gleichzeitig seien jedoch Rückschritte zu beobachten. Eine bislang erfolgreiche Kommission zur Wiedereingliederung von Aufständischen habe faktisch aufgehört zu existieren." (AI, October 2013)

"At the Valdai forum in September, Abdulatipov stated that there were 150–250 insurgents in the republic and that 2 percent of them were foreign mercenaries." (Jamestown Foundation, 30 September 2013)

"On October 22, government forces deployed in Dagestan's mountains were significantly reinforced when at least 500 servicemen arrived in the district of Untsukul. Government forces will reportedly also be sent to other districts in Dagestan's mountainous region to improve the deteriorating security situation in the area." (Jamestown Foundation, 28 October 2013)

"Dagestan remained the epicentre of insurgent violence in 2013, with a long list of violent confrontations, improvised explosive device (IED) incidents, killings of officials and attacks on shops selling alcohol. It also was subject to a significant number of alleged abuses by security officials. These included illegal detentions, enforced disappearances, extrajudicial killings, falsified criminal cases and torture." (ICG, 30 January 2014, p._21)

Attacks and violations of human rights

"Похищения и насильственные исчезновения людей по-прежнему остаются одной из распространенных форм грубейших нарушений прав человека в Дагестане. За годы сложилась целая система незаконного насилия, включающая в себя неотъемлемые элементы – похищение людей, применение к ним пыток и осуществление внесудебных казней части похищенных. В Дагестане объектом похищений обычно становятся люди, исповедующие фундаменталистское направление ислама (салафизм), именно их силовики подозревают в пособничестве или причастности к вооруженному подполью. В Дагестане, как и в других республиках Северного Кавказа, нередко похищают и впоследствии убивают идеологов этого течения, тех, кому сложно предъявить официальные обвинения, но кого силовики считают 'опасными'. Впрочем, среди похищенных есть люди, не принадлежащие к салафитскому течению." (Метогіаl, 4 September 2012, р. 48-49)

"Government personnel, rebels, and criminal elements continued to engage in abductions in the North Caucasus. [...] Security forces in Chechnya, Dagestan, and Ingushetiya frequently abducted or detained individuals for several days without immediate explanation or charge. Human rights groups believed the numbers of abductions were underreported because victims' relatives were reluctant to complain to authorities due to fear of reprisal. Generally, there was no accountability for government security personnel involved in abductions. Criminal groups in the region, possibly

with links to rebel forces, frequently resorted to kidnapping for ransom." (USDOS, 24 May 2012, Section 1g)

"Across town in an outlying, concrete-block neighborhood, Svetlana Isayeva runs the group Mothers of Daghestan for Human Rights from a tiny ground-floor office. She started the organization after her 25-year-old son disappeared from the street outside her home three years ago. A stoic, dark-haired woman, Isayeva says many young men like him are detained by security forces, especially those who attend mosques and show other signs of religious piousness. She says they're forced to confess to terrorism and often killed. 'Lately it's become common among law enforcers to burn people alive in their cars,' she says. 'Then they're accused of blowing themselves up by accident." (RFE/RL, 4 November 2011)

"Armed groups continued to attack security officials, members of local administrations and prominent members of the public, including mullahs preaching traditional Islam. Law enforcement operations gave rise to numerous allegations of enforced disappearances, extrajudicial executions and torture." (AI, 24 May 2012)

"Die beinahe täglichen Überfälle auf Sicherheitskräfte, welche vor allem in Dagestan und Inguschetien weiter zugenommen haben, weisen dieselben Tendenzen auf: Einerseits finden sie immer häufiger an stark bevölkerten Orten statt, was auch zivile Opfer fordert. Andererseits werden vermehrt 'prestigeträchtige' Ziele anvisiert, das heisst hohe Sicherheitsbeamte." (SFH, 12 September 2011, p. 5-6)

"Die Dagestan-Spezialistin Ekaterina Sokiryanskaya berichtet von illegalen Verhaftungen und Misshandlungen von Personen, denen religiöser Extremismus vorgeworfen wird. Häuser von Angehörigen der Aufständischen seien in Brand gesetzt worden, so Sokiryanskaya. Staatlich geduldete Bürgerwehren würden die Bewohner einschüchtern. Tatsächlich treibe man mit diesen Methoden einen Teil der Opposition in die Hände der Aufständischen." (AI, October 2013)

Timeline of attacks in Dagestan

Please note: Although a lot of information on the Russian Federation is available in Russian language only, currently only selected Russian documents are available on ecoi.net. No Russian language publisher is currently among the sources regularly covered by ecoi.net. The following timeline therefore does not purport to be an exhaustive list of attacks in Dagestan, but shall serve as an overview and introduction to the subject.

Please also see the archived versions of this featured topic for a timeline for previous years:

For 2011, see http://www.ecoi.net/en/document/220655

For 2012, see http://www.ecoi.net/en/document/242518

For 2013, see http://www.ecoi.net/en/document/270091

"In 2013, the total number of victims of the armed conflict in Northern Caucasus decreased as compared to 2012 by 239 people, or by 19.5%. The death toll went down from 700 in 2012 to 529 in 2013, i.e., by 24.4%; the number of wounded persons – from 525 to 457 (by 13%). However losses among civilians went up. [...] In 2013, the highest count of victims was recorded in Dagestan – 641 persons, including 341 people killed and 300 others wounded." (Caucasian Knot, 31 January 2014)

2014

January

"Two persons blocked in a flat of apartment block in Khasavyurt were killed, said the law enforcement spokesman of Dagestan. The 'Caucasian Knot' has reported that on Thursday, in the course of a special operation, a flat was blocked with an alleged member of the so-called 'Khasavyurt' militant grouping inside. According to power agents, he refused to let his wife and a baby out of the flat and opened fire on the policemen. Later, the baby was evacuated." (Caucasian Knot, 2 January 2014)

"Unknown assailants have shot dead a well-known businessman in Russia's volatile North Caucasus Republic of Daghestan. Local authorities say the owner of the Versal construction company, Ruslan Muduyev, was gunned down in Daghestan's capital, Makhachkala, late on January 11." (RFE/RL, 13 January 2014)

"15.01.2014 - Bei einer Spezialoperation der Sicherheitskräfte werden im Rayon Chasawjurt (Dagestan) drei Soldaten der Sondereinheit OMON und vier Untergrundkämpfer getötet. Acht Personen, darunter fünf Soldaten, werden verletzt. Einer der Kämpfer soll Drahtzieher des Anschlags in Pjatigorsk vom 27. Dezember 2013 gewesen sein." (Universität Bremen, 31 January 2014, p. 21)

"17.01.2014 - Vor einem Restaurant in Machatschkala (Dagestan) detonieren zwei Sprengsätze. 14 Personen, darunter zwei Polizisten, werden verletzt. Es wird berichtet, dass das Restaurant keine Schutzgelder an kriminelle Strukturen bezahlen wollte." (Universität Bremen, 31 January 2014, p. 21)

"Russian security forces have killed seven people suspected of involvement in a grenade and bomb attack on a restaurant in Dagestan, officials say. Anti-terrorism officers surrounded a house near regional capital Makhachkala and shot dead seven people. Some reports described the dead as gang members and criminals, while others said they were Muslim militants." (BBC News, 18 January 2014)

"18.01.2014 – [...] Bei Kampfhandlungen im Rayon Sergokalinsk wird ein weiterer Aufständischer getötet." (Universität Bremen, 31 January 2014, p. 21)

"20.01.2014 – Bei einer Anti-Terror-Operation der Sicherheitskräfte in einem Vorort von Machatschkala (Dagestan) werden drei mutmaßliche Untergrundkämpfer getötet." (Universität Bremen, 31 January 2014, p. 22)

"Police in Russia's volatile North Caucasus say they have killed a senior Islamist militant as part of a crackdown ahead of next month's Winter Olympics in Sochi. Russia's National Antiterrorism Committee says Eldar Magatov was killed on January 21 in a gun battle against security forces in Daghestan." (RFE/RL, 22 January 2014)

"On January 26, near the village of Gemetyube of the Babayurt District of Dagestan, unidentified attackers shelled an outfit of road patrol. As a result, one policeman was killed and another one was wounded." (Caucasian Knot, 3 February 2014)

February

"A report says police in the Russian republic of Daghestan are claiming to have killed a man who 'might' have been an organizer of the Volgograd bombings. The ITAR-TASS state news agency quotes a Daghestani law-enforcement source as identifying the suspect as 'Mirzayev,' leader of the 'Kadarskaya gang.' The report said he was killed in a shootout with security forces on February 5 in the town of Izberbash. The report said that, according to preliminary information obtained by investigators, 'Mirzayev' may have been responsible for sending two suicide bombers to Volgograd." (RFE/RL, 5 February 2014)

"Five members of the 'Buynaksk' militant grouping were killed during the today's special operation in Makhachkala, another one surrendered, said a source from the Dagestani MIA." (Caucasian Knot, 8 February 2014)

"On February 11, unidentified killers shot dead a 14-year-old boy, whose father and cousin were killed last July. [...] Investigators link the murder of the teen with earlier received threats from members of illegal armed formations (IAFs), a source from the above ID of the ICRF told the 'Caucasian Knot' correspondent." (Caucasian Knot, 12 February 2014a)

"Late in the evening on February 11, near the village of Khutor, Khasavyurt District, in the course of checking their operative information, power agents found the trail of Sheikh-Akhmed Baisuev, a native of Chechnya and a leader of a militants' grouping, also known as 'Amir of Gudermes'. He was offered to surrender, but refused and opened fire. In a shootout, he was killed." (Caucasian Knot, 17 February 2014)

"In the course of a special operation conducted in the village of Bammatyurt, Khasavyurt District of Dagestan, three suspected members of illegal armed formations (IAFs) were killed, said a source from the Dagestani Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA). Let us remind you that on Wednesday in Bammatyurt law enforcers blocked a private house. According to power agents, members of the 'Kizilyurt' terrorist grouping were inside the house. The active phase of the special operation in Bammatyurt is over, the source told the 'Caucasian Knot' correspondent. 'The militants barricaded in the house were invited to surrender, but they refused and started shooting and throwing grenades at the power agents. In the course of the firefight those in the house were killed,' said the source." (Caucasian Knot, 12 February 2014b)

"On February 14, at 1:15 p.m. Moscow time, the CTO regime was introduced in the village of Novogagatli, Khasavyurt District of Dagestan. Power agents blocked a private house in the outskirt of the village. During the negotiations, elderly man and a woman went out of the house. The four

men, remaining inside, including the son of the elderly people, refused to surrender and opened fire. They all were killed by response fire." (Caucasian Knot, 17 February 2014)

SOURCES: (all links accessed at 20 February 2014)

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