

KBR Interior Minister: Republic's Militants Well-Organized and Trained

Bomb disposal experts with the Interior Ministry for the Southern Federal District's counter-terrorist Center 'T' defused a large bomb in a wooded area three kilometers outside the village of Babugent in the Cherkesk district of the Kabardino-Balkaria Republic (KBR), Kavkazky Uzel reported on February 28. "The explosive device was located in a hiding place," a source in the KBR Interior Ministry told the website. "It consisted of a gas-cylinder with a capacity of 27 liters, four bags with a mixture of ammonium nitrate and aluminum powder, a five-liter plastic canister of kerosene and a demolition cord." KBR Interior Minister Yury Tomchak told a meeting of the ministry's public council on February 26 that 53 members of "illegal armed formations" are wanted by the republican authorities, Interfax reported. "Until recently the law-enforcement bodies were searching for 42 NFV [illegal armed formation] members, 14 of whom are on the federal wanted list and 10 who are on the international wanted list," Tomchak said. He added that the republic's Interior Ministry, with the assistance of the republican branch of the Federal Security Service (FSB) and the Investigative Committee of the Prosecutor General's Office, have put another 11 members of "illegal armed formations" on the republic's wanted list over the last two weeks.



The republic's law-enforcement bodies are facing "a well-organized, trained and deeply clandestine underground, whose members undergo training in camps of the militants on the territory of the North Caucasus region, and even in KBR," Tomchak said. "The effectiveness of the fight against extremism depends on resolving the task of blocking the channels of financing for the NVFs."

According to Kavkazky Uzel, 12 people, including Anzor Astemirov (aka Amir Seifullah), leader of the Kabardino-Balkaria Jamaat and the rebel Caucasus Front's Kabardino-Balkarian sector, are wanted in connection with last November's murder of nine forest rangers and hunters (Chechnya Weekly, November 8 and 21, 2007). Citing the Interior Ministry, the website reported that the 12 wanted men were also involved in the murder of the head of Kabardino-Balkaria's regional anti-organized crime directorate, Colonel Anatoly Kyarov, in Nalchik last month (see Eurasia Daily Monitor, January 14). Kyarov was in charge of a special unit that targeted Astemirov (Chechnya Weekly, January 17.) Kavkazky Uzel reported that forensic testing had established that the forest rangers and hunters and Kyarov were all shot from the same automatic rifle.

Meanwhile, Kavkazky Uzel reported on February 21 that Magomed Abubakarov, a member of the Chechen Republic's collegium of lawyers who is defending Rasul Kudaev, the KBR resident who was held in the U.S. detention facility at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, and subsequently arrested for allegedly participating in the October 2005 rebel raid on Nalchik, appealed the KBR prosecutor's office on February 21 concerning the detention of Kudaev's mother, Fatima Tekaeva, and his brother, Arsen Mokaev. Abubakarov said in his appeal that Fatima Tekaeva was illegally detained while on her way to work on February 14 by several policemen wearing masks, who then took her to the headquarters of Center 'T'. The lawyer said that police seized from her home material related to the criminal case against Rasul Kudaev, including evidence proving his innocence and documents about his medical problems in the Nalchik pretrial detention center where he remains incarcerated. Tekaeva herself said that during her six-hour detention she was questioned about the murder of the forest rangers and hunters and the murder of Kyarov, as well as about events in Chechnya and Ingushetia. She said her son Arsen Mokaev, who was detained that same day, was beaten while in detention.

On January 16, Amnesty International issued an "Urgent Action" appeal concerning Rasul Kudaev. It noted, among other things, that prison authorities were finally allowing Kudaev, who reportedly has a liver condition, to receive "limited medical treatment" after months of refusing to pass on to him medication his mother was bringing while visiting him in prison.

Amnesty International noted that it has been campaigning since 2005 on behalf of Kudaev, who was allegedly tortured following his October 2005 arrest on suspicion of involvement in the armed attack on Nalchik. "The organization has seen photographs of him, reportedly taken in detention shortly after the alleged torture, spoken to eyewitnesses and reviewed medical records that appear to support the allegations of torture," the human rights group wrote. "Since October 2005, Rasul Kudaev's lawyers have repeatedly tried, without success, to get the local prosecutor's office to open an investigation into these allegations of torture. A number of the other 59 defendants, charged with involvement

in the attack, allege they were also tortured and ill-treated in order to extract their 'confessions'." Preliminary hearings against the 59 defendants began last October.

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Putin Decorates Zyazikov for “Services to the Fatherland”

President Vladimir Putin signed a decree awarding Ingushetia’s president, Murat Zyazikov, an Order “For Services to the Fatherland,” third degree, Newsru.com reported on February 26. The press service of Ingushetia’s president said Zyazikov had been awarded for his “large contribution to the republic’s socio-economic development and many years of fruitful work.” As Kavkazky Uzel noted on February 29, Ingushetia has one of the highest unemployment rates in Russia: according to the Russian Federation Statistics agency (Rosstat), 52.6 percent of Ingushetia’s economically active population were unemployed as of the end of 2007, up from 43 percent as of June 2007. According to the website, in neighboring Chechnya, which has even higher unemployment, the rate nonetheless dropped last year—from 70 percent in June 2007 to 61.5 percent as of December 2007.



In addition, food prices in Ingushetia are rising, as they are in the rest of Russia, and gasoline prices in Ingushetia are the highest in southern Russia. Citing the independent Ingushetiya.ru website, Kavkazky Uzel reported that more and more residents of Ingushetia are moving abroad in search of better living standards.

The Memorial human rights group stated in a report on Ingushetia released earlier this month that the situation in Ingushetia is heading toward a “catastrophe” (Chechnya Weekly, February 14). According to Newsru.com, Memorial’s report, citing the office of Ingushetia’s prosecutor, says that the number of attacks by rebels on security personnel increased 85 percent in 2007 over 2006 and that the security forces, in their turn, committed gross violations of human rights. “The cruel tactic of counter-terror being used in Ingushetia is reminiscent of Chechnya in 2000-2003,” the report says.

Memorial’s report also states that Ingushetia is in the midst of a political crisis. “The current leadership of Ingushetia is incapable of influencing the situation, cannot resolve a single one of the urgent problems, cannot protect the population from militant attacks or the lawlessness of the siloviki, cannot provide for economic development, cannot create jobs, cannot defend what a majority of the population sees as national interests,” it states. While a majority of Ingushetia’s people are forced to endure such hardships, luxurious mansions belonging to officials are sprouting up in the republic, Memorial says in its report. “Dissatisfaction within society has reached critical mass, however no democratic mechanisms remain to influence the authorities,” the report states.

Meanwhile, Itar-Tass reported that three militants died in a shootout with FSB personnel during a special operation in Nazran on February 28. The news agency quoted an FSB source as saying that the militants opened fire with automatic rifles and grenade launchers on security forces who approached a home in Nazran’s Altievo municipal district. Two militants were fatally wounded in the shootout while a female “terrorist” killed herself by detonating a bomb. Ingushetiya.ru, however, citing an unnamed official in Ingushetia’s Interior Ministry, reported that all three of those killed in the shootout were women. A member of the security forces was reportedly wounded in the battle. Earlier on February 28, Russian news agencies report that Interior Ministry and FSB forces had killed five militants who had been tracked to a private home in Nazran’s Gamurzievo district. A woman was reportedly among the five killed in that special operation.

On February 27, a security officer was wounded when a vehicle carrying three security officers hit a mine in the village of Ordzhonikidzevskaya in Ingushetia’s Sunzha district. On February 22, a policeman and two local residents were injured when unidentified attackers fired on a police car on the Karabulak-Nazran road, RIA Novosti reported. (See the articles by Andrei Smirnov and Mairbek Vatchagaev below.)

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Kadyrov Meets with Memorial Activists

Members of the Memorial human rights group met with Chechen President Ramzan Kadyrov on February 22. Kavkazky Uzel on February 28 quoted the chairman of the board of the Memorial human rights center, Oleg Orlov, as saying of that a "mutual point of view" had more or less been reached during the meeting on a majority of issues. "The human rights activists and the Chechen authorities demonstrated identical views on the need to review the masses of criminal cases against Chechnya's civilian population, to punish those guilty of gross human rights violations in the republic [and] to begin work by forensic medical laboratories to identify the bodies of those killed," Orlov said. "We agreed with one another that people must live in their homes and temporary accommodation centers (PVRs) [shut down]; that people must not be kidnapped; that, in general, human rights need to be observed."

According to Kavkazky Uzel, there were also areas of disagreement, with the Memorial staffers telling Kadyrov and other members of the Chechen administration that Chechen law-enforcement bodies, and not only federal security structures, have frequently abducted and held people illegally. The human rights activists said there are illegal prisons on the grounds of the Akhmad-khadzhi Kadyrov Patrol-Sentry Service Regiment No. 2 (PPSM-2), among other places. Orlov said Kadyrov and other Chechen officials denied that Chechen law-enforcement personnel are involved in such crimes but admitted that former Chechen Deputy Interior Minister Alambek Yasaev, who commanded PPSM-2 before resigning at the end of last year, had been involved in crimes. Orlov quoted Kadyrov as saying that information about Yasaev's crimes had been sent to Moscow and adding that "thank God, he is no longer in the law-enforcement system or in the Chechen Republic." According to Orlov, the Chechen officials also denied that there are illegal prisons in the village of Goiti, where the two Aushev brothers, residents of the village of Surkhakhi in Ingushetia who were kidnapped from the Chechen capital of Grozny in September and released following protests in Nazran, were reportedly held (Chechnya Weekly, December 13 and September 13, 20 and 27, 2007).

"At the same time, we stated with satisfaction that at the current moment the situation involving torture in Chechnya has greatly improved," Orlov said. "At any rate, reports about it [torture] have become significantly fewer. We believe this is an objective reality."

According to Orlov, Kadyrov also denied that there have been rights violations in the course of resettling residents of temporary accommodation centers (PVRs) located in Grozny. However, Orlov added that Kadyrov had demonstrated a "very constructive approach" by offering to take Memorial's information about such cases and work together with Memorial to verify it.

Kadyrov, for his part, said on February 22 after meeting with the Memorial staffers that "in the Chechen Republic there is not a single subject that is closed to human rights activists," Kavkazky Uzel reported on February 23. "I am ready to render assistance in studying any problem, to consider any suggestion by human rights organizations, and I believe that the end result will be better if we resolve these problems together." According to the website, Kadyrov said that he himself had lost those nearest and dearest to him "for the sake of establishing order and ensuring human rights in the Chechen Republic." He insisted that he is the person "most interested" in ensuring that no one's rights in Chechnya are infringed upon. "For that, I am doing and am ready to do everything possible; however, the actions of not all of the law-enforcement bodies depend on me," Kadyrov said. "Many of these are directly subordinated to the central departments, and this explains why representatives of the power structures so far have not take measures concerning the many crimes committed in Chechnya."

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Chechens and Ingush Mark Anniversary of Stalin's Deportation

February 23 marked the 64th anniversary of Soviet dictator Josef Stalin's mass deportation of the Chechen and Ingush people to Central Asia. Prague Watchdog reported on February 23 that ceremonies in memory of the deportation were held that day in Chechnya, Ingushetia, Moscow and several European capitals. Kavkazky Uzel on February 23 quoted Ingush human rights activist Magomed Mutsolgov as saying: "I believe that it is the duty of the entire nation to remember the



terrible ordeal that fell to our people's lot—hunger and cold that took half the Ingush people; hostility on the part of the local population in the places of exile; the stigma of being a 'traitor nation', even though thousands of Ingush gave their lives in the victory over the German fascists. The country must remember this so that nothing similar is ever repeated. At the moment I cannot say that this is so. The present time is also not peaceful and quiet for the Ingush. But a similar tragedy must not be repeated. My father lost his parents and sister in the deportation. Thus the deportation meant that I never had the opportunity to see my grandfather and grandmother."

Kavkazky Uzel quoted Madinat Albakova, a resident of the Ingush village of Kantyshevo, as saying: "I was a young girl during the period of the deportation. And I remember that day very well. Not only that we were driven from our own homes like a herd; we were not allowed to take necessities with us, even for sustenance. We were driven into freight cars, in which, I think, present-day people would not survive. We were accompanied everywhere by extremely unsanitary conditions. When someone in the car died of hunger or cold, the body was thrown out of the car into the snow, so that the entire route of our movement was strewn with bodies. It was a terrible ordeal for the Ingush, since burying someone according to Islamic rituals means so much to us. Our people were humiliated for no reason. But we withstood it; we lived in hope of returning."

Kavkazky Uzel also quoted an anonymous local human rights activist in Ingushetia as saying: "The preparations for carrying out the deportation were carefully concealed. NKVD troops who were brought into Checheno-Ingushetia were disguised in regular military uniforms. They told people that the troops were gathering for a large-scale exercise in the mountains. The local residents, who didn't suspect anything, generally received the troops cordially. The deportation operation began at dawn. Families were given no more than an hour to pack their belongings; the slightest insubordination was thwarted with the use of weapons."

One of those deported, Bashir Zangiev, told Kavkazky Uzel: "Those were terrible days. I was seven years old at the time, and I remember certain moments, albeit vaguely. Early in the morning, soldiers rapped out our door and ordered us to get dressed quickly and follow them. We were allowed to take only what was most necessary. With rifles aimed at us, we were stuffed into freight cars unfit for transporting people. Any attempt to run away and you were shot without warning. We traveled for several days. The cars were unbearably cold. The train stopped at some stations, but we were not permitted to get out, even for emergencies." Zangiev said that those deported were given practically no food, fuel or medical care and that thousands of people, particularly children and old people, died along the way from the cold, hunger or disease. According to Kavkazky Uzel, those who survived the deportation were, upon their arrival in Central Asia, divided into small groups, placed in semi-destroyed barracks or sheds and forced to live under a very strict regime that did not permit them to leave their immediate area.

According to Kavkazky Uzel, some 387,000 Chechens were deported in February 1944. While, according to official documents, 90,000 Ingush were also deported, the real number of Ingush deported exceeds 134,000, the website reported. "More than 50,000 of them died en route from hunger, cold and disease," said Maryam Yandiev, head of the Ingush branch of the Memorial human rights group. He added that also taking into consideration how many people were not born because of the deportation, it has to be considered a "demographic catastrophe" for the Ingush.

Other groups in the Caucasus were also victims of Stalin's deportations in 1943-44: according to Memorial, 101,000 people were deported from Kalmykia; 70,000 from Karachaevo-Cherkessia; 37,000 from Kabardino-Balkaria. In addition, 100,000 Meskhetian Turks and other ethnic groups in the Caucasus were deported.

Prague Watchdog on February 23 reported that in a survey taken in Ingushetia about the deportation, 73 percent of the respondents said it has still not been erased from the memory of the Ingush people while 14 percent said it has more or less been erased from their memory (according to the website, the latter were aged 20-25 and

predominantly female). Seventy-two percent of those surveyed said the deportation had had a personal impact on them while only 15 percent said they had not been affected.

Most of the respondents said that the perpetrators of the crime against the Ingush people were Stalin and the Soviet state, while other put the blame on "anyone who signed up," Soviet secret police chief Lavrenty Beria, "the former and the present government", the Ossetians and Russia.

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Why Are Ingushetia's Rebels so Successful?

By Andrei Smirnov

Out of all the regions of the North Caucasus, Ingushetia is focused on most today. People inside and outside Russia have different versions for why the situation in this republic has become so unstable even compared with "hot" regions such as Chechnya or Dagestan. Many observers explain the instability by pointing to special problems within Ingush society, including the conflict between the Ingush and their neighbors in North Ossetia, or to power struggles between various Ingush clans. Other political scientists and journalists say that the main reason for the current chaos in Ingushetia lies in the republic's economic problems, including unemployment and corruption. Many say that the roots of the conflict in Ingushetia can be found in Moscow. Some Russian officials point to Washington or al-Qaeda, while human rights activists insist that the numerous human rights violations in Ingushetia are the main destabilizing factor there.

The key question, however, is why one should look at Ingushetia as an isolated case while ignoring the general situation in the North Caucasus. It is indeed true that the instability in the republic is primarily the result of successful attacks by local insurgents, but the insurgency is operating not only in Ingushetia but also throughout the North Caucasus. The only difference between the rebels in Ingushetia and the rebels in Dagestan, for example, is that the Ingush militants are more successful in their actions and therefore closer to their goal of taking control of the republic. What we see now in Ingushetia is an example of what will happen in other Caucasian regions if the insurgency is more successful in those areas.

Facing strong pressure from the Russian security forces, the militants in Chechnya, Kabardino-Balkaria and Dagestan have to act more cautiously and hide their main forces in the local mountain areas. Many militants who operate in the cities of these republics were killed by police and FSB troops, who managed to obtain information about the rebels' whereabouts. In Ingush settlements, local insurgents operate freely, hunting for policemen and FSB officers. In 2007, only one rebel was killed in the republic while the military, police and FSB lost dozens of servicemen dead or wounded. While security forces in Dagestan and the Chechen capital Grozny regularly surround small rebel groups in apartment blocks or private houses and destroy them, not a single operation of that kind was conducted in Ingushetia last year. This shows that the FSB in Ingushetia is experiencing serious intelligence problems. At the same time, the rebels easily identify secret FSB car patrols on the streets of Ingush settlements and attack them. On January 23, rebels attacked a minibus carrying eight FSB officers in the center of Nazran, Ingushetia's largest city. It should be noted that this attack occurred just a day after a meeting of the local Anti-Terrorist Commission at which a resolution was adopted again to intensify the search for "members of illegal armed formations."

So, why have the rebels in Ingushetia, the smallest Caucasian republic, managed to act so successfully against the authorities, unlike the rebels in other parts of the Caucasus?

The theory of counter-guerrilla warfare states that to destroy an insurgency in a region, military commanders need to find out where guerrillas have their bases, to know the routes along which they move and to be informed their plans and sources of intelligence and material support. The guerrillas need to be cut off from support by the local population and from outside, and demoralized from within. The authorities need to take specific political, economic, social and other measures to win over the civilian population and prevent the insurgents from recruiting new people. Rebel squads need to be eliminated and steps taken to prevent the guerrillas from penetrating settlements in order to conduct attacks on government, police and military facilities.

Conversely, the guerrillas need to expand the area under their control, to hide their bases and routes, to make efforts to increase support from the population, to destroy the intelligence network of the counter-insurgency forces in the villages and to prevent agents of the security services from penetrating their ranks.

It should be noted that the rebels in Ingushetia have done much to see their plans through and foil those of security officials. First, the rebels have managed to eliminate the local police force as an effective counter-insurgency tool. During the large-scale raid on the republic in June 2004, the rebels destroyed the core of the Ingush police. After that, they only needed to kill off individual officers who remained active in fighting the insurgency, such as Dzhabrail

Kostoev, Ingushetia's deputy interior minister, and Musa Nalgiev, commander of the Ingush police force's special-task unit. The demoralization of the police resulted in the destruction of the security forces' intelligence network throughout the republic. The lack of agents allowed the rebels to hide and set up bases in settlements. The rebels' use of cars in ambushes against police, FSB and military forces makes the rebels so mobile that the security forces are unable to surround them, while the lack of intelligence prevents the counter-insurgency forces from locating rebels in the settlements. Large-scale security sweeps also do not work because, as the security forces' intelligence network gets weaker, the intelligence network of the militancy is in fact growing stronger. When FSB Special Forces move into a village, they are ambushed or the rebels simply leave the settlement in advance. Those who are detained are usually unarmed civilians who perhaps know something about the rebels but are not involved in insurgent activities.

Unlike in Dagestan, where the local police is still strong enough to fight the insurgents, or in Chechnya, where there are military squads composed of former militants who help Russian troops search for guerrillas, the police in Ingushetia is weak and full of secret insurgent sympathizers. There is almost no basis on which to form paramilitary formations that could help fight the insurgency. All attempts by the FSB to find traitors inside the insurgency have failed completely. Alikhan Kalimatov, an FSB colonel whose mission was to find such traitors, was shot dead in September 2007.

The authorities have also failed to get control the roads and routes along which the Ingush rebels move. The fact that the rebels use cars for their operations indicates how easily they can move around Ingushetia.

Unlike in Dagestan or Kabardino-Balkaria, the rebels in Ingushetia feel so strong that, in addition to fighting the security forces, they are attempting to establish control over the region. The top Caucasian rebel leader, Dokka Umarov, said that "everywhere a mujahideen puts his foot Sharia law should be established." Since 2006, the militants in Ingushetia have been establishing Sharia law systematically, destroying movie houses and saunas, burning liquor stores, gambling centers and killing fortune-tellers, whom Islam regards as grave sinners. They also attack private houses of top Ingush officials infamous for their corruption and bribery.

Security officials, who cannot defend themselves, have been unable to prevent this, thereby increasing the authority of the rebels in the eyes of the population and discrediting the official bodies, which people regard as weak and ineffective. It should be understood that this process is not peculiar to Ingushetia and that if the rebels in the other Caucasian republics become as successful as those in Ingushetia, we will see the same situation develop there.

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Ingushetia Spins Further Out of Control

By Mairbek Vatchagaev

For some time now, bad news coming out of Ingushetia has been treated as “business as usual”: reports of explosions, arrests and assassinations have become a trademark of this North Caucasus region. In part, this is reminiscent of the earlier times in Chechnya, but the analogy does not always hold. The difference between Chechnya and Ingushetia is that in the case of the latter, the conflict cuts across multiple sectors of society: there is the Ingush intelligentsia against the government; the Sharia Jamaat and its leader Magas against the official powers; and Ingush businessmen against each other in a fight over spheres of influence.

Few today would deny that the biggest and the most acute concerns for both the local and federal governments are over the operations of the Sharia Jamaat under the leadership of Amir Magas (Akhmed Yevloev). Yevloev also commands the military units of the North Caucasus resistance movement as the successor to Shamil Basaev, who was assassinated in Ingushetia on the night of July 9, 2006.

A brief review of only last week’s news (February 18-24) finds reports of almost daily losses among law-enforcement personnel, while information on casualties among the rebel fighters is much harder to come by. For instance:

February 23: “On Saturday unidentified attackers fired on a vehicle carrying local policemen in the village of Ordzhonikidzevskaya in Ingushetia’s Suzhenski district (Interfax). Yusup Dzarakhov, a member of the traffic police corps of the Ministry of Interior of the Russian Federation in Ingushetia, was shot near the Yandare village of Nazran district (Kavkazky Uzel). Starting on February 23, all Interior Ministry troops began operating in an emergency mode due to the upcoming Russian presidential elections in Russia (Interfax-Yug).

February 22: Unknown individuals thought to be driving a VAZ-2107 vehicle in Nazran’s Barsuki district fired automatic weapons on a UAZ-469 vehicle transporting the personnel of the Interior Ministry’s Nazran department.

February 20: One policeman was killed and another wounded during an armed attack on a post located on the Caucasus highway in Nazran.

February 19: A VAZ 2107 vehicle carrying an official came under fire (Ingushetiya.ru); that same evening, a movie theatre in Nazran was fired on (Newsru.com, February 19).

February 18: An explosive device was detonated in the vehicle of an employee of the Interior Ministry’s Nazran department in an apparent assassination attempt (Ingushetiya.ru). Later that evening, a group of unknown persons fired machine guns and grenade launchers at the residence of Ibrahim Malsagov, the chairman of the Government of the Republic of Ingushetia (Ingushetiya.ru).

Thus, attacks against law-enforcement personnel occur almost daily. This level of conflict exists in only two regions of the North Caucasus, Ingushetia and Dagestan, making these two republics the least stable in the region and posing the greatest challenge for Moscow when it comes to trying to present a picture of a region at peace.

As for the relationship between the opposition and the government of Ingushetia, it is worth noting that things have escalated to a new level of intensity. After failed attempts to organize protests against the actions of Ingushetia’s president, Murat Zyazikov (September 19, 2007; January 26, 2008; and February 23, 2008), the opposition began compiling what may be described as parallel lists of the future parliament of Ingushetia—a process that started with a series of clan (teip) meetings across the republic to elect deputies to represent the teip. These meetings are a new phenomenon, and approximately ten of them have already been held by some of the largest Ingush teips, including the Aushevs, Ozdoevs, Kartoevs, Yevloevs, Kotievs, Nalgievs, Khalukhaevs, Sultygovs, etc. According to the opposition’s plan, the elected teip deputies will form a Mekh-Khel, a traditional council of the nation or Council of Elders. It will, of course, be a non-government organization, but the fact that its members have been elected at meetings of each of the clans will give it a strong leverage against the power bodies that Murat Zyazikov has staffed with United Russia party members.

The opposition also plans to boycott the Russian presidential elections set for early March and to use the boycott to demonstrate that the official powers will yet again manipulate the numbers in order to deliver a fantastic percentage of votes to please Moscow and Vladimir Putin personally. The local governments of the North Caucasus are running an informal competition for securing the highest popular election turnout, so we can expect more numbers like 99 percent in support of Dmitry Medvedev, the new Russian president who has already been pre-elected by Vladimir Putin.

One should also note another development that has remained off the mass media's radar. A visit by a group of Ingush youth supporters of the pro-Kremlin United Russia party to Chechnya to attend meetings with President Ramzan Kadyrov (www.edinros.ru/news.html?id=128050), along with a concurrent address by Ingush President Murat Zyazikov to Chechen and Ingush youth (<http://chechnya.gov.ru/page.php?r=116&id=26>), may indicate that the two leaders of the adjacent republics are coordinating their activities. Evidently, the authorities in Moscow have decided that joint actions involving the Chechen and Ingush leaderships may change the situation in Ingushetia for the better.

Additionally, Ramzan Kadyrov has for the first time voiced public criticism of the Ingush opposition and support for the policies of Murat Zyazikov. Kadyrov's statements that the "well-fed" opposition is trying to destabilize the situation in Ingushetia was met with an outraged response published online by Ingushetia's only opposition web portal, Ingushetiya.ru, under the self-explanatory headline "Ramzan Kadyrov, Who Drowned the Chechen People in Blood, is Trying to Meddle in Ingushetia's Affairs" (Ingushetiya.ru, February 22, 2008). The worst-case scenario for the Ingush would be if Zyazikov's position in Ingushetia were strengthened the way Kadyrov's was in Chechnya. In spite of overwhelming support from Moscow, Zyazikov has still failed to consolidate power or become even a pale imitation of his Chechen counterpart.

As for the internal squabbles of Ingushetia's businessmen, despite the departure of the Gutseriev teip from Ingushetia, the government has not only failed to defeat its once-powerful opponent, Mikhail Gutseriev, but the power struggle in Ingushetia has become a corruption-mired conflict between various clans. If before there was only Gutseriev, now there are numerous smaller Ingush businesses attempting to secure their positions in the available markets and recruit new patrons among officials in the Kremlin administration in Moscow.

The developments in Ingushetia, therefore, are somewhat similar to the situation in Dagestan, where lines of conflict in various areas—politics, civil society and the market—have also been drawn. As in Dagestan, it is certain that the Russian government's actions in Ingushetia will not serve to promote peace in the republic. On the contrary, what will follow is the radicalization of society, which, seeing no chance to influence the government, will become more belligerent toward it. The Russian government may win back some support in Ingushetia when the new Russian president comes to office and the opposition attempts to use him to put pressure on Murat Zyazikov. However, after a few months the people will recognize that the change of presidential guard does not equal systemic change, and things will remain as they were under Putin. Therefore, during the next year or two Ingushetia will remain a political battlefield between various forces in Ingush society. It should also be noted that there is no single leader in Ingushetia capable of bringing people to the streets and becoming a real opposition to the official government.

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