

Zyazikov Dismisses His Cabinet

Ingushetian President Murat Zyazikov on March 12 dismissed his cabinet, which is chaired by Ibragim Malsagov, as well as the republic's local administration heads. Newsru.com reported that the dismissed cabinet will remain in place until a new one is formed and that First Vice-Premier Khov Yevloev will serve as the republican government's acting chairman, replacing Malsagov.



"Today, new tasks in the sphere of state-legal construction, and also an increase of activity in carrying out reforms in the economic and social spheres, stand before us," Interfax quoted Zyazikov as saying after dismissing the cabinet. He added that the "many successes" in the work of the government needed to be noted but that "some of the problems remain unsolved." Referring to the March 2 election for Ingushetia's legislature, the People's Assembly, Zyazikov said: "Taking into consideration all democratic principles, a new parliament has been elected in the republic, and today we need to put more ambitious tasks before the bodies of power of Ingushetia." He also said that "the government and parliament need to work in a regime of constant open exchange of opinions with the population in order to resolve urgent tasks more effectively."

The opposition Ingushetiya.ru website quoted the political analyst Amir Yevloev as saying that Zyazikov's dismissal of the cabinet and local administration heads was a public relations stunt and that no one will really lose their jobs. "There will be no changes, except that the minister of education [Ismail Tankiev], having become a deputy in the RI (Republic of Ingushetia) People's Assembly, will be replaced," Yevloev said. "The remaining ministers have paid the Ingush president bribes for their positions."

Zyazikov's move came just two days after an opposition "extraordinary congress of the Ingush people" sent an appeal to President Vladimir Putin and his successor Dmitry Medvedev, calling on them to impose order in the republic and "stop the tyranny of Zyazikov's bureaucratic clique." The appeal, which was posted on Ingushetiya.ru, stated that "the people of Ingushetia have the impression that the central authorities of Russia have no mechanisms of influence on the situation in the republic." It continued: "The current leadership of Ingushetia, contrary to the constitution of the Russian Federation and all legislative acts, is engaged in terror and excess with respect to citizens - the tyranny of the power structures, corrupt officials and bribe-takers is thriving in the republic and unemployment has reached extreme limits, yet officials from the central apparatus [in Moscow] make claims about 'Ingushetia's dynamic development'."

The appeal also stated that instances of kidnapping apparently carried out by the special services have not been investigated and are "collecting dust in the safes of investigators." It also stated that excesses committed by the special services during their operations in Ingushetia have not only failed to improve the criminal situation in the republic, but in fact worsened it. "During the past three years, crimes committed by unidentified person with goals of destroying property with the use of firearms, explosive devices, hand grenades, grenade launcher and other weapons have increased by many times," the appeal read.

Meanwhile, Kavkazky Uzel reported on March 12 that a support group for Maksharip Aushev, an organizer of the January 26 opposition rally in Nazran that was forcibly disbursed by riot police (Chechnya Weekly, January 31), plans to hold a series of protests in Ingushetia and other parts of Russia to demand that he and other opposition activists be released from jail. The protesters also plan to condemn corruption and express no confidence in Murat Zyazikov. According to the website, one such protest is set to take place in April. Maksharip Aushev was reportedly arrested in Nazran on February 13 (Chechnya Weekly, February 14).

Meanwhile, the security situation in Ingushetia remains problematic. Interfax reported on March 12 that law-enforcement bodies in Ingushetia had carried out a "counter-terrorist operation" in the village of Troitskaya and that one militant had been killed. "An armed man resisted law-enforcement personnel who were conducting a counter-terrorist operation in the village of Troitskaya, opening fire on them with automatic weapons," a source in the headquarters of the Temporary Group of Forces told the news agency. "A bandit was killed in crossfire when he tried to leave one of the private homes [where he had been] hiding from members of the law-enforcement bodies. Newsru.com identified the slain militant as Rustam Mutsolgov, a 21-year-old Troitskaya resident.

According to investigators, Mutsolgov was suspected of having carried out "sabotage-terrorist actions" against federal forces, possibly including an armed attack on a Defense Ministry unit based in Troitskaya on March 9 that killed a Russian serviceman. Rustam Mutsolgov's sister, Zarema, was reportedly also located in the private home at the time of the special operation. Kavkazky Uzel quoted witnesses as saying that neither Mutsolgov nor his sister mounted armed resistance but had simply tried to flee. According to the website, Rustam Mutsolgov, who did not have a regular job but did construction work, was considered religious, as were his wife, sister and mother. The family moved from Karabulak more than a year ago.

Kavkazky Uzel reported that Rustam Mutsolgov was neither on the federal wanted list nor accused of any crimes. However, his older brother, Zaur Mutsolgov, is serving a 25-year prison term for allegedly participating in the rebel attack on law-enforcement targets in Ingushetia that took place on June 22, 2004. Mutsolgov's sister Zarema was the wife of Ibragim Gardanov, aka Adam, who was killed by security forces in February 2007.

Interfax reported on March 9 that unidentified gunmen in a VAZ-2115 car fired on KamAZ truck in Troitskaya, killing a contract serviceman named Oleg Nikitin. Another serviceman who was in the truck at the time it was attacked was unharmed.

A second attack on a Defense Ministry post in Troitskaya took place on March 10 when unidentified gunmen fired automatic weapons at a guard-post located roughly 150 meters from the control-admission station for the 503rd Motorized Infantry Regiment of the Defense Ministry's 58th Army. According to Interfax, the servicemen returned fire and the attackers withdrew. None of the servicemen was hurt.

RIA Novosti reported on March 8 that additional troops from federal Interior Ministry's Interior Troops had been deployed in Nazran along with armored personnel carriers. The news agency quoted sources inside Ingushetia's leadership as saying that units permanently deployed in Ingushetia had been deployed in Nazran to bolster security in connection with the holiday (an apparent reference to International Women's Day). However, Agence France-Presse quoted Ingush opposition politician Magomed Khazbiev as telling Echo Moskvyy radio that the troops were closing off Nazran in order to prevent delegates from attending a planned opposition congress. "They were stopped and no one has been able to get through to the building where the congress is meant to take place," he said.

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<http://www.jamestown.org/terrorism/news/article.php?articleid=2374027>

North Ossetia's Anti-Organized Crime Chief Assassinated

The head of North Ossetia's anti-organized crime unit (UBOP, formerly known as RUBOP), Mark Metsaev, was killed in the republican capital Vladikavkaz on March 7. Agence France-Presse reported that Metsaev "died in a hail of automatic gunfire following a minor car accident that appeared to have been part of the assassination plan." Interfax on March 8 quoted North Ossetian Deputy Interior Minister Soslan Sikoev as saying that a car rammed the police jeep Metsaev was traveling in and that the jeep was then fired on from two different directions. Itar-Tass quoted Sikoev as saying that Metsaev's murder was "a carefully planned act."



The "Kataib al-Khoul" Ossetian Jamaat claimed responsibility for the killing of Mark Metsaev in a statement posted on the rebel Kavkaz-Center website on March 8. The statement, which was signed by the jamaat's deputy amir, Khuzeifoi (who was further identified as being located in "Vilayat Iriston, Caucasus Emirate"), called Metsaev an "enemy of Allah" and said he had earlier been warned that "we know about his orders for sadistic torture, which is endured by those caught in RUBOP torture chambers, and his personal participation in it." The statement also claimed that "young mujahideen from one of the jamaats operating on the territory of the Mozdok district of Iriston [North Ossetia] and the territory of Kabarda and Balkaria" who were wounded in a battle earlier this year and taken prisoner were being tortured by "satans in human form from RUBOP and the FSB." The statement provided details of the operation in which Metsaev was murdered.

Some observers have noted similarities between Metsaev's assassination and the murder of Anatoly Kyarov, who was the UBOP chief in Kabardino-Balkaria and headed a special unit that targeted the leader of the Kabardino-Balkarian section of the Caucasus rebel front Anzor Astemirov (aka Seifullah) (Chechnya Weekly, January 17).

Meanwhile, a police post on the outskirts of the village of Khasanya, which is located in the suburbs of Kabardino-Balkaria's capital Nalchik, came under fire from unidentified gunmen on March 10. According to Kavkazky Uzel, the gunfire came from several different directions and the police operating the post returned fire. While none of the policemen was injured in the incident, several civilians were hit by gunfire. One of the victims—identified as Aslan Tokumaev, a 26-year-old Khasanya resident—died in the hospital on March 12.

Kavkazky Uzel reported on March 13 that Khasanya residents had written the village's administration asking it to intercede with authorities to get the police post on the village's outskirts moved because it is a target of attacks by militants and thus endangers local residents. One resident said the police post has come under attack three times just in the last half year alone.

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Dagestan: Bombings, Shootings and an Armed Raid on a Power Company

An improvised explosive device (IED) apparently targeted at a police car went off in Makhachkala, Dagestan's capital, on March 11, RIA Novosti reported. The bomb, which was estimated to contain 1.2 grams of TNT equivalent and was packed with bolts and screws, was detonated as a police patrol car was passing by the city's Marrakesh banquet hall. None of the policemen was hurt and the police car sustained only a few holes caused by shrapnel from the IED. That same day, another IED was discovered near an apartment building in Makhachkala and detonated in a controlled explosion using a bomb disposal robot. On February 7, two large explosive devices were discovered and defused in Dagestan's Untsukul'sky district. According to Kavkazky Uzel, the two devices together consisted of five grenades, four TNT blocks weighing a kilogram together, 400 kilograms of saltpeter and two plastic canisters (one with a 10-liter capacity and the other with a 20-liter capacity) filled with aluminum powder.

On March 8, an IED made out of a plastic bottle and packed with screws and nuts detonated in Makhachkala as a police car was passing by. None of the policemen in the car was injured, RIA Novosti reported.

On March 7, unidentified gunmen shot and seriously wounded a cleric from a mosque in the Dagestani town of Khasavyurt. Kavkazky Uzel identified the victim as Mukhammed Gebekov.

Three people were killed in a shootout that took place inside Makhachkala's Marrakesh banquet hall on March 9, ANN News reported. Police found 17 9-mm shell casings at the scene of the crime.

Meanwhile, Reuters reported on March 8 that police in Dagestan had helped an electricity grid operator, MRSK North Caucasus, regain control over sub-stations that had been seized by armed men after the firm cut power supplies over non-payments. MRSK North Caucasus said up to 300 men, many armed with rifles, had broken into five sub-stations in Dagestan over the preceding week, beating staff and switching the power back on for parts of Makhachkala.

According to Reuters, MRSK North Caucasus said that Makhachkala owed it 600 million rubles (\$25.07 million) and blamed the local administration for stirring up trouble. "These criminal actions were provoked by the irresponsible position of the municipal authorities," the company said in a statement. Makhachkala Mayor Said Amirov accused Russia's electricity monopoly Unified Energy System (UES), which owns MRSK North Caucasus, of maneuvering to try to seize Makhachkala's electricity distribution network. "Only barbarians and foreign invaders are capable of such actions," Amirov said of the power cuts in a statement published on the city administration's website.

Electricity shortages that began in Dagestan last year led to power cuts that in turn triggered protests, with protesters reportedly even clashing with police in late December (Chechnya Weekly, January 17).

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Chechnya Weekly

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Briefs

- U.S. State Department Details Rights Abuses in the North Caucasus

The U.S. State Department this past week released its annual human rights report— "Country Reports on Human Rights Practices-2007"—and the section on Russia contains quite a bit of reporting on Chechnya and the North Caucasus. "The government's human rights record remained poor in the North Caucasus, where the government in Chechnya forcibly reined in the Islamist insurgency that replaced the separatist insurgency in Chechnya as the main source of conflict," it states. "Government security forces were allegedly involved in unlawful killings, politically motivated abductions and disappearances in Chechnya, Ingushetiya and elsewhere in the North Caucasus. Disappearances and kidnappings in Chechnya declined, as Chechen President Ramzan Kadyrov established authoritarian and repressive control over the republic, and federal forces withdrew. Federal and local security forces continued to act with impunity, especially in targeting families of suspected insurgents, and there were allegations that Kadyrov's private militia engaged in kidnapping and torture. In the neighboring republics of Ingushetiya and Dagestan, there were an increase in violence and abuses committed by security forces."

- Moscow Refuses to Let Demonstrators Mark Anniversary of Maskhadov's Death

Authorities in Moscow refused permission to the Anti-War Club to hold a demonstration in the Russian capital on March 13 to mark the third anniversary of the death of Aslan Maskhadov, the separatist leader and Chechnya's second president, who was killed by security forces in Chechnya on March 8, 2005. One of the Anti-War Club's leaders, Mikhail Kriger, held a one-man protest against the Kremlin's policy in the North Caucasus in Moscow on March 11, Kavkazky Uzel reported.

- Chechen Union of Journalists Quits Russian Union of Journalists

The Chechen Union of Journalists announced on March 7 that it is leaving the Russian Union of Journalists to protest the latter's decision to rescind President Ramzan Kadyrov's membership, which the Chechen chapter had conferred on Kadyrov on March 5. According to Kavkazky Uzel, the Chechen Union of Journalists said that the parent organization's decision was illegal because its charter does not contain legal norms for overriding decisions made by regional branches. Lema Gudaev, who heads the information-analytical department of the Chechen Republic's presidency and government, said on March 6 that the Chechen Union of Journalists had picked the wrong way to express their gratitude toward Ramzan Kadyrov "for everything he has done in terms of supporting the republican press," since their gesture contradicted the Russian Union of Journalists charter (Chechnya Weekly, March 6).

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Uzun Haji's and Dokka Umarov's Emirates: a Retrospective

By Mairbek Vatchagaev

Any present-day event always triggers associations with other episodes already captured by history. Analogies of this sort help to understand the advantages and flaws of current actors, who similarly are most often influenced by the specific personalities and events of the past.

Dokka Umarov's leadership is seemingly inspired by the history of Sheikh Uzun Haji's emirate state, which was located within the same boundaries claimed today by Umarov's Caucasus Emirate. Umarov and those behind him view Haji's emirate as a historical precedent for an Islamic state that existed in more recent times. The website of Dagestan's Sharia Jamaat features long articles on the life of Uzun Haji and other Sufi sheikhs (<http://www.jamaatshariat.com/content/view/69/40/>). All of them are portrayed as great religious scholars (alims), yet the fact that all of them belonged to the Sufi branch of Islam is totally ignored. For instance, in addition to Uzun Haji, the websites cite other Sufi sheikhs, including Gazi Mullah, Shamil, Magomed of Yaragi and Jamaldin of Kazikumykh, in support of the Sharia Jamaat's ideology, and describe them as "the ideologists of Jihad in the Caucasus of Imam Shamil's era (1820s–1850s)" (<http://www.jamaatshariat.com/content/view/178/36/>).



When the Russian empire began to break down in 1917, the collapse of the once-powerful state gave way to the establishment of various entities founded on regional, national and religious allegiances. The latter group included the emirate of a Sufi sheikh, Uzun Haji of Salty (his native village in Dagestan), a follower of the Naqshbandi/Khalidi tarikat. Uzun Haji's emirate [1], while short-lived—it only lasted from September 1919 to March 1920—left a deep impression on the history of the North Caucasus.

Sheikh Uzun Haji, the head of this emirate state, relied primarily on the support of the people of the mountainous part of Chechnya and a part of Dagestan, although his personal belief was that the boundaries of his state extended to Ingushetia and other regions of the Caucasus where Islam was the dominant religion. Incidentally, this is also the position embraced by Dokka Umarov, who maintains that his emirate state covers a much bigger area, but the key difference between them is that Sheikh Uzun Haji was much more of a genuine ruler of the mountainous region of Chechnya and a part of mountainous Dagestan.

Almost single-handedly, Sheikh Uzun Haji defeated one of the most powerful armies of his time, the army of General Denikin, who had conquered virtually all of non-mountainous Chechnya, Ingushetia and Dagestan up to Derbent, and was intending to continue into the mountains until he encountered the organized resistance led by Sheikh Uzun Haji [2]. Similarly, Dokka Umarov commands rebel fighters in the struggle against the Russian army, one of the world's largest, but his successes compared to those of Sheikh Uzun Haji of Salty are much more modest.

In contrast with Sheikh Uzun Haji, Dokka Umarov controls divisions that are much more diverse ethnically than the ones led by Sheikh Uzun Haji—in addition to Chechens, Ingush and Dagestanis, the contingent of today's resistance fighters also include Kabardins, Balkars, Karachais and Nogais.

Dokka Umarov's army is much smaller than that of Sheikh Uzun Haji, who was able to draft up to 10,000 people to take up arms and defeat General Denikin. In this aspect, Dokka Umarov cannot pretend to compete with his historical predecessor.

Sheikh Uzun Haji's state had a much more sophisticated level of organization—his cabinet of ministers included highly educated officials and his fiscal system was strategic (supported in part by tax revenues.) His state printed its own money (though backed by very few real assets) and boasted a much higher-level judicial system staffed by learned religious scholars. In contrast, Dokka Umarov's monetary system depends entirely on outside donations from his sponsors, while his judicial system is operated by those who either have barely graduated or never attended religious educational institutions at all. His ministerial appointments are essentially absent except leaders of certain areas and his General Representative abroad; that is, there is de facto no government, except for Dokka Umarov and his people in the vilayets, who are simultaneously acting as commanders of ethnic jamaats in the republics of the North

Caucasus.

Sheikh Uzun Haji enjoyed a much stronger personal reputation during his time. His scholarly credentials in Islamic theology have never been questioned by anyone, which certainly does not apply to Dokka Umarov. The latter does have advisors who know what they want. However, Umarov personally is far from the field of religious studies; he is simply a practicing Muslim (a Sufi of the Qadiri tarikat, a follower of Ustaz Kunta Haji), but certainly no religious scholar. He is a warrior, and as such, knows much more about warfare, which is precisely the expertise that Sheikh Uzun Haji lacked: his military affairs were handled by his military minister, General Inaluk Arsanukayev Dyshninsky, a native Chechen and a reputed military strategist of his time.

There are also certain similarities between the two emirates when it comes to the people who, due to their work, should have been allies but have parted ways as a result of differences in opinion on the political resolution of the Russia issue. Sheikh Uzun Haji's one-time associate Imam Najjmutdin Gotsinsky from Dagestan became his biggest enemy, opposing Uzun Haji's vision of the political future of the North Caucasus. This scenario virtually mirrors the current situation: the resistance movement has in fact split into two factions—one that is calling for the immediate implementation of an Islamic state and another that sees itself as heir to the idea of Chechen independence—that is, a radical camp and a democratic camp.

In this respect, and with a bit of a stretch, the situation resembles the Irish resistance movement in Northern Ireland, where the political wing, Sinn Féin, operated quite comfortably alongside the faction engaged in armed resistance to Great Britain's rule. Almost the same picture can be found in Spain's Basque region and France's Corsica. Therefore, the Chechens have not really come up with anything new. What happened had to happen—once the resistance movement expanded beyond Chechnya's borders and other North Caucasus ethnicities got involved, a common platform for everyone was needed. The best and simplest way to unify different military units today turned out to be Islam, which for a time makes it possible to address the questions of who is going where and who will get what when the enemy is defeated.

By the end of his life, Sheikh Uzun Haji became the Bolsheviks' number one enemy. This is in spite of the fact that the Bolsheviks themselves hid behind his back during his fight with General Denikin—they realized that he was also capable of defeating them. His sudden death for reasons that are still unknown saved the Soviets from attacks by the North Caucasus emirate. Dokka Umarov would do well to try and emulate, at least to some degree, Sheikh Uzun Haji of Salty, who, as a Sufi sheikh, saw no need to stick to or implement Salafi teachings in any form. Sheikh Uzun Haji relied on his supporters who saw him as a Sufi sheikh, while Dokka Umarov, who until recently was a follower (murid) of Kunta Haji, is trying to find support in the faction of Islamic ideology that enjoys the least popularity in Chechnya and the region as a whole. This clearly indicates his alienation from the absolute majority of the region's populace—that is, from those who follow the tarikat system.

Notes

1. An emirate is one of the forms of an Islamic state.
2. Alexander Uralov (A. Avtorkhanov) *The Murder of Chechen-Ingush People. Ethnic genocide in the USSR. Restoration of the North Caucasus Independence.* Makhachkala, 2002, page 17.

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<http://www.jamestown.org/terrorism/news/article.php?articleid=2374031>

Ramzan Kadyrov Targets the Yamadaev Brothers

By Andrei Smirnov

Some people say that Chechnya's pro-Russian leader, Ramzan Kadyrov, controls the republic firmly and has no rivals, at least in the Chechen pro-Russian camp. However, secret conflicts inside that camp surface from time to time, demonstrating that Kadyrov still has competitors in Chechnya.



Late in 2006, Movladi Baisarov, the commander of the Gorets (Russian for "highlander") squad controlled by the Federal Security Service (FSB), was killed in Moscow by an agent of Kadyrov. About a week before from his murder, Baisarov gave an interview to Moscow News in which he criticized Kadyrov and mentioned some of the crimes committed by Kadyrov's men against Chechen civilians. The Chechen president was apparently able to get rid of Baisarov once Baisarov's murder was sanctioned by the FSB. The FSB leaders thought Baisarov had talked too much, and the kontora (the unofficial name for the FSB in Russia) no longer needed him.

However, Kadyrov did not stop simply with eliminating Baisarov. He initiated a campaign in Russia against Akhmed Khasambekov, head of the Investigation Bureau of the Russian Interior Ministry in Chechnya (ORB-2). Ramzan Kadyrov blamed ORB-2 for all human rights violations committed by security agencies in Chechnya.

In July 2007, Kadyrov forced the Russian authorities to replace Khasambekov with a Chechen police officer loyal to Ramzan. Nevertheless, Akhmed Khasambekov got the position of Deputy Head of the federal Interior Ministry's Main Directorate for the Southern Federal District, so he is still able to control the entities he used to head.

In the wake of Movladi Baisarov's murder and Khasambekov's departure, the Yamadaev brothers' time has come. Ruslan Yamadaev is currently a deputy in the State Duma while Sulim Yamadaev is the commander of the Vostok battalion, which is controlled by Russian military intelligence (GRU). The battalion is also part of the 42nd Russian Army stationed in Chechnya.

Kadyrov is using the same tactics that he used against Baisarov and Akhmed Khasambekov against the Yamadaev brothers. Razman points to the Vostok battalion as the unit responsible for all human rights violations in the region.

On February 26, Ramzan Kadyrov had a meeting in Grozny, the Chechen capital, to discuss the reconstruction process in Vedeno District, one of the "hottest" places in the republic. State Duma deputy Adam Demikhanov, a Kadyrov henchman, and Ruslan Alkhanov, Chechnya's Interior Minister, told Kadyrov about their recent trip to Vedeno. Demilkhanov said that the residents of Vedevo fully support the Chechen president's policy. According to Demikhanov, even relatives of rebels support Razman and condemn the militants. At the same time, civilians in the district complain about abuses committed by members of the Vostok battalion and are demanding that the authorities withdraw the unit from Vedeno. Kadyrov agreed that "if somebody oppresses our civilians we should consider all complaints" (Grozny-Info, February 26).

After the meeting, Demikhanov rushed to the local TV station, where he came down on Vostok more harshly. "The Vostok battalion is responsible for many crimes against civilians," he said. "People complain and ask that the battalion be removed. They (members of battalion) have brought only evil to the district [Vedeno] and to the whole republic. They are of no use. They should be removed" (Forum.msk.ru, February 29).

Thus started a campaign of criticism against Vostok. In an interview with Chechen TV on March 5, Magomed Khambiev, a former rebel field commander who is now a close ally of Ramzan Kadyrov, named Vostok as one of the main reasons why young Chechens are still joining the insurgency. "There is no doubt that the Vostok battalion is a source of discomfort for our young people," Khambiev said. "Its fighters detain anybody they want and beat them. Of course, there are good fighters in the battalion, but most of the unit members are drug addicts who kill people and ignore our traditions and all human laws. The Vostok battalion headed by Sulim Yamadaev commits grave crimes" (Regnum, March 5).

It is noteworthy that Khambiev called Vostok fighters drug addicts. In 2006, Adam Demilkhanov told Moscow News that Movladi Baisarov used heroin. Several days after the interview was published, Demilkhanov himself shot Baisarov in the center of Moscow.

On March 4, Ramzan Kadyrov appointed Chechen Deputy Interior Minister Shemil Magomaev the new head of Vedeno District. Kadyrov is trying his best to demonstrate to the Kremlin that he, unlike Yamadaev, can control the hotbed of the Chechen insurgency.

In order to weaken the Yamadaevs' positions, Kadyrov met on February 19 with an ally of the brothers in Chechnya: Said-Magomed Kakiev, commander of the Zapad (West) battalion and a deputy military commandant of the republic. Kadyrov promised more financial support to Kakiev and his men. However, according to the Kavkaz-Center rebel website, Kakiev, who is fully aware of Ramzan's plans to eliminate Vostok, does not want to get closer to the Chechen president. Kakiev understands that if Kadyrov manages to disarm Vostok, Zapad will be next.

At the same time, Ramzan Kadyrov is trying to take control of regional military registration and enlistment offices. Vostok and Zapad recruit new fighters through these offices, so to control them means to control recruitment for the battalions. Late last year, Kadyrov met with Said Selim Tsuev, the military commissar of Chechnya, and promised "large-scale support" to Chechnya's enlistment offices (Grozny-Info, December 25, 2007).

The answer to the question of whether Kadyrov will win his battle with the Yamadaev brothers depends totally on the Kremlin and the Russian military command. Vostok plays a crucial role in Russian anti-insurgency tactics in Chechnya, so it will not be an easy decision to allow Ramzan to annihilate it. However, it seems that the Kremlin is interested in seeing just one pro-Russian dictator in the region, so political considerations may prevail over military ones.

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