

Police Disperse Demonstrators Protesting Killing of Website Owner

Police in Ingushetia's largest city, Nazran, forcefully broke up an anti-government protest on September 2, two days after police shot dead Magomed Yevloev, owner of the opposition Ingushetiya.ru website. Reuters reported that the protest started during the funeral of Yevloev, who died after being shot while in police custody. The news agency quoted Magomed Mutsolgov of the Ingushetia-based human rights group Mashr as saying police had arrived at around 5:30 a.m. local time to disperse a crowd of around 50 men who had been sleeping in Nazran's main square. Police and military vehicles were then deployed to block access to the main square, Mutsolgov told Reuters. Protest organizers later vowed to try and force their way back into the square on September 2. However, an Ingushetia Interior Ministry press official denied the police had forced the demonstrators to leave and insisted they had left peacefully. "We didn't even have to make any arrests," Reuters quoted the official as saying.



Vremya Novostei on September 3 quoted demonstrators as saying that their protest was broken up by OMON riot police who shot and wounded several people. However, the newspaper quoted Ingushetia's Interior Ministry and prosecutor's office as saying that police neither fired weapons nor used force, and that the demonstrators themselves ended their protest after the police persuaded them to do so. Still, Vremya Novostei reported that on the evening of September 2, opposition leaders had to talk relatives and friends of Yevloev out of trying to use force to retake the square where they had held their demonstration, which was now occupied by riot police.

Ingushetiya.ru reported September 2 that the demonstrators, in addition to demanding an investigation into the circumstances surrounding Magomed Yevloev's death and the resignation of Ingushetia's leadership, also demanded that Ingushetia's former president, Ruslan Aushev, be brought back to replace Murat Zyazikov, the republic's incumbent president, who has been the main target of the opposition and Ingushetiya.ru.

Newsru.com on September 3 quoted opposition leader Magomed Khazbiev as saying that several hundred people held a demonstration in the Ingush city of Malgobek that day in honor of Magomed Yevloev. According to Khazbiev, their main demands were the resignation of the republic's leadership and an investigation into the circumstances surrounding Yevloev's death. However, the website quoted other opposition leaders as saying that only several dozen people took part in the demonstration in Malgobek and that it lasted only a short time. These opposition leaders said that Magomed Yevloev's father, Yakha Yevloev, called on those gathered not to engage in any protest actions while the mourning period for his son was ongoing. Yakha Yevloev also thanked the protesters for their support and vowed that Zyazikov and Ingush Interior Minister Musa Medov would be made to answer for his son's murder, declaring a blood feud with both men. Newsru.com reported that the demonstrators then dispersed at Yakha Yevloev's request.

Find this article at:

<http://www.jamestown.org/terrorism/news/article.php?articleid=2374396>

Ingush Opposition, Rights Groups Call Yevloev Killing a Political Murder

Magomed Yevloev died on August 31 from a gunshot wound sustained while in police custody. Police said he was shot after lunging for an officer's gun, but his supporters and human rights groups say they do not believe that explanation.

As Kommersant reported on September 1, Yevloev's death took place shortly after he was detained by police at the airport in Ingushetia's capital Magas. The newspaper reported that it was first told about Yevloev's detention by Czech human rights activist Hana Demetrova, who told the newspaper by telephone from Prague that Yevloev had been in the Czech Republic and had decided to fly home to Ingushetia and was expected to return to Prague on September 1. "We told him that it is dangerous to go there now, but he didn't listen," she told the newspaper. Ten minutes after she told Kommersant Yevloev had been detained at the airport in Magas, she called the newspaper back to report that he had been killed.



Magomed Yevloev

Kommersant reported that immediately after hearing from Demetrova, it contacted Ingush opposition leader Magomed Khazbiev, who had met Yevloev at the airport on August 31. "The jet flying from Moscow to Ingushetia that Magomed was onboard landed at the airport on schedule, at 13.30," Khazbiev told the newspaper. "I and another dozen and a half people who came to meet Magomed went into the air terminal's waiting room and, observing the taxiing airliner through the glass partition, waited for the passengers to start coming out." Khazbiev said that another dozen and a half friends and relatives of Yevloev were waiting for him in cars outside the terminal. "We were afraid the authorities would try to detain Magomed and decided to take safety measures," Khazbiev told Kommersant. "When the plane landed, Magomed sent me an SMS [text] message saying: 'Zyazikov is flying with me'." Ingushetia's president, Murat Zyazikov, was on the same flight as Yevloev.

According to Khazbiev, the first passenger off the plane was Zyazikov, who got into one of the cars waiting for him on the tarmac. "Several minutes after the presidential motorcade's departure, another cavalcade of armored automobiles drove up to the airplane – two UAZ and four Volgas," Khazbiev said. "Police armed to the teeth poured out of the cars, among them the head of the [Ingush] MVD [Interior Ministry] Musa Medov." Khazbiev said that the policemen "pounced on" Yevloev after he exited the aircraft and dragged him toward one of their vehicles. Yevloev's relatives and friends then rushed into the airport waiting room, pushing aside airport security guards and breaking glass doors, but failed to liberate him: the policemen who had Yevloev in custody fired automatic weapons at their feet, threw Yevloev into one of the waiting UAZ vehicles and sped off. The police convoy drove off not via the airport's front gate, which was already blockaded by opposition supporters, but by an "alternate route."

Khazbiev told Kommersant that once it left the airport, the police convoy split into two columns, one of which drove off toward the village of Troitsky while the other drove to the Kavkaz highway in the direction of Nazran. Yevloev's supporters assumed he was being taken to a detention facility in Nazran and took off after the second column. According to Khazbiev, they managed to catch up with the second column of police vehicles at the turnoff to Nazran near the Ekazhevsky Circle and rammed two of the police Volgas, but it turned out that Yevloev was not in either of those vehicles. Yevloev's supporters dragged the policemen out of the Volgas and beat them, seizing their side-arms and IDs. Khazbiev said the captured policemen said: "There's no blood on us; we are not guilty." He added: "At that point, we didn't understand what blood they were talking about; we thought they were talking about previous victims of the siloviki. But ... they were talking about Magomed, who had already been murdered in a car."

Yevloev's supporters then headed to the Nazran city police department (GUVd), where they believed he was being held. "We had already planned to storm the GUVd when one of the guys found that Magomed [had been] mortally wounded back at the airport [and] was in the resuscitation unit of Nazran's TsKB [Central Clinical Hospital]," Khazbiev said. "Later, the doctors told us that he was taken directly from the airport in an essentially hopeless condition, and therefore they didn't even want to operate on him. They performed an operation, but it didn't save him."

Khazbiev called the official version of Magomed Yevloev's death – that he was shot accidentally – a lie. "They wanted to kill Magomed," he said. "Think about it: what need was there to use spetsnaz armed to the teeth to detain an unarmed person? Magomed could have been overpowered without the use of weapons. And why did the weapon that

supposedly shot Magomed accidentally not have its safety on and have a cartridge in the chamber? I washed the body of Magomed and saw the wound: the wound went in one temple and out of the other. It is impossible to inflict such a wound in a fight.”

Human rights activists in Moscow also believe Yevloev was killed deliberately. “It is hard to believe that Yevloev received a mortal wound while resisting arrest,” said Aleksandr Cherkasov of the Memorial human rights group. “He was unarmed, given that he was seized from the aircraft. You cannot bring a weapon onto a plane. Human rights activists have repeatedly emphasized that in Ingushetia, the practice of extra-judicial killing is used: people are not detained, but murdered.”

Ingushetiya.ru reported on September 3 that it had received an anonymous telephone call stating that the commander of Ingushetia’s OMON special police, Magomed Tsoroev, personally participated in detaining and killing Magomed Yevloev. However, the website later reported that Tsoroev personally told the current owner of the website, Maksharip Aushev, on September 4 that he had been on vacation and only returned to Ingushetia on the evening of August 31 – that is, after Yevloev’s killing – and had no role in the killing. He also said he did not give the OMON orders to kill Yevloev and said he would swear on the Koran that he was telling the truth. “Thus, it is becoming obvious that [Ingush President] Murat Zyazikov, [Ingush Interior Minister] Musa Medvov and their gang are trying to deflect the justifiable popular indignation from themselves and in a cowardly manner are ... blackening the names of other people,” Ingushetiya.ru commented. The website added that Zyazikov, Medov and their allies do not have the courage to own up to their deeds, which demonstrates the “dirty essence of their regime.”

Kommersant on September 5 quoted Magomed Khazbiev as claiming that Yevloev was shot and killed by the police even before they left the grounds of the airport in Magas. Khazbiev also said there is “reason to believe” that it was Ingush Interior Ministry Musa Medov himself who shot and killed Yevloev.

Kommersant on September 1 quoted Ingush opposition leaders as saying that if the federal authorities do not take decisive measures to solve Magomed Yevloev’s murder and punish the perpetrators, then the Ingush opposition will appeal to the international community to “detach Ingushetia from Russia.” The newspaper quoted Magomed Khazbiev as saying: “If we are disliked by this country, then we don’t know what else there is for us to do.” Khazbiev added that the Ingush opposition would discuss what further actions to take in the wake of Magomed Yevloev’s murder at a special meeting that will be held in the near future.

The United States urged Russian authorities to investigate Yevloev’s death. “It’s very disturbing,” U.S. State Department spokesman Sean McCormack said. “We’re still gathering the details and some of the facts regarding this issue, but apparently this individual was in the custody of officials and ... was shot in the head. So it is something that needs to be investigated. Russian officials need to get to the bottom of it. And there needs to be people held to account for what happened.”

The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) said that Yevloev died in custody because authorities wanted to silence him, Deutsche Presse-Agentur reported. OSCE Freedom of Media Representative Miklos Haraszi said in a statement that Yevloev’s death was “the culmination of an orchestrated campaign by the authorities of Ingushetia to silence the only critical voice in the region.” Haraszi said Yevloev had been on the same flight as Ingush President Murat Zyazikov, during which he had a heated discussion with the politician. The OSCE official called on Russian authorities to conduct a thorough investigation of the incident. “Russia should live up to its OSCE commitments and support, rather than repress, free debate, free reporting and media pluralism,” Haraszi said.

Memorial issued a statement calling Yevloev’s killing an act of state terrorism, Newsru.com reported on September 1. “One is under the impression that after ‘a small victorious war’ the authorities have given up observing even the appearance of lawfulness in their actions toward those they consider opponents,” the Russian human rights group said, alluding to the conflict between Russia and Georgia. “We demand a quick and effective investigation of this crime and that those who committed it and ordered it be brought to justice.”

Meanwhile, the Russian business newspaper Vedomosti on September 4 quoted a source in the Russian presidential administration as saying that Yevloev’s murder could have negative consequences for Ingushetia’s president. “The situation with Zyazikov is bad,” the Kremlin source told the newspaper, adding that “we will be thinking” over what to do about him.

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Dagestani Journalist Murdered, Opposition Newspaper Targeted

Telman Alishaev, a journalist with the TV-Chirkei Islamic television channel in Dagestan, died on September 3, a day after he was shot near his home in the republic's capital, Makhachkala. The Moscow Times reported on September 4 quoted Dagestani Interior Ministry spokesman Mark Tolchinsky as saying that Alishaev was shot by two men as he sat in his car. According to another Dagestani Interior Ministry official, Shamil Guseinov, Alishaev hosted a religious-themed program and had produced documentaries and written extensively about "Wahhabism."



Telman Alishaev

Rossiiskaya Gazeta on September 2 quoted an unnamed law-enforcement source as saying that Alishaev had co-produced a documentary called "Ordinary Wahhabism" and was an opponent of "Wahhabism" in Dagestan. Kavkazky Uzel reported on September 3 that in addition to hosting a program on the republic's Islamic TV channel, Alishaev was an Islamic preacher who had been one of the initiators of a petition calling for teaching Dagestani boys and girls separately and for optional classes on Islam in the republic's schools.

A major with the Dagestani Interior Ministry's anti-organized crime unit (UBOP), Arsen Zakaryev, was shot to death in Makhachkala on September 2 as he was leaving his home for work. Kavkazky Uzel reported on September 3 reported that investigators believe "Wahhabis" may have been behind the murder of both Zakaryev and Alishaev. On September 4, Kavkazky Uzel reported that Dagestan's law-enforcement agencies claim to have information indicating that Vadim Butdaev, the brother of Gulnara Rustamova, the leader of the movement Mothers of Dagestan for Human Rights, perpetrated both murders. A law-enforcement source said that witnesses to both murders identified Butdaev as the killer from photographs and that, according to witnesses, a person resembling Butdaev said after killing Major Zakaryev, "Tell them Vadim did this." Kavkazky Uzel reported that someone named Rustam Umalatov is suspected of also being involved in the murders.

Vadim Butdaev is wanted by the authorities for alleged involvement in attacks on law-enforcement personnel. However, the Memorial human rights group reported earlier this year that Butdaev went into hiding after the authorities began arresting friends of his and forcing them to confess to "terrorist" activities. According to Memorial, pressure on Butdaev and threats against Rustamova began after the Mother of Dagestan group organized pickets to protect and win the release of people abducted by Dagestani law-enforcement authorities (North Caucasus Weekly, March 27).

Meanwhile, investigators from the Dagestani prosecutor's office and Interior Ministry officers searched the homes of six journalists with the opposition weekly Chernovik (Rough Draft) in Makhachkala on August 26. The paper's editor-in-chief Nadira Isayeva told the New York-based Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) that the raiders were looking for evidence of "extremism" and, without presenting valid search warrants, seized one computer, two books, several computer disks, and four electronic files containing articles and book excerpts about the separatist movement in Dagestan. Kommersant reported that among the seized materials was a broadcast on Ekho Moskvyy radio by political commentator Yulia Latynina.

According to Kommersant, on August 27, a day after the searches, Vladimir Markin, a spokesman with the Investigative Committee of Russia's Prosecutor General's Office, said in a statement that "it has been determined that the authors of [Chernovik's] articles may have published them in co-authorship or on the order of persons sought for having committed crimes of an extremist nature." Isayeva told the CPJ that on the same day, August 27, she got a notice signed by Maksim Mirzabalayev, an investigator with the Investigative Committee in the Dagestani Prosecutor's Office, informing her that she has been ordered to undergo a psychological analysis.

"We are disturbed by the persistent persecution of Nadira Isayeva and the unsanctioned searches of Chernovik's journalists," CPJ's Europe and Central Asia Program Coordinator Nina Ognianova said in an August 28 press release. "Extremism has become a term in Russian law that authorities wield liberally against critical reporters and non-mainstream publications. We call on Dagestan's prosecutors to scrap the charges against Isayeva, return all confiscated materials and equipment, and allow Chernovik to work without fear of reprisal."

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Briefs

Editor of Independent Newspaper Attacked in Kabardino-Balkaria

On September 2, Miloslav Bitokov, chief editor of the newspaper Gazeta Yuga (Newspaper of the South) in Kabardino-Balkaria, was beaten by unidentified assailants in the republic's capital, Nalchik. The newspaper's deputy editor, Zarem Khadtsev, said the incident took place as Bitokov was returning home from work with his son Artur, who also works for the newspaper. Artur went to park their car and as he was returning, saw three young men run out of the apartment building and found his father on the floor of the entranceway, covered in blood. He suffered a broken nose and cheekbone, a concussion and a cut lip. The Moscow Times on September 4 quoted colleagues of Bitkov at Gazeta Yuga as saying that he had been threatened previously for publishing articles critical of local authorities. According to Kavkazky Uzel, Gazeta Yuga has never received funding from the government or from foundations or other institutions, surviving off of sales of newspapers and advertisements, and has been the republic's most popular newspaper over the past six years thanks to its image of objectivity and political independence.

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McCain's Call to Recognize Chechen Independence Has Inspired Chechens

By Andrei Smirnov

On August 26, John McCain, the presumptive U.S. presidential candidate for the Republican Party, suggested that "after Russia illegally recognized the independence of South Ossetia and Abkhazia, Western countries ought to think about the independence of the North Caucasus and Chechnya." McCain added: "Russia accuses the West of double standards. We will reply to these accusations of the Kremlin and point to its double standards regarding Chechnya and the North Caucasus" (Georgian Daily, August 29).

This is not the first time that an American politician or government official has linked Chechnya with the issue of the two Georgia's breakaway republics, Abkhazia and South Ossetia. In December 2007, Deputy Secretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs Matthew J. Bryza said in an interview with the Azeri TV channel ANS that recognition of the independence of Abkhazia and South Ossetia by Russia could negatively influence the situation in the Russian North Caucasus, Chechnya, Kabardino-Balkaria, Dagestan and North Ossetia. Such a strategy looks logical, because pointing to the North Caucasus could be a good way of dissuading the Kremlin from recognizing Abkhazia and South Ossetia as independent states.

However, the Russian government's recent decision to recognize the independence of Georgia's separatist enclaves demonstrates that the Kremlin is not particularly worried that Georgia or the West could do the same thing vis-à-vis Chechnya or other North Caucasian regions. The Russian authorities have already prepared an argument they could use if somebody were to start talking about Chechen independence. That argument is Ramzan Kadyrov.

Almost immediately after McCain's statement about possible recognition of an independent Chechnya, the pro-Russian president of Chechnya, Ramzan Kadyrov, declared that he supported Russian President Dmitry Medvedev's decision to recognize the independence of Abkhazia and South Ossetia and insisted that this recognition had no links to the Chechen issue. "I am extremely surprised by statements made by U.S. presidential candidate John McCain and some other American politicians of intent to return to the issue of Chechnya, and all but calling for its independence," Kadyrov said in a statement.

"There is no connection between the events in South Ossetia and Abkhazia and the Chechen Republic," Kadyrov continued. "The Americans try to pull Chechnya by the ears to these events, but this is fruitless," he noted. "In Chechnya, where Mr. McCain is not known, we've had a referendum [in 2003] in which people voted for the constitution, recognizing the Chechen Republic as an integral part of Russia. We have made our choice ... We are fed up with conflicts" (Interfax, August 27).

Kadyrov said that McCain is unknown in Chechnya, but ironically Kadyrov's response to the Republican candidate's statement, which was widely broadcast by the Russian mass media, has been a kind of advertisement for McCain in the republic. Ordinary Chechens have heard about McCain's declaration and, according to the independent Russian website Kavkazky Uzel, they support it with great enthusiasm.

A Chechen named Aslan told the website that Ramzan Kadyrov and other leaders of the Caucasian republics are simply clients of Moscow and that their reaction to McCain's words was predictable. "Kadyrov does not need independence because in that case he will have to cut and run out of here, leaving his luxury mansions and cars behind," he said (Kavkazky Uzel, August 28).

Another Chechen told Kavkazky Uzel that Chechnya could not exist within the borders of Russia because every 50 years Moscow kills Chechens. "Neither Ramzan or somebody else can talk in the name of the whole Chechen nation," he told the website. "We do not have so short a memory to forget all the atrocities that were committed in Chechnya by the Russian army."

A Chechen human rights activist told Kavkazky Uzel that "it is funny to say that in 2003 all Chechens voted for Chechnya [to remain] a part of Russia because there was no real referendum that time. Referendums and elections are not held at gunpoint. I am absolutely sure that a majority of Chechens will vote for independence if the Russian

troops withdraw from the region. Kadyrov is the Kremlin's client and he will always say what comes from above. It is a fate of all puppets: they pretend they can do what they want, but they are just puppets."

Such opinions are crucial to understanding the real mood of ordinary Chechens, despite the fact that people do not give away their names, apparently for security reasons. Nevertheless, some public figures in the North Caucasus are not afraid to blame the Kremlin openly. "When I see Putin on TV talking about Georgian actions in South Ossetia I feel disgusted," said Aslanbek Apaev, an expert from Moscow Helsinki Group in the North Caucasus. "All this pompous rhetoric about genocide, mass killings, sufferings of women and children, ethnic cleanings and the fascist regime of Sakaashvili are no more than propaganda. The same could be said about the actions of Moscow in the Chechen Republic during the two military campaigns" (Kavkazky Uzel, August 28).

If anyone is really interested in what people in Chechnya and other parts of the North Caucasus think about their independence from Russia, one should first of all listen seriously to people in the streets and only after that to Ramzan Kadyrov's declarations. The interviews taken by Kavkazky Uzel demonstrate that if the United States ever recognizes Chechen independence, it could make the Chechens the best friends the U.S. has ever had. These interviews also confirm again that the issue of Chechen independence is still alive.

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Two Yevloevs in Ingushetia are Too Much for the Russian Government

By Mairbek Vatchagaev

The disturbing news circulated in the mass media on Sunday, August 31, forced many to think again about the North Caucasus, a region where assassinations have long become the norm of the political landscape. The murder of the owner of Ingushetia's most popular independent website Ingushetiya.ru (with daily visitor traffic of 8,000 to 10,000) Magomed Yevloev looks set to become Russia's most infamous assassination since the killing of the journalist Anna Politkovskaya. A prominent businessman and philanthropist, Yevloev preferred to stay out of the spotlight, yet for the last few years he has been a target of attacks by the government of Ingushetia, a small enclave of just over four thousand square kilometers. Yevloev won public respect by being different - that is, by his demonstrated lack of political ambition, his desire to stay in the background and his dislike of publicity. Human rights defenders have already called his murder a political assassination (Regnum, August 31), and the wave of protest meetings has rippled through Ingushetia and some European cities (Nazran, Moscow, Brussels, Paris – see www.ingushetiya.ru, September 1).

Magomed Yevloev, 37, an attorney by training, left Ingushetia's State Prosecutor's office after his conflict with then-President Ruslan Aushev (www.ingushetiya.ru, August 24). According to Yevloev, he regretted his role in helping the current President Murad Zyazikov rise to power. After entering the private sector in 2001, Yevloev became a successful businessman, yet he continued monitoring the developments in Ingushetia and actively supporting the editorial team of Ingushetiya.ru, asking in return only that their coverage of events in Ingushetia stays fair and accurate.

Yevloev frequently had to defend his website in court in lawsuits that were not always resolved in his favor. His father was asked to talk his son out of opposing the government, and his erstwhile friends and colleagues threatened him, which became a concern for Reporters Without Borders (www.rsf.org, May 29).

In an interview with this writer on August 22, he spoke of his desire to re-introduce the Vainakh (a collective term for the Chechen and Ingush) people to the world through a satellite television channel, which he had already acquired and started to set up, thus demonstrating that he had no intention to leave the mass media world, and, on the contrary, wanted to elevate the issue to a truly global level.

Yevloev's assassination can be seen as a public example, given that his arrest and death occurred very quickly, probably within minutes of each other (www.vremya.ru, September 1) and with the full knowledge of Ingushetia's top government officials. The republic's leadership has surely been aggravated by the steady stream of critical articles published on Yevloev's website, which contested every statement Murat Zyazikov made in Russia's central press and offered facts and figures to demonstrate that Ingushetia's president was deliberately misleading Russia's government. Ingushetiya.ru has consistently challenged the operations to detain young men suspected of involvement with the rebels, using personal witness statements disproving the official language of the charges filed by Ingushetia's State Prosecutor's Office and Interior Ministry.

Reporting on the North Caucasus has always been a hazardous job, yet during Vladimir Putin's term it became downright lethal. The list of incidents in the region involving the media includes the arrest of Andrei Babitsky in Chechnya in February 2000, the shooting of 24-year-old Reuters cameraman Adam Tepsurkaev later that year (www.rol.ru, November 24, 2000), the disappearance of Agence France-Presse reporter Ali Astamirov after his arrest by Russia's law enforcement agencies (Novaya Gazeta, July 17, 2003), the murders of Anna Politkovskaya in October 2006 (www.newsru.com, October 7, 2006) and Aleksandr Litvinenko in December 2006, the forced exile of Fatima Tlisova of the Regnum news agency's North Caucasus bureau and Radio Liberty reporter Yury Bagrov to the United States in July 2007, Ingushetiya.ru chief editor Rosa Malsagova's escape from Russian government prosecution and petition for asylum in France (Novaya Gazeta, August 11; North Caucasus Weekly, August 15) and many others.

In the meantime, the story of Magomed Yevloev is unfolding against the backdrop of multiple rebel attacks against the Interior Ministry, Federal Security Service (FSB) and other Russian law enforcement agencies in Ingushetia.

Oddly enough, the key figure of this story, although better known as Emir Magas (aka Akhmed Yevloev) shares the last name with the assassinated website founder. For the second year running, the leader of the Ingush Jamaat and commander of the Caucasus Front (which includes all units representing the Caucasus Emirate vilayets of Chechnya, Ingushetia, Kabarda, Balkaria and the Nogai Steppe) Emir Magas has made no public statements, nor did Islamist resistance movement leader Dokka Umarov make mention of his commander-in-chief, in contrast with his frequent references to Acting Chairman of Supreme Sharia Court and Emir of United Vilayet of Kabarda, Balkaria and Karachai, Emir Seifullah (Anzor Astamirov). One can only wonder why this key player of the resistance movement has faded into the background. Most likely, the core issue has to do with the announcement of the Caucasus Emirate, although Yevloev's ostensible support was implicit in the statement Dokka Umarov made during his field inspection trip to Chechnya and Ingushetia in December 2007, when Umarov reiterated his personal support for the Emirate's military leadership (<http://generalvekalat.org/content/view/21/30/>).

However, despite the absence of Emir Magas from the airwaves, the military units under his command continue their relentless raids against the Republic of Ingushetia. In their last public statement, commanders of the Ingush units (www.kavkaz.tv, August 29) informed the public about the tactics and identities of the organizers of attacks on Ingushetia's law enforcement personnel. According to the statement, the resistance movement has formed special operations groups that primarily target employees of Ingushetia's UBOP (security and public order department). The statement also claims that up to 1,000 employees of Ingushetia's Interior Ministry have recently resigned. Although this number is fairly high and should be taken with a large grain of salt, the departure of Interior Ministry employees en masse was indirectly confirmed by the ministry itself, which tried to package the news as a "routine personnel turnover" (Ekho Moskvyy radio, August 24).

In summary, recent events in Ingushetia clearly indicate that the military rebel movement personified by its leader Akhmad Yevloev (Emir Magas) is active, and developments in August suggest that the activity levels will spike again due to the Russo-Georgian conflict. It is well known that the sympathies of the Ingush are, without reservation, with the Georgians and their operations against South Ossetia. Therefore, in addition to the religiously-driven members who make up the majority of the North Caucasian resistance movement today, rebel recruitment will also benefit from those motivated by nationalist sentiment.

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