

Vostok and Zapad Battalions to be "Reorganized"

The deputy commander of Russia's army, Colonel General Vladimir Moltenskoï, announced on November 8 that the two Chechen-manned special force battalions of the Defense Ministry's Main Intelligence Directorate (GRU), Vostok and Zapad, will be reformed into companies of the Defense Ministry's 42nd Motor Rifle Division, which is based in Chechnya. According to RIA Novosti, Moltenskoï announced the reorganization at a meeting with Chechen President Ramzan Kadyrov in Grozny. However, there was some confusion about the battalions' fate: Interfax quoted the Chechen president's press service as saying that Moltenskoï had said the battalions would be disbanded. Yet Moltenskoï told Interfax on November 8 that the units would not be disbanded but rather reorganized into companies within the 42nd Motor Rifle Division. Interfax on November 10 quoted Kadyrov's press service as saying that it had been stated during the meeting between the Chechen president and Moltenskoï on November 8 that the criminal investigation committee of the Russian Prosecutor General had ordered the Chechen Interior Ministry to bring Sulim Yamadaev to interrogators by force. Prague Watchdog reported on November 10 that the Chechen Interior Ministry had received a formal request on November 7 that Sulim Yamadaev be sent to the Gudermes district investigative unit for questioning. According to the website, Yamadaev is the principal suspect in the case of the murder of a Gudermes district resident committed ten years ago.

Whatever the case, the disbandment of the Vostok and Zapad battalions appears to be a victory for Kadyrov, who came into conflict with the Vostok battalion and its former commander Sulim Yamadaev after a reported armed confrontation between Vostok members and security forces loyal to Kadyrov in April. The Chechen president, it should be noted, has insisted he is not in favor of disbanding the battalions, but has denounced their commanders, calling them criminals. However, Kommersant reported on November 10 that Kadyrov has long been seeking to "liquidate" the battalions.

Sulim Yamadaev's brother, former State Duma deputy Ruslan Yamadaev, was shot to death in Moscow in September (North Caucasus Weekly, September 26). Zapad battalion commander Beslan Elimkhanov (identified in some news stories as Beslan Edilkhanov) was wounded in an attack in September (North Caucasus Weekly, September 19) that Kommersant, in a report on November 10, described as an assassination attempt. The newspaper quoted Elimkhanov, who remains in the hospital recovering from wounds received in that attack, as saying that the decision to reorganize the Vostok and Zapad battalions was "mistaken" and "unfair."

The fate of Sulim Yamadaev remains unclear. On November 8, Interfax quoted the Chechen presidential press service as saying that Colonel General Moltenskoï, in his meeting with Kadyrov that day, had referred to crimes that Vostok and Zapad members had been accused of, saying they would be investigated by a special commission of the Defense Ministry and that Sulim Yamadaev would be compelled to give evidence to the commission. Interfax quoted the Chechen president's office as saying that former Vostok battalion officers had provided video evidence describing some of these crimes.

In a report on November 11, Interfax quoted Kadyrov's office as saying that two former Vostok servicemen, identified as Shatoi regional group commander Rasul Baimuradov and company commander Gurman Gadzhimuradov, had accused Sulim Yamadaev of organizing the kidnapping and murder of the brothers of Moscow Industrial Bank President Abubakar Arsmakov, Yunus and Yusup, along with their driver, in early 2007. The two former Vostok servicemen said the Arsamakov brothers were kidnapped and taken to Sulim Yamadaev and then taken away by another Yamadaev brother, Badruddi Yamadaev—who, according to the former Vostok members, was then commander of one of the Vostok battalion's subunits at the time. The two former Vostok members claim that Badruddi Yamadaev shot the Arsamakov brothers dead, after which their bodies were dismembered. The Vostok members accused the Yamadaev brothers of various other crimes.

On November 11 Newsru.com reported that soon after the announcement that the Vostok and Zapad battalions were being reorganized, reports appeared in the press that Sulim Yamadaev had been named deputy commander of a GRU brigade in Rostov Oblast port city of Taganrog. However, the website quoted an unnamed Defense Ministry official as saying: "There is no GRU unit in Taganrog; correspondingly, there is no serviceman by the name of Yamadaev who was supposedly named deputy commander of this non-existent brigade." RIA Novosti quoted an unnamed Defense Ministry official saying that "rumors about Yamadaev's recent appointment as deputy commander of a special forces unit in the Rostov region are incorrect" and adding that the ex-Vostok battalion commander had not received any new assignment (see "Kadyrov's Strategic Victory" by Mairbek Vatchagaev).

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New Ingush President Criticizes Republic's Law-Enforcement Bodies

Kavkazky Uzel reported that on November 9, Ingushetia's new president, Yunus-Bek Yevkurov, strongly criticized the work of the republic's law-enforcement bodies during a meeting with members of Ingushetia's government and the heads of the republic's ministries and agencies. According to the website, Yevkurov said that "without the necessary organization of work of all structures of the police, the fight against crime will not be effective."

Yevkurov's criticism of the republic's law-enforcement bodies was understandable, given that while Murat Zyazikov's resignation as Ingushetia's president and replacement by Yevkurov has been the cause of much rejoicing in the republic (North Caucasus Weekly, November 6), there has not been a concomitant reduction in insurgent violence.

On November 11, a policeman was killed by unidentified gunmen in the city of Malgobek, RIA Novosti reported. The officer, who died in the hospital while undergoing surgery for gunshot wounds, was identified as Musa Tochiev, a member of the Ingush Interior Ministry's operational administrative border guard regiment. The Associated Press said he was shot as he was returning home from his job guarding Ingushetia's administrative border with Chechnya.

Also on November 11, five Interior Minister Internal Troops were wounded when a bomb explosion hit a troop convoy near a stadium in the city of Karabulak. One of the servicemen was reported to be in grave condition. Meanwhile, the Associated Press quoted police as reporting a third incident that day in which a gunman fired shots in two CD and DVD shops in Ingushetia. No one was hurt in that incident.

On November 10, a policeman was killed and another wounded near the central market in the village of Ordhonikidzevskaya in Ingushetia's Sunzha district when he and a fellow officer working off-duty as private security guards were shot by unknown gunmen. Itar-Tass quoted a republican law-enforcement source as saying a local resident was also wounded in the attack and hospitalized. The attackers were reportedly driving a black VAZ car. RIA Novosti reported that two of the three wounded people were in critical condition.

On November 9, unidentified attackers fired on and damaged the cupola of a Russian Orthodox church in Ordhonikidzevskaya, Kavkazky Uzel reported. The website reported that the same day, a serviceman was wounded when an improvised explosive device went off in a store in Nazran as two people, including a Russian contract serviceman, were entering. Both patrons were injured. Kavkazky Uzel reported that there was information that the store in question had been repeatedly leafleted with warnings to stop selling alcohol.

On November 8, a member of the Interior Ministry's Temporary Operational Group for Ingushetia was wounded in a shooting incident in Nazran. Interfax said the officer was shot as he was getting out of his car, apparently by a sniper.

On November 7, a policeman was wounded by unidentified gunmen in Ordhonikidzevskaya. Interfax quoted a military source as saying that an investigative-operational group from the Sunzha police department arrived at the district hospital after receiving a call, and that a police master sergeant, Alekhan Esmurziev, was sitting in the car outside the hospital when he was shot by the gunmen. The source said his wounds were not life threatening.

Also on November 7, unidentified attackers fired grenade launchers and automatic weapons at a column of Interior Ministry Internal Troops on the Alkhasty-Nesterovskaya highway in Ingushetia's Sunzha district. RIA Novosti quoted a republican Interior Ministry official as saying that no one was hurt in the attack.

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Dagestan's Sharia Jamaat: We'll Kill Anyone Stopping Women from Wearing Hijab

On November 12, the head of Dagestan's Charodinsky district, Murtuz Kuramagomedov, was killed in the republic's Gubinsky district. Kavkazky Uzel reported that Kuramagomedov and his driver were shot by unidentified gunmen in his car while they were traveling between the Gubinsky district settlements of Kwartikuni and Kuppa. According to the website, the attackers blocked the road with their VAZ car, after which they got out of the vehicle, went up to Kuramagomedov's Volga car and opened fire. Both Kuramagomedov and his driver were already dead by the time the emergency services arrived.

RIA Novosti reported on November 9 that a senior Dagestani police officer had been gunned down that day. According to the news agency, Dagestan's Interior Ministry reported that Colonel Ainutdin Gelikhanov, who worked for the ministry's department for combating organized crime, was killed by unidentified assailants late November 8 in the town of Khasavyurt while returning from a wedding of his relatives. Gelikhanov died at the scene of the attack. The Associated Press quoted Dagestan's Interior Ministry as saying that Gelikhanov was shot and killed by two unidentified gunmen who fled the scene of the crime. Furthermore, Itar-Tass quoted an unnamed republican law-enforcement source as saying that the incident took place near the entrance to the Barakat banquet hall in Khasavyurt.

Dagestan's militant Islamist Sharia Jamaat said in a statement posted on the Kavkaz-Center website on November 11 that its "mujahideen" have increasingly been hearing reports that "in certain establishments, schools [and] universities, pious Muslim women are forbidden from wearing hijab" (headscarves or veils). The statement called on Muslim women not to "weaken" or "grieve." "Fear Allah properly and do not doubt Allah's help," the statement read. "While there are mujahideen on Dagestani soil, we will not leave you without help. May Allah reward you with Paradise for forbearance and fear of God."

The Sharia Jamaat statement continued: "We warn all directors of schools, institutes, chief doctors of hospitals and the rest: don't put obstacles in the way of Allah's commands. We are explaining to you that our pure sisters are fulfilling the orders of their God, which no one has the right to abrogate or forbid."

The statement went on to warn that any attempts to prevent "our sisters" from wearing hijab would be seen as "an attack on the honor of our sisters and a war on Islam" and that anyone who places obstacles in the way of Sharia or tries "to wage war on Islam" will be "severely punished" —or, more precisely, "mercilessly killed."

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Briefs

Court Rules Slain Website Founder Was Illegally Detained

The Nazran District Court ruled on November 12 that the police had illegally detained Magomed Yevloev, the slain founder of the independent Ingushetiya.ru website, the Associated Press reported. Yevloev was detained on August 31 as he stepped off a flight from Moscow and was later shot in the head while in being held in a police car. Yevloev's family and friends insist that he was deliberately murdered and the news agency quoted Musa Pliev, the lawyer representing Yevloev's family, as saying that he is pushing for murder charges against the police. The website that Yevloev founded, now known as Ingushetia.org, has accused former Ingush President Murat Zyazikov, Ingush Interior Minister Musa Medov, and other top officials in Zyazikov's administration of being behind the killing.

Policeman, Militant Killed in Chechnya

On November 10 Chechen Interior Ministry officials were quoted by the Associated Press as saying that a police officer died when three militants fired on a police post with a grenade launcher in the Chechen capital, Grozny, on November 9. Two colleagues were hospitalized in the attack and the suspects escaped. The officials also reported a separate gun battle that took place in a Chechen forest between militants and an army reconnaissance unit. One militant was killed while all others who attacked the unit escaped under the cover of darkness. No soldiers were injured.

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Kadyrov's Strategic Victory

By Mairbek Vatchagaev

Following a long debate, Ramzan Kadyrov has finally won support for his stance against the Russian army colonel and Hero of Russia award recipient, Sulim Yamadaev. On the evening of November 8, 2008, Kadyrov's supporters went into the streets of Grozny and opened celebratory gunfire after the news of dissolution of their nemesis' group, the Vostok battalion—the pro-Russian military unit in Chechnya that was under Sulim Yamadaev's exclusive command and not under Kadyrov's direct control. In the eyes of many, Vostok acted as a counterweight to keep Kadyrov's ambitions in check; preserving the battalion was the military's way of letting Kadyrov know that his powers in Chechnya had limits. Kadyrov initially attempted to eliminate the group by using legal tactics: he declared its commander and several of his close associates to be a danger to society and they were subsequently charged with crimes for which, according to the Chechen government, Sulim Yamadaev bore full responsibility.



The dissolution of Vostok and Zapad special-forces battalions of the Russian Defense Ministry's Main Intelligence (GRU) was announced during a personal meeting between Kadyrov and Deputy Chief Commander of the Russian forces Valery Moltenski (www.newsribbon.ru/news/6285.html). Moltenski said that the defunct battalions will be replaced by two soon-to-be-formed infantry companies totaling 200 servicemen under the Defense Ministry's 42nd Motor Rifle Division, which is permanently stationed in Chechnya. Kadyrov was thus able to realize his longtime dream of quashing his last remaining opponents and onetime allies in the fight against the separatists.

The other group, Zapad battalion, is linked to another infamous pro-Russian military man Said-Magomed Kakiev, who despite his appointment as Chechnya's deputy military commander in 2007, was known to sometimes disagree with Kadyrov's actions. Kakiev's unit did not and could not include any former separatist fighters, as Kakiev saw that as a betrayal of those who defended Russia's interests alongside the Russian army.

The man who replaced Kakiev as Zapad commander was his close associate Major Beslan (Magomed) Elimkhanov, who was devoted to Kakiev and had always stood by him. Four Zapad battalion members were killed in a clash with Kadyrov's fighters in June 2007, and Elimkhanov himself was targeted in an assassination attempt on September 19, 2008. According to Sulim Yamadaev, after this incident Elimkhanov was forced to leave Chechnya and move to Moscow due to a threat of death from Kadyrov (www.kavkazuzel.ru/persontext/person/id/1213144.html; www.grani.ru/War/Chechnya/m.141604.html). It is generally understood in Chechnya that those who dare challenge the Chechen president will not enjoy their freedom for long, regardless of the powerful backers that they may have in Moscow. Movladi Baisarov, Ruslan Yamadaev, Ruslan Atlangeriev and many others have fallen victim because of their belief that their influential patrons would be able to shield them from the wrath of Chechnya's young and ambitious ruler.

Kadyrov blacklisted both the Zapad and Vostok battalions because he believed that they were plotting a merger or, in the best-case scenario, a united coalition of pro-Russian Chechen political elites opposed to him. As such, the battalions became the object of suspicion on the part of Chechnya's Kremlin-appointed president (www.axisglobe-ru.com/article.asp?article=346).

By eliminating the two battalions Kadyrov has won an unquestionable victory over his enemies. Kadyrov's success was probably the outcome of a recent visit to Chechnya by Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin. It appears that Putin was satisfied with Kadyrov's reconstruction efforts, which have resulted in striking changes in Chechnya. Putin may have decided to reward Kadyrov by putting an end to his longtime tensions with the Defense Ministry and removing the last impediments to Kadyrov's control over Chechnya.

Yet, Kadyrov's victory may ring hollow if Russian media reports about Sulim Yamadaev's appointment to the post of the deputy commander of a GRU brigade stationed in Taganrog, a seaport city in Rostov Oblast, prove to be true (Ekho Moskv Radio, November 10). That would mean that even after the dissolution of the Zapad and Vostok battalions, Sulim Yamadaev himself remains under the Defense Ministry's informal but nevertheless real protection.

An alternative explanation is that Yamadaev's appointment as commander of a Caucasus-based brigade (which otherwise would have clearly meant a promotion) is designed to give his enemies a chance to kill him in southern Russia as opposed to Moscow, where it would be more difficult to find him. There is speculation that the difficulty in tracking down Sulim Yamadaev while he was in Moscow earlier this autumn was the reason for the assassination of his older brother Ruslan, who ran a business in Moscow (www.kommersant.ru/doc.aspx?DocsID=1030899).

No organization or person in Chechnya today dares make their opposition to Kadyrov public. Even human rights organizations such as Memorial, Glasnost and others prefer to keep their commentary on human rights violations in the third person with no implied links or attributions to Kadyrov's regime (http://kavkaz-uzel.ru/newstext/news/id/1208560.html). This in no way signifies a change in their fundamental operating principles of protecting human rights in Chechnya, but rather is an indication that there is currently no other way to survive and continue to operate under the authoritarian regime of Kremlin's protégé.

Still, things are not going as well as Kadyrov might hope for. Prior to receiving the satisfying news that his two rival battalions were being dissolved, several of his requests were denied by the Russian government. For instance, Kadyrov's long-standing desire for Grozny's airport to be granted international status was denied due to the absence of security guarantees from the Federal Security Service (FSB) and the Defense Ministry. Kadyrov could not keep his emotions in check when he was informed about Moscow's decision by the chairman of Chechnya's government Odes Baisultanov during the Chechen state television's evening news broadcast on October 27. He responded by stating that the Russian military should be reminded about the eight-story high-rise apartment buildings on Khankalskaya Street in Grozny that they blew up several years ago. The residents of the buildings were not offered an explanation and were not even allowed to pack their belongings. These buildings have not been restored to date and Kadyrov commented that the Russian military should be pressured using every available method, including legal recourse, to admit responsibility and restore the buildings.

The buildings in question were blown up in 2002 after a chopper carrying servicemen was shot down not far from the buildings at the Khankala military base. Russian soldiers based in the Khankala camp consequently mined more than ten high-rise apartment buildings, eight of which were blown up after the hasty eviction of all of their residents. A school and kindergarten buildings were also demolished (www.grozny-inform.ru/main.mhtml?Part=8&PubID=9324).

The second piece of bad news for Kadyrov was Moscow's refusal to establish a laboratory for the identification of exhumed bodies in Chechnya. The reason given for Moscow's decision was "exuberant financial cost" (www.regnum.ru/news/fd-south/medicine/1077577.html). Yet another negative development came when the Defense Ministry adopted a decision to halt the clearing of minefields and recommended that the task be turned over to private contractors. The news is particularly striking considering that 7,000-10,000 people, including 5,000 children, have been victims of anti-personnel mines in Chechnya. Out of these, 1,300 children died and about 2,000 have been severely wounded.

In all likelihood Kadyrov, like all other regional leaders, will have to get used to hearing "no" from Moscow. Putin has a history of tightly controlling local chiefs and is unlikely to allow any one of them to become too powerful.

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A Bombing Shakes North Ossetia

By Mairbek Vatchagaev

Another bombing took place in Vladikavkaz, the capital of the Republic of North Ossetia-Alania, on November 6. This time, however, it claimed the lives of ordinary residents of the capital and not of Interior Ministry or Federal Security Service (FSB) directorate agents in the republic. North Ossetia is a special region of North Caucasus, because there, unlike in the other republics of titular nationalities (such as Dagestan, Chechnya, Ingushetia, Kabardino-Balkaria, Karachaevo-Cherkessia and Adygea), the majority of the local population is Orthodox Christian. Muslims number less than 20 percent of North Ossetia's population but the Muslim traditions in the society are prevalent because of the strong influences stemming from the Muslim Kabarda prior to the conquest of Ossetia by the Russian Empire in the early 19th century.



According to press reports, the blast in Vladikavkaz, was caused by a suicide bomber and struck a minibus in Vladikavkaz as it was unloading passengers at a market. The bombing caused hellish carnage, killing 12 people, seven of whom lost their lives on the spot, while the rest died on the way to the hospital or at the hospital from their injuries (Ekho Moskovy Radio, November 7). An estimated 38-40 people were wounded in the bombing. Investigators report that the power of the explosive device, which was packed with shrapnel, was the equivalent of 300-500 grams of TNT (RIA Novosti, November 6). The majority of wounded were students from local colleges. If judged by the number of civilian casualties, this attack was the bloodiest since the tragic death of 330 hostages, including 180 children, at the school in Beslan on September 1, 2004, when militants subordinate to the then military leader of the North Caucasian resistance movement, Shamil Basaev, seized the school compound (www.kavkaz-uzel.ru/newstext/news/id/1228411.html). Investigators subsequently said that they believed the bombing was carried out by a female suicide bomber.

The bombing was another sign in a series of signals indicating that the Ossetian Jamaat Kataib al Khoul have embarked on a more aggressive campaign. A series of sensational actions carried out over the past couple of months by members of the Jamaat against North Ossetian law enforcement authorities leads one to such a conclusion.

The Kataib al Khoul Jamaat is a major irritant to the leadership of North Ossetia who have been denying its existence since the Beslan school seizure in 2004 (www.newsinfo.ru/news/2006-09-13/item/127382). Furthermore, the authorities are so irritated by the qualifying prefix "Ossetian" that is used in reference to the Kataib al Khoul Jamaat that they are even ready to admit its existence if it is mentioned with the prefix "Ingush" instead. The official rationale is that if such a jamaat existed in the republic, it would have to be composed exclusively of those Ingush who previously lived in the disputed Prigorodny District and the capital of the republic, and therefore all such actions are emanating from the "adjacent" territories. (www.newziv.ru/news/2006-09-19/54001/).

In reality, this is one of the earliest Jamaats formed under the direct guidance of the late Shamil Basaev and it is very likely that it has mixed Ossetian-Ingush roots. Thus, this jamaat was established on the territorial principle and not on the nationality principle. In this regard it should be noted that the Kataib al Khoul Jamaat is similar with the Kabardino-Balkarian Jamaat, which the authorities of the Republic of Kabardino-Balkaria had presented as a movement based on the principle of Balkar national identification until it was discovered that ethnic Kabardins outnumbered the Balkars in the group. In fact, for several years now this Jamaat has been headed by the ethnic Kabardin Anzor Astamirov (aka Emir Seifullah).

Thus it can be concluded that Jamaats are formed both on territorial principles and on religious commonality, which in this case is Islam. More specifically, Jamaat members are united by the Salafi ideology, the long-term aim of which is the establishment of an Islamic theocracy over the Russian North Caucasus.

The Ossetian Jamaat Kataib al Khoul represents a subunit of the North Caucasian resistance movement under the leadership of Dokku Umarov. The head of this Jamaat is Emir Saad (it is not clear who is behind this nom de guerre), who recognizes the establishment of the Caucasus Emirate as a virtual state created by the Islamic Revival Party on the basis of the Chechen resistance movement. Thus, the general objective of the creation of the independent Chechen state has been superseded by the goal of forming a North Caucasus Islamic supra-state.

The Ossetian Jamaat Kataib al Khoul took responsibility for an attack on a helicopter gunship on September 15, 2006 that killed 11 out of the 14 people on board, including three generals, six colonels, two lieutenant colonels, and one major. The casualties included the head and deputy head of the logistics service for the North Caucasus Military District, as well as other high-ranking logistics officials (<http://news.ng.ru/2006/09/13/1158133762.html>). A week before that, on September 6, an armored personnel carrier was blown up in the vicinity of the Maisky settlement, killing four and wounding four soldiers (Regnum News Agency, September 7, 2006). Attacks on gambling establishments in North Ossetia and Ingushetia have also become almost daily occurrences.

Another one of the recent actions of the Kataib al Khoul Jamaat was the assassination of the head of the First Department of the Criminal Investigation directorate of North Ossetia's Interior Ministry, Vitaly Cheldiev, on October 1, 2008 (North Caucasus Weekly, October 3). He became the fourth high-ranking officer killed in North Ossetia since the beginning of 2008. Earlier casualties included Mark Metsaev, the head of North Ossetia's anti-organized crime unit (UBOP, formerly known as RUBOP); Ilya Kasradze, the head of the Division of Outreach to the District Police Officers at the Department of Internal Affairs of the Promyshlenny Municipal District; and Inal Dzigoiev, a law enforcement official. (www.regnum.ru/news/1062823.html).

At the same time it is important to remain accurate when referring to the masterminds behind the actions claimed by the Kataib al Khoul Jamaat because the possibility of other players being involved can never be conclusively ruled out. For instance, the motivation for the violence can stem from a blood feud (vendetta), criminal score settling, or simple revenge. Here—as in other regions of North Caucasus—if no one claims responsibility for an attack, any jamaat can take responsibility for the violent act.

In any case, if the participation of a suicide bomber (shaheed) is indeed confirmed, this will be a surprising development in the evolution of the Ossetian Jamaat since no violent acts involving either male or female shaheeds have been registered in North Ossetia-Alania prior to this (with the exception of the tragedy in Beslan). It is telling that in a region that has a substantial presence of Russian armed forces and police, this Jamaat is not simply surviving but evolving and expanding its recruitment of ideological supporters in order to carry out such attacks. Female and male shaheeds first appeared in Chechnya in 2000, but largely disappeared by 2004 due to a conscious decision by the Chechen resistance movement to abandon suicide missions. To a large extent their was a result of an overwhelming condemnation of them by the population who saw them as alien to human nature, contradicting the teaching of Islam, and a sure symptom of the "Palestinization" of Chechnya.

On November 8, the Republic of North Ossetia-Alania declared a day of mourning for those who died in the November 6 terrorist attack. Police in

the republic are on heightened alert and additional checkpoints have been set up along the entire perimeter of Ossetia's border with Ingushetia (<http://echo.msk.ru/news/551725-echo.html>). As a rule, measures of this kind have not produced the desired results and are unlikely to result in the arrest of those responsible for this atrocity. It remains to be seen whether the masterminds behind this bombing will explain why their act targeted students and ordinary residents in the bustling heart of the North Ossetian capital.

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