



VIOLENCE IN THE NORTH CAUCASUS

Spring 2010: On the rise, again?

Human Rights and Security Initiative

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CENTER FOR STRATEGIC &
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Spring 2010: Violence on the rise, again?

Since 2008, CSIS staff have tracked, on a daily basis, incidents of violence occurring in the North Caucasus. We have released six [previous reports](#), the [last of which](#) illustrated the dramatic rise in violence in 2009.

In this report, we present our data for Spring 2010 (January 1–April 30), with special attention given to the disturbing frequency of suicide bombings.



Definition of Terms

“Incidents of Violence”:

Incidents of violence include abductions of military personnel and civilians, bombings*, assassinations of key civilian and military leaders**, rebel attacks, police or military operations against suspected militants, destruction of property by militants, and the discovery of weapons.

“North Caucasus”:

The database primarily tracks incidents occurring in Chechnya, Ingushetia, Kabardino-Balkaria, North Ossetia, and Dagestan.

* Includes failed detonations

** Includes unsuccessful assassination attempts

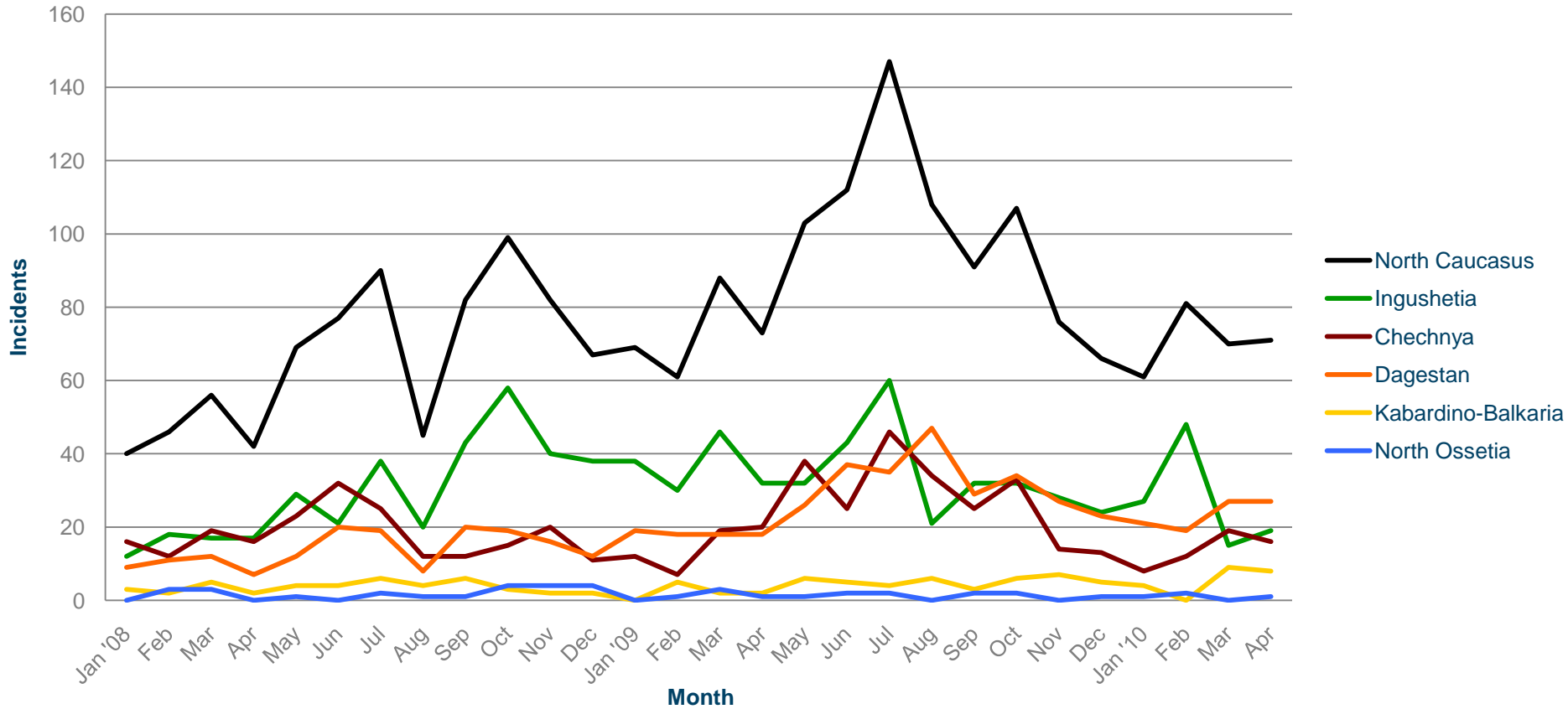
Main Findings



In Spring 2010:

- More than 200 fatalities occurred due to incidents of violence making the first four months of 2010 more deadly than the same period in 2008 and in 2009;
- Ingushetia and Dagestan remained more violent than Chechnya, with 109 incidents of violence in Ingushetia alone;
- In just twelve days, six suicide bombings, including the two in the Moscow Metro, were carried out;
- On April 16, 2010 the Chechen government celebrated the one year anniversary of the end to counter-terrorist operations (KTO). Yet Chechnya, Ingushetia, and Dagestan all experienced more fatalities in the year since the end of KTO than in the year prior, with 906 deaths due to incidents of violence compared with 562 respectively.

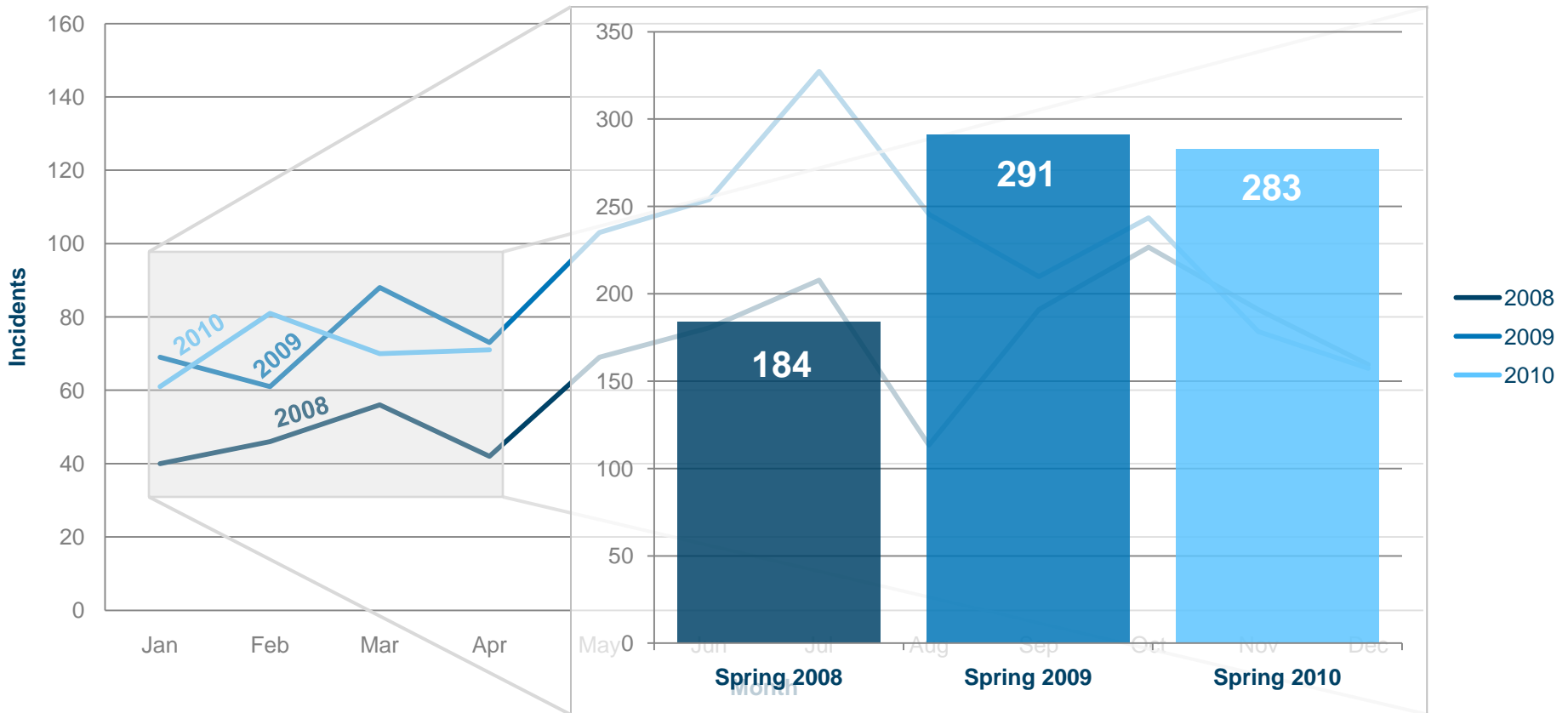
Incidents of Violence in the North Caucasus January 2008 – April 2010



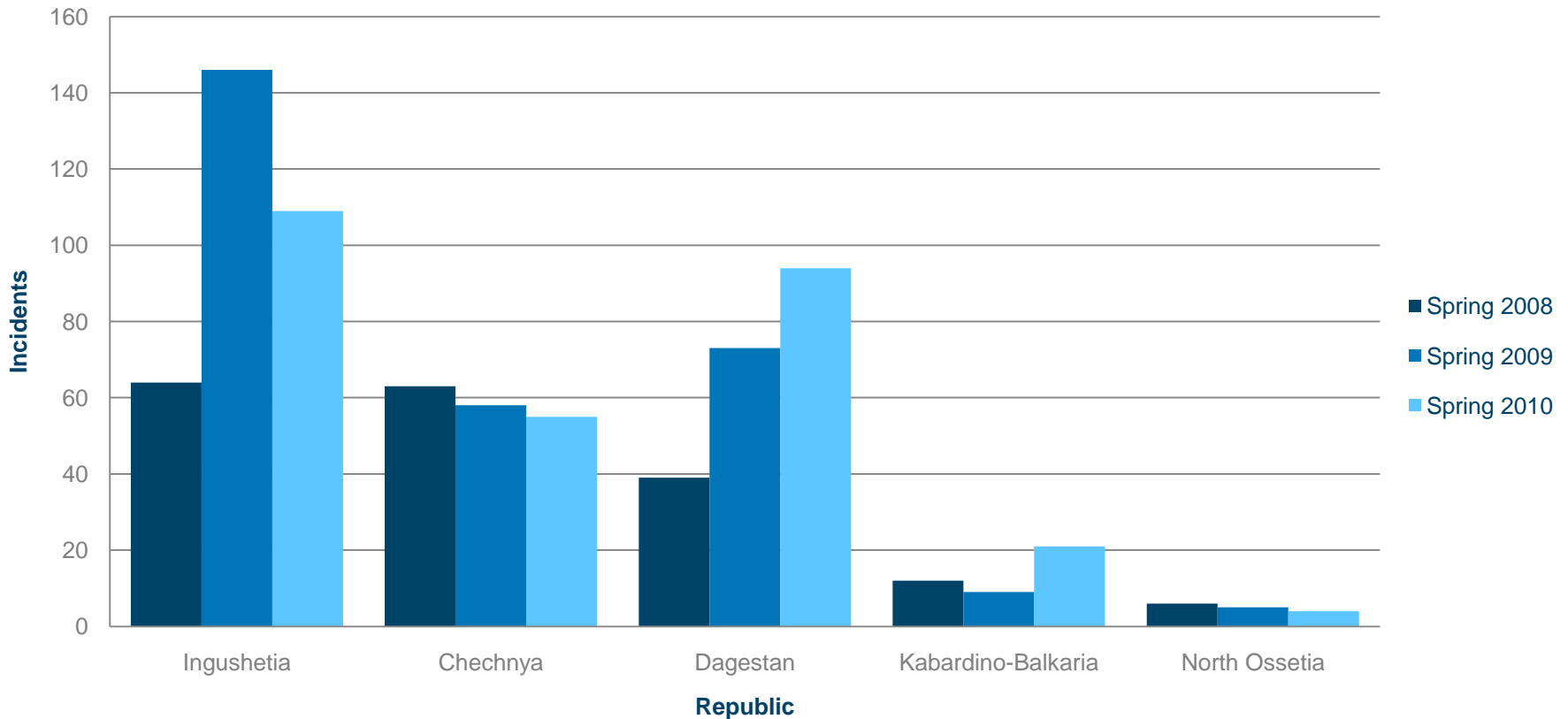
Incidents of Violence in the North Caucasus 2008, 2009, and Jan 1 – Apr 30, 2010



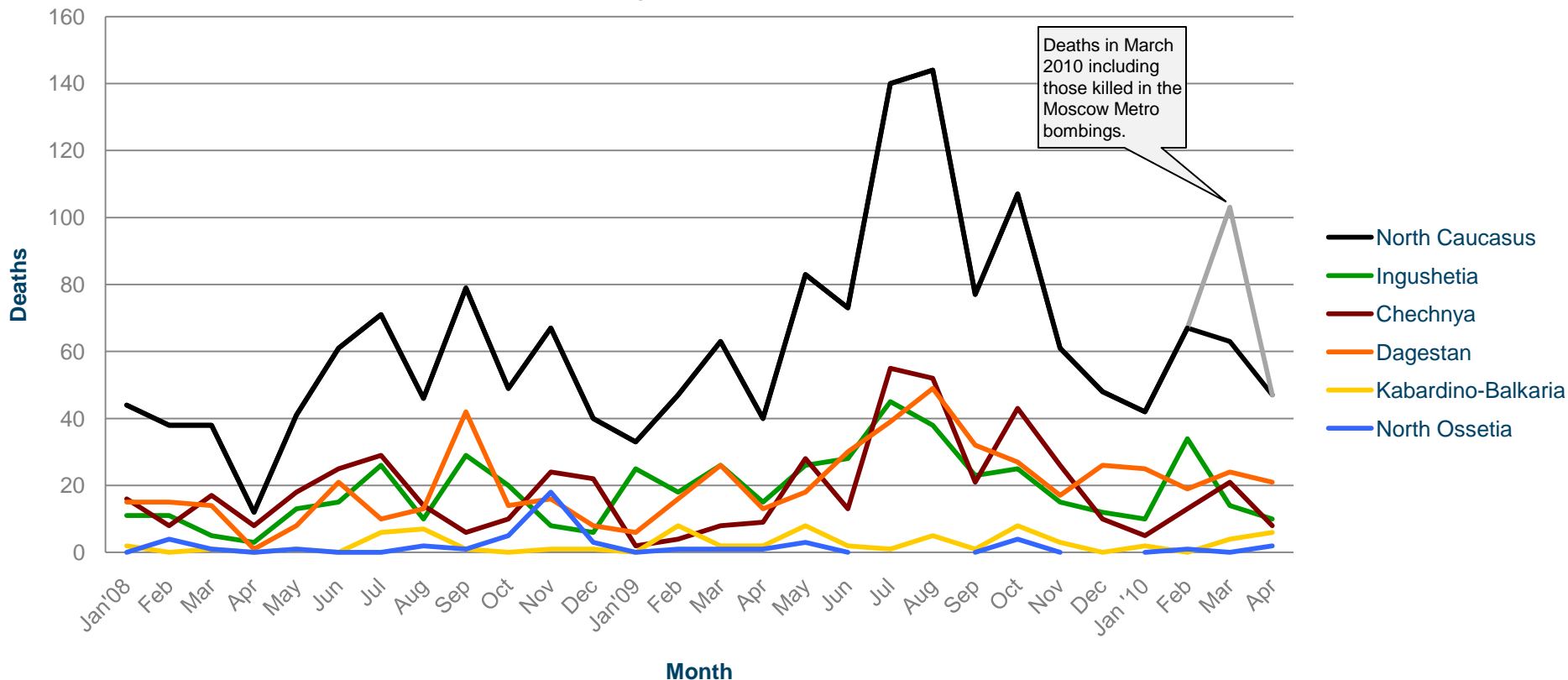
Incidents of Violence in the North Caucasus Spring (Jan 1 – Apr 30) 2008, 2009, and 2010



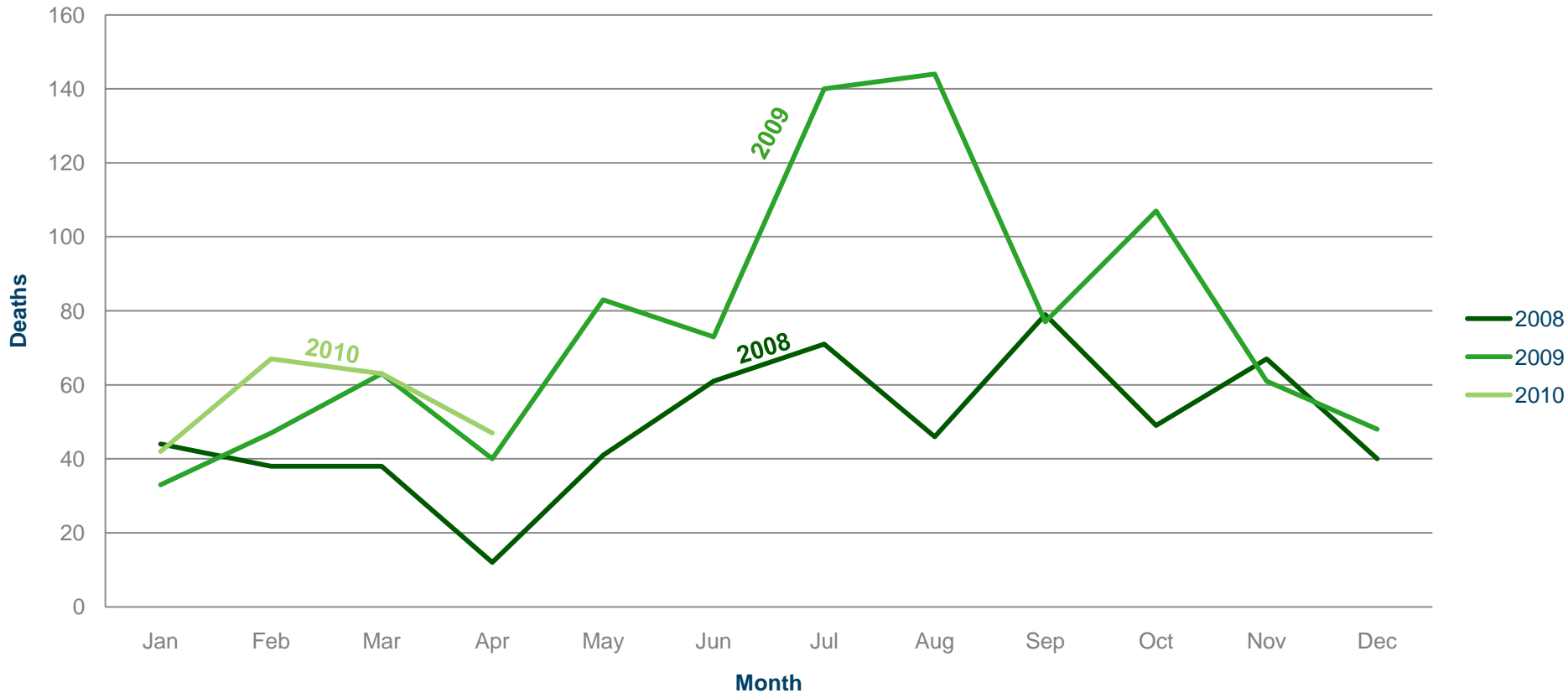
Incidents of Violence in the North Caucasus by Republic Spring (Jan 1 – Apr 30) 2008, 2009, and 2010



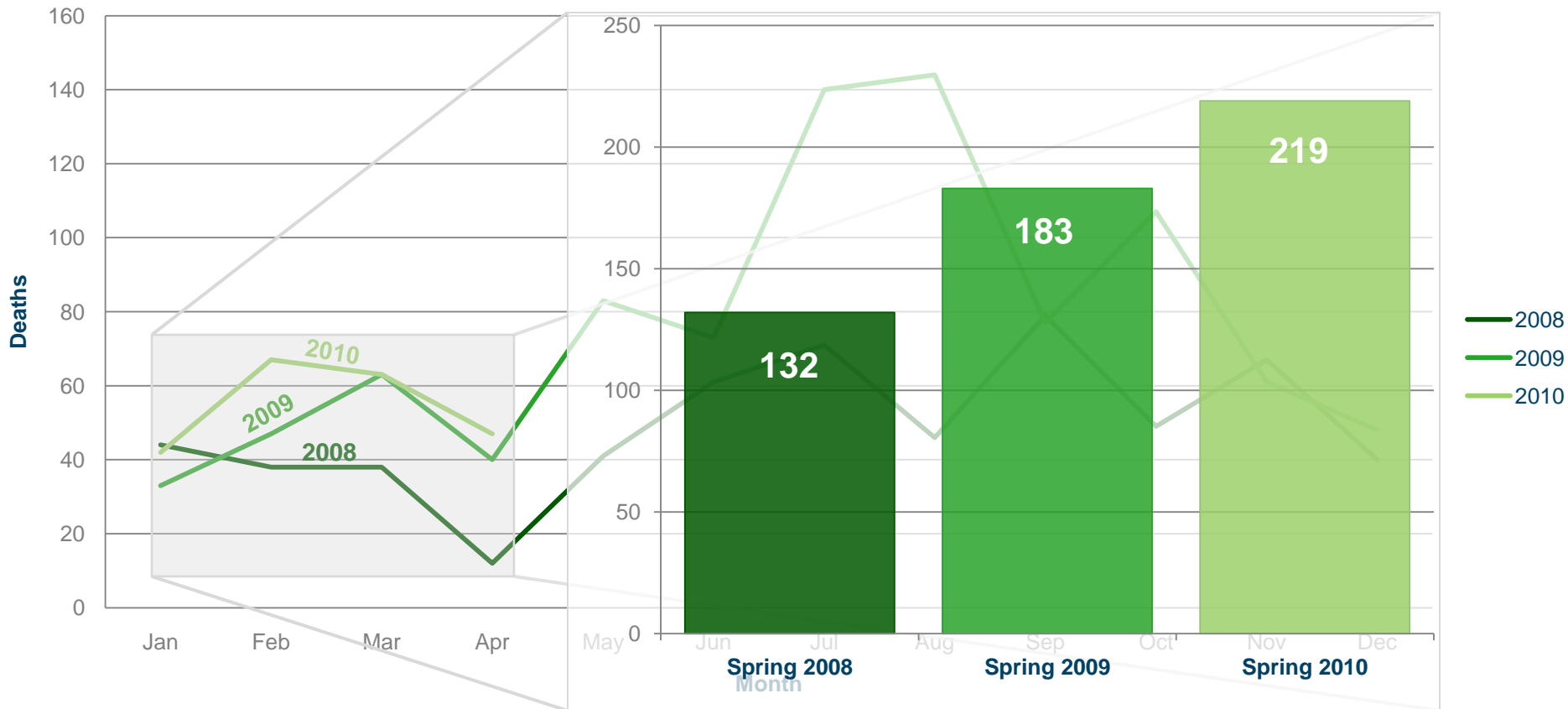
Deaths due to Incidents of Violence in the North Caucasus January 2008 – April 2010



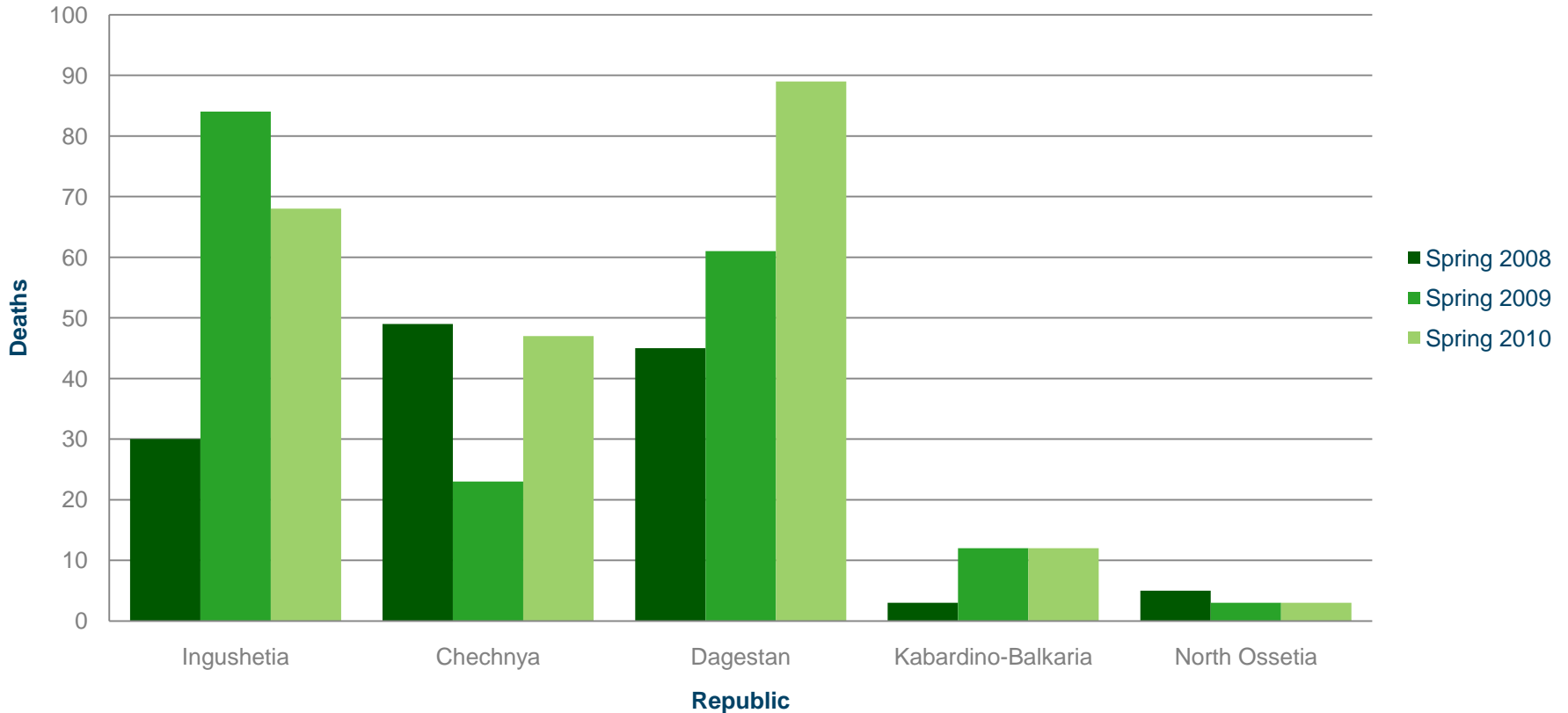
Deaths due to Incidents of Violence in the North Caucasus 2008, 2009, and Jan 1 – Apr 30, 2010



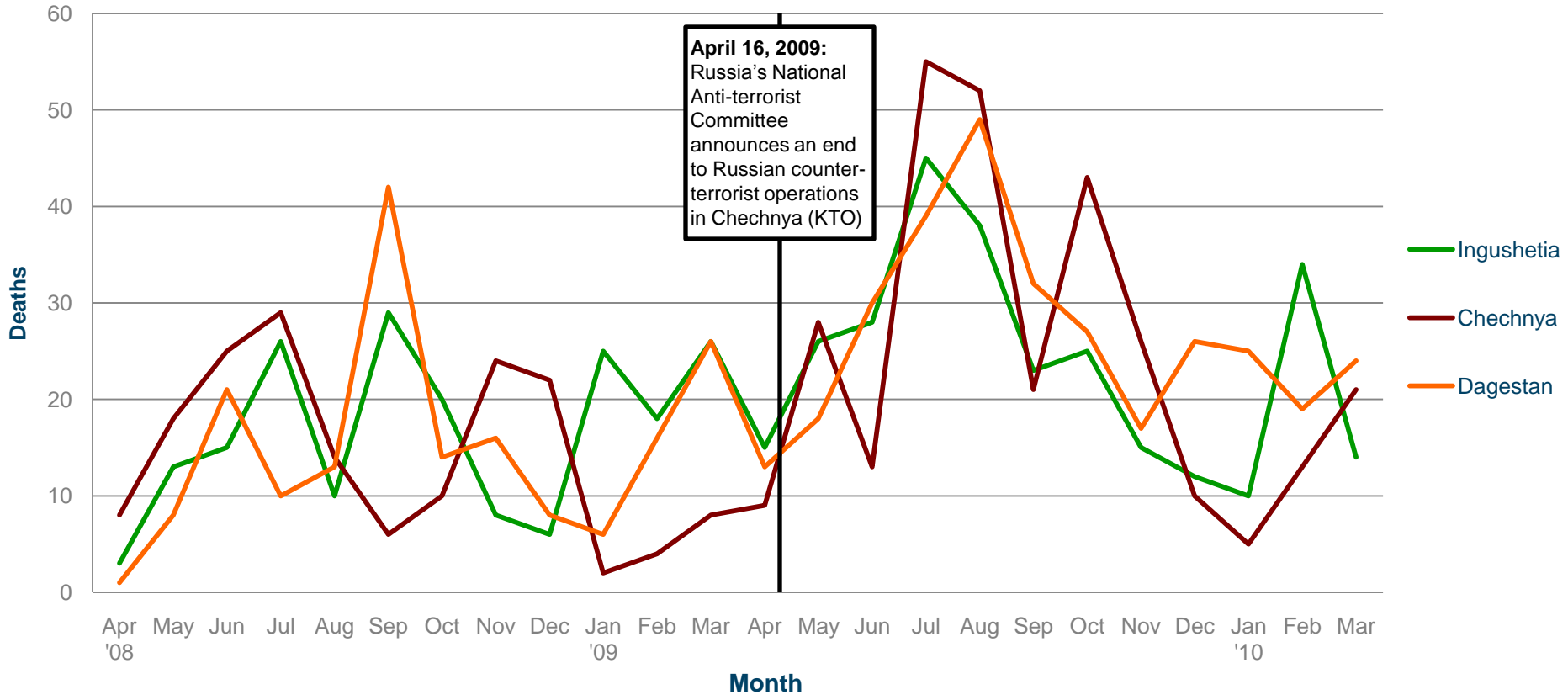
Deaths due to Incidents of Violence in the North Caucasus Spring (Jan 1 – Apr 30) 2008, 2009, and 2010



Deaths due to Incidents of Violence in the North Caucasus by Republic Spring (Jan 1 – Apr 30) 2008, 2009, and 2010



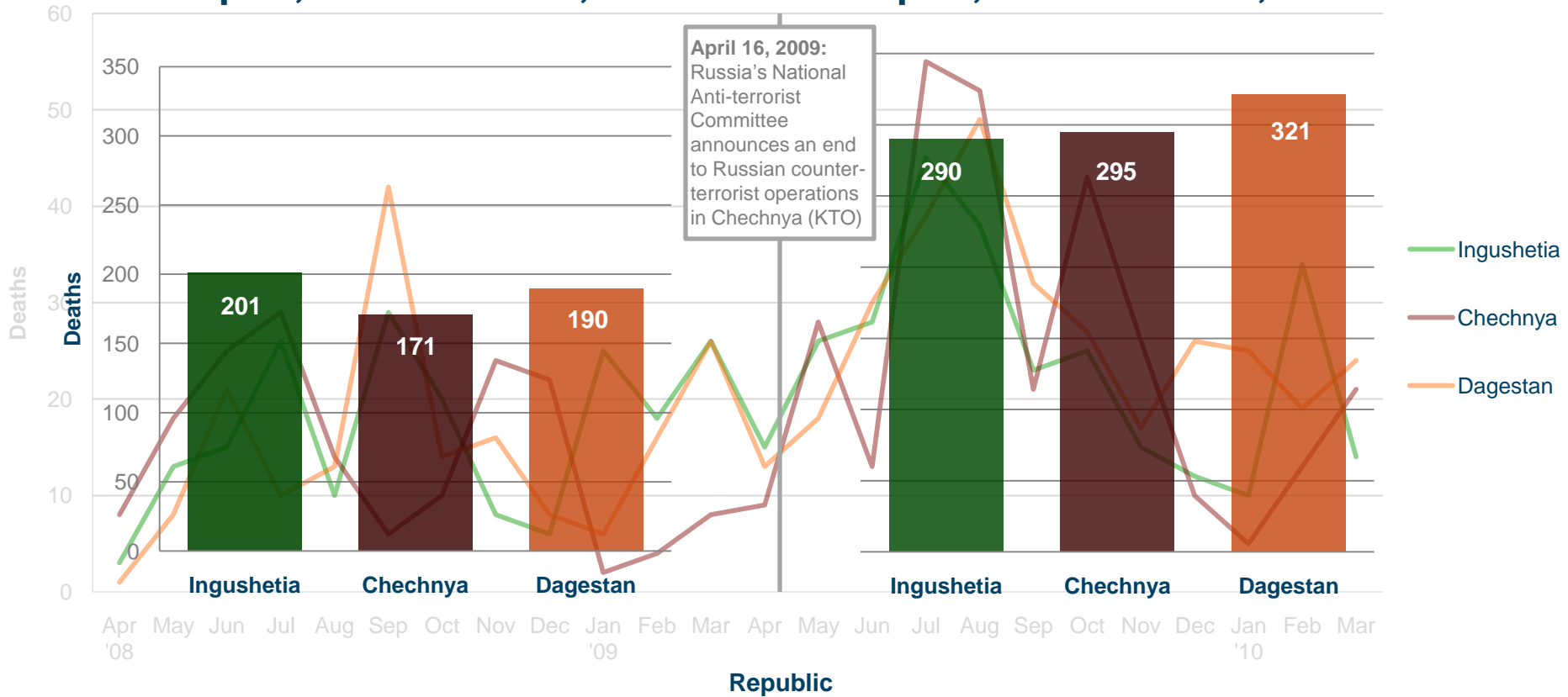
Deaths due to Incidents of Violence in Ingushetia, Chechnya, and Dagestan Apr 1, 2008 – Mar 31, 2010



Deaths due to Incidents of Violence in Ingushetia, Chechnya, and Dagestan

Apr 1, 2008 – Mar 31, 2009

Apr 1, 2009 – Mar 31, 2010

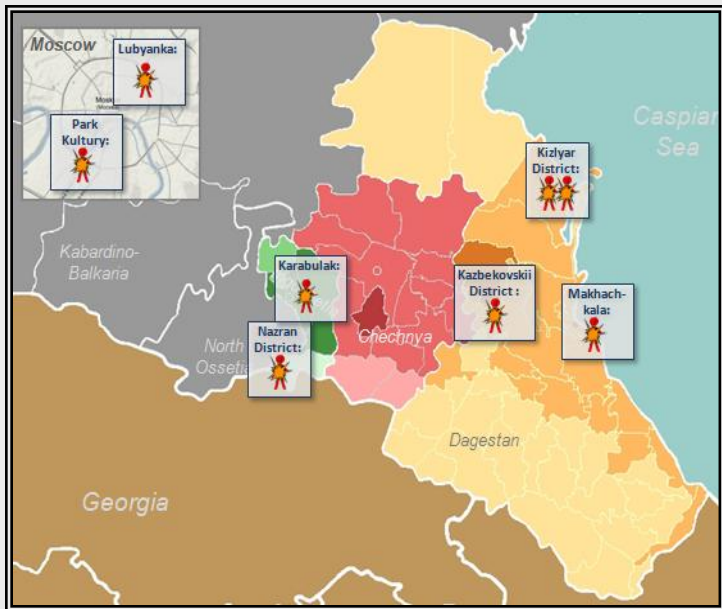


Suicide Bombings:

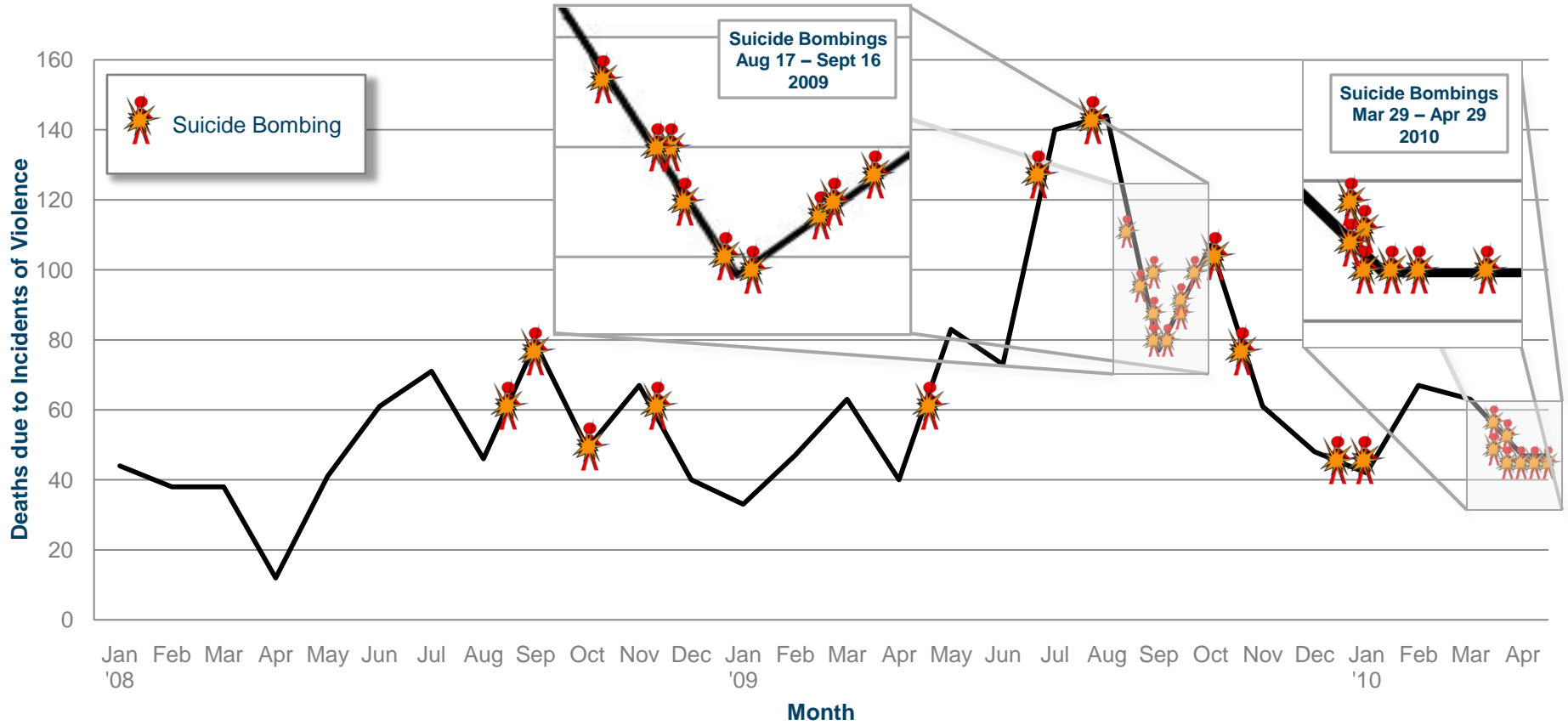
The number of suicide bombings in the North Caucasus has risen dramatically in 2009-2010. Alarming, six suicide bombings were committed in just twelve days in Spring 2010, including the infamous Moscow Metro bombings.

In the following slides, we present our data on suicide bombings since Jan 1, 2008, which illustrate that:

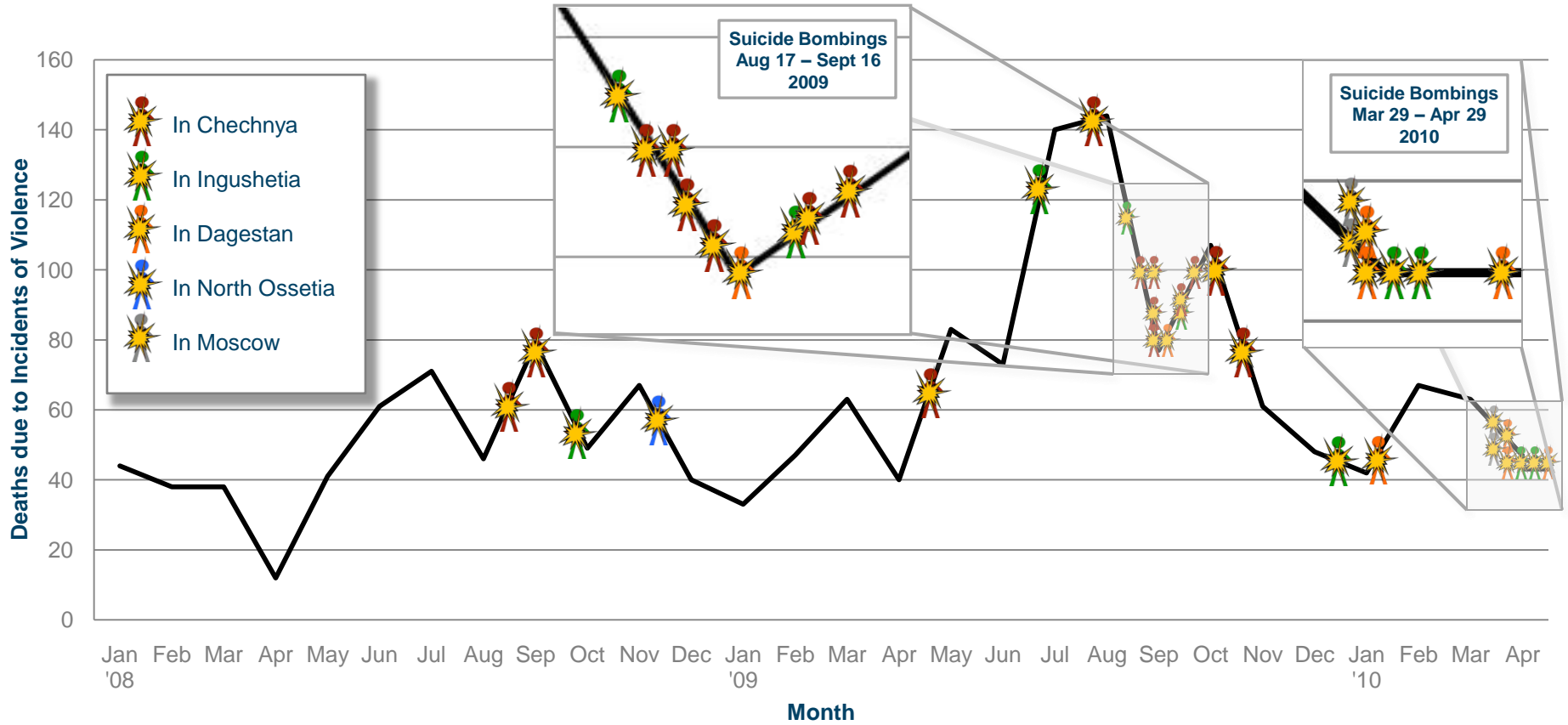
- The frequency has increased;
- The locality has shifted: 10 of 15 suicide bombings in 2009 were committed in Chechnya, whereas the 8 suicide bombings to date in 2010 all took place in Dagestan, Ingushetia, or Moscow;
- Despite fears of a resurgence of “black widows,” only 5 of 27 bombers were female.



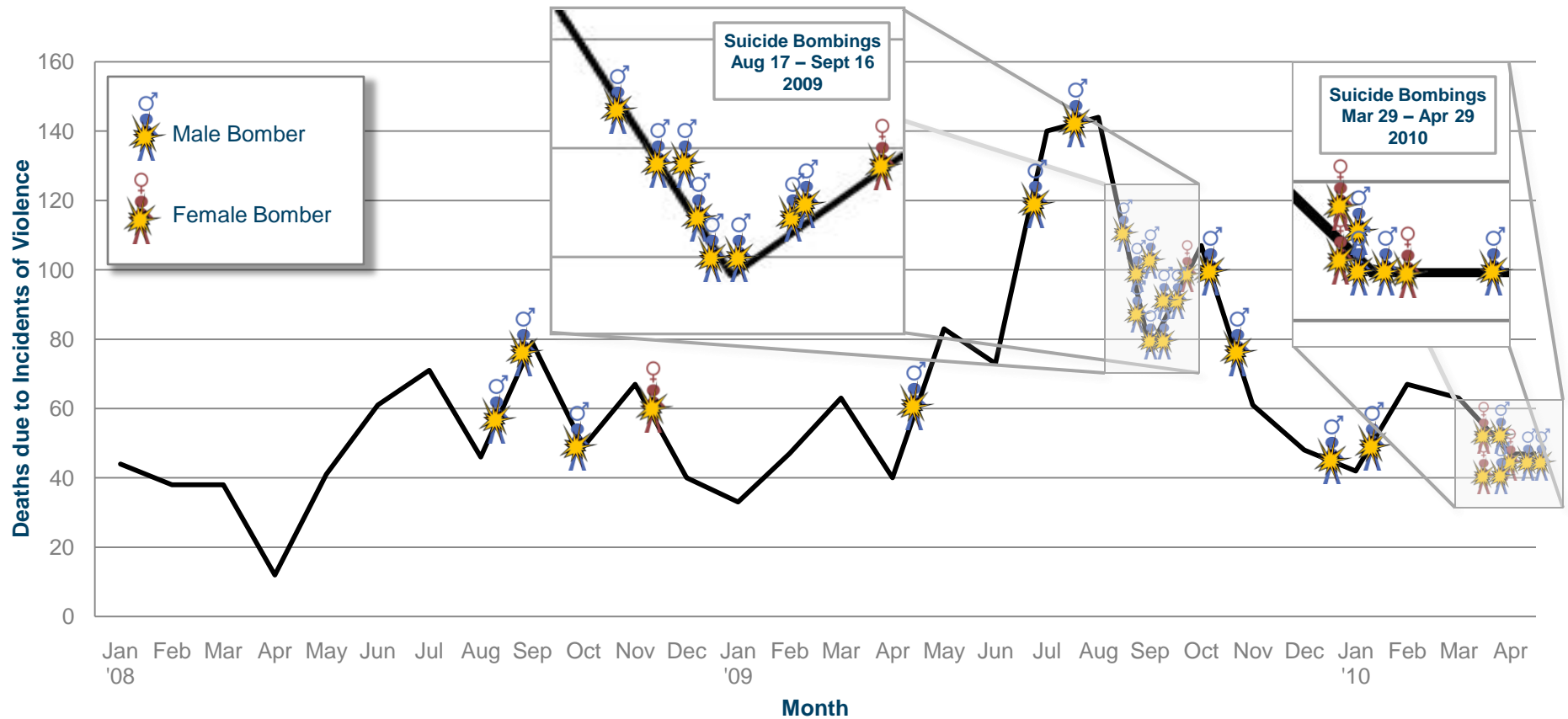
Suicide Bombings in the North Caucasus Jan 1, 2008 – Apr 30, 2010



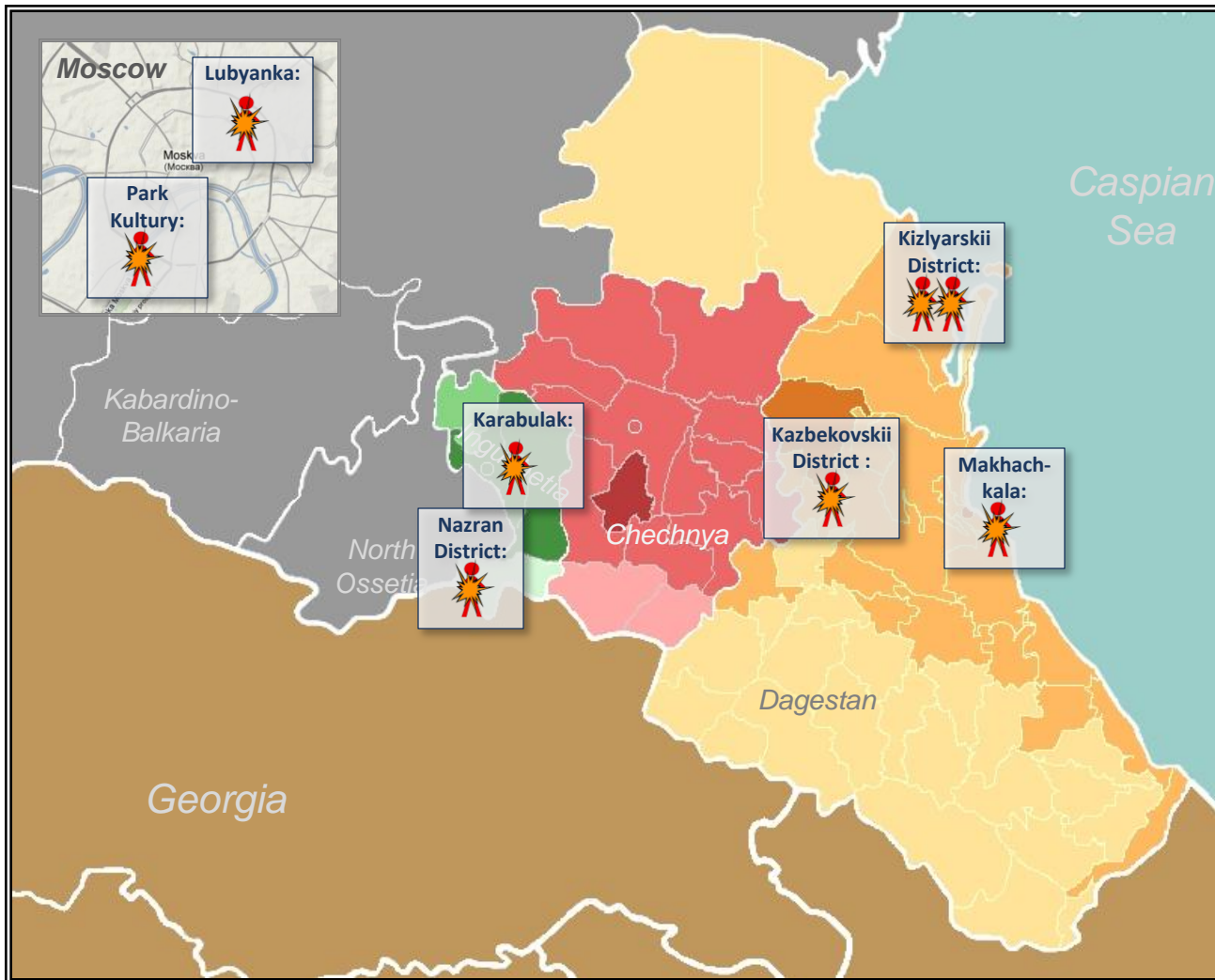
Suicide Bombings in the North Caucasus by Republic Jan 1, 2008 – Apr 30, 2010



Suicide Bombings in the North Caucasus by Gender Jan 1, 2008 – Apr 30, 2010

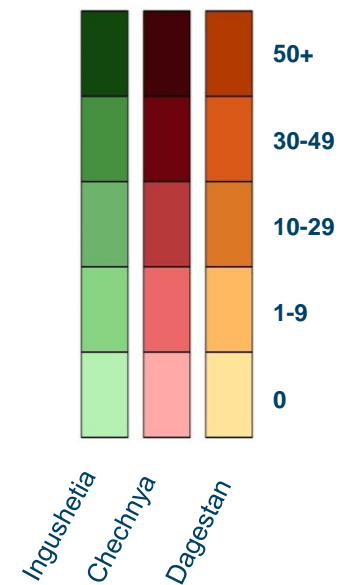


Suicide Bombings by District in the North Caucasus Jan 1 – Apr 30, 2010



= suicide bombing

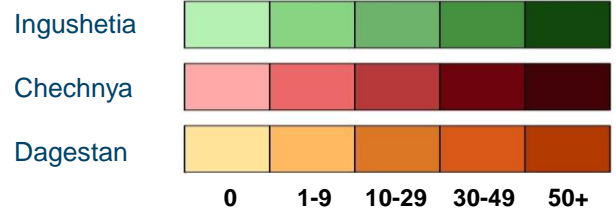
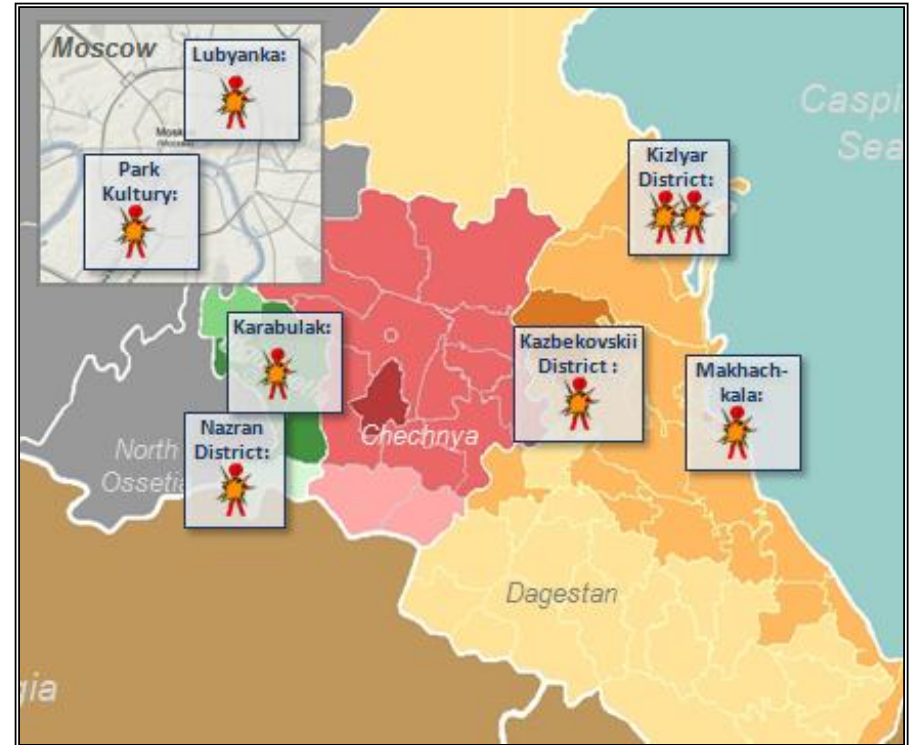
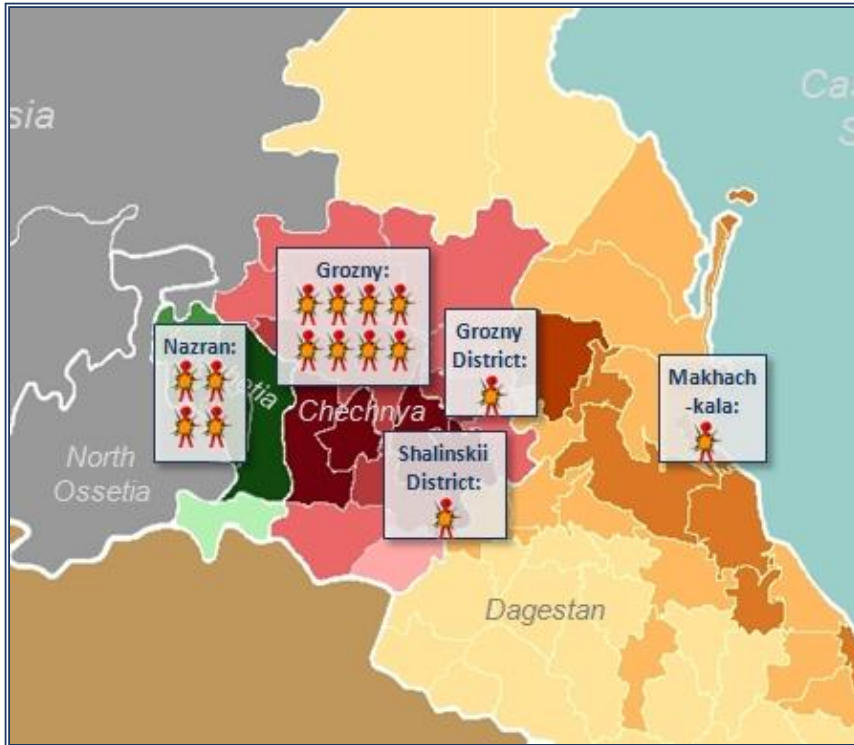
Incidents of Violence



Suicide Bombings by District in the North Caucasus

2009

Jan 1 – Apr 30, 2010



Incidents

= suicide bombing

Following the tragic suicide bombings in the Moscow Metro on March 29, 2010, some researchers suggested that these bombings represent a resurgence of Chechen female suicide bombers known as “black widows,” motivated by vengeance for the loss of a loved one.

While we welcome and encourage social science research on terrorism in Russia, we believe that some recent analysis has missed the mark with a focus on Chechens, women, and separatism. Such analysis misrepresents not only what happened in Moscow but also the reality behind the increasing number of suicide bombings in Russia’s North Caucasus.

Attention on Chechnya alone obscures the terrific levels of lethal violence also occurring in the neighboring republics of Ingushetia and Dagestan, levels that recently surpassed those of Chechnya. Overall in 2009, we recorded more than 1,100 incidents of violence in the region, more than a third of which occurred in Ingushetia alone. In that same year 10 of 15 suicide bombings in were committed in Chechnya; however, in 2010 to date, 8 suicide bombings have occurred, none of which took place in Chechnya.

As for the focus on gender, women carried out only 5 of the 27 completed suicide bombings between Jan 1, 2008 and Apr 30, 2010.

Like other researchers, we can only speculate what motivates suicide bombers. But there is little research to support the notion that in 2010 separatist claims are the main motivating factor. While there is no need to exaggerate the strength of violent *salafi jihadist* sentiment in the region, it clearly has a pull through the likes of ideologue Said Buryatskiy, a Muslim convert from Siberia who was killed in March 2010; and Doku Umarov, the self-appointed Emir of the Caucasian Emirate. Moreover, poor socioeconomic conditions and abuses by the authorities have combined to create an enabling environment for violence and terrorism, and these desperately need to be addressed.

In short, the security threats emanating from the North Caucasus necessitate much more domestic and international focus and attention, but they also need accurate diagnosis.

Sources

Main:

- Caucasian Knot (<http://kavkaz-uzel.ru/>)
- Ria Novosti (<http://www.rian.ru/>)

Additional:

- ITAR-TASS (<http://www.itar-tass.com/eng/>)
- North Caucasus Weekly, The Jamestown Foundation (<http://www.jamestown.org/programs/ncw/>)
- RFE/RL (<http://www.rferl.org/>)
- The Moscow Times (<http://www.themoscowtimes.com/index.htm>)
- The New York Times (<http://www.nytimes.com>)

Further Reading:

- For more on the impact that this mounting violence has had on Russia's human rights community and what the international community ought to be doing about it, see Sarah Mendelson's August 12th *Foreign Policy* article "[\(Un\)civil Society in the North Caucasus.](#)"
- For a survey-based assessment of factors contributing to the region's volatility, see Professor Theodore Gerber's and Sarah Mendelson's article "[Security through Sociology: The North Caucasus and the Global Counterinsurgency Paradigm,](#)" in *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, Volume 32, Issue 9, September 2009.
- For recommendations on ways in which the international community can address issues facing the North Caucasus, see "[49 Steps To Improve Human Rights and Security in the North Caucasus,](#)" a 2007 report by the CSIS Human Rights and Security Initiative and the Robert Bosch Stiftung.

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