

ПРАВООЗАЩИТНЫЙ ЦЕНТР «МЕМОРИАЛ»

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Bulletin of the Memorial Human Rights Centre

Situation in the North Caucasus conflict zone:

analysis from the human rights perspective

Summer 2008

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The Memorial Human Rights Centre continues its work in the North Caucasus. We offer you here the new issue of our regular bulletin containing a brief description of the key events featured in our news section over the three summer months of 2008 and a few examples of our analysis of the trends in development of the situation in the region. This bulletin contains materials collected by the Memorial Human Rights Centre working in the North Caucasus and published on the Memorial website as well as media and information agencies reports.

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Summer Escalation of Violence

The full-scale war between Russia and Georgia that broke out on **August 7** had completely obscured all news and issues relating to the Caucasus region. Not wishing to elaborate here on the reasons and developments of the new drama that broke out in the Caucasus, we nevertheless believe it important to stress that the armed conflict on the other side of the Caucasus Ridge, in the North Caucasus, far from coming to an end, showed a sharp escalation of tensions over the summer months of 2008.

The key criteria according to which we evaluate the intensity of warfare is the number of casualties sustained by the security forces of the Russian Federation in armed encounters and clashed as well as resulting from terrorist attacks. The table below has been compiled on the basis of the data collected by the *VoineNet website* (<http://www.voinenet.ru>), which has been accumulating and analyzing information from across the Russian media on casualties sustained by the forces of the Russian Federation in summer 2008¹

	June		July		August		TOTAL	
	Killed	Wounded	Killed	Wounded	Killed	Wounded	Killed	Wounded
Chechnya`	11	32	10	16	12	22	33	70
Ingushetia	3	10	14	39	12	26	29	75
Dagestan	3	1	2	7	6	5	11	13
Kabardino-Balkaria		5	5	3	4	3	9	11
TOTAL	17	48	31	65	34	56	82	169

According to our calculations made on the basis of the data obtained from the same source, in **summer 2007** the casualty figures for the Russian military and police forces serving in the conflict zone stood at **61 persons killed** and **132 wounded**, while the figures for the **summer 2006** were **83 killed** and **210 wounded**. Thus, the fatality figures have sadly reached the level of two years ago – the period of increased activity of Basayev and Maskhadov. What should be particularly emphasized is the fact that the casualties in the tiny Ingushetia have for the first time surpassed the figures for Chechnya – **104 and 103 persons** respectively.

We would also consider it important to emphasize the fact that the military and law enforcement casualty figures in Chechnya were not lower than over the same period in **2007 (28 killed and 80 wounded)**. On the contrary, the militant underground has become even more active in Kabardino-Balkaria.

Members of the Anti-War Club ‘VoineNet’ have recently presented the results of their own analysis of the casualty statistic for **the summer months of 2004 – 2008**. For the first time over the last 5 years, an upward trend has clearly manifested itself in the casualty statistic for the military and law enforcement officers over the so-called resulting from their clashes with the guerilla forces (www.voinenet.ru/index.php?aid=17124)

With regard to the **Chechen Republic**, the worst situation has been observed in the mountainous *Vedeno and Nozhai-Yurt districts*, where attacks on convoys and posts of the security services continued. Moreover, three cases of siege of populated settlements by militants had been registered throughout summer 2008.

On the night of **June 13** a big group of Chechen militants (numbering about 60 persons) under the command of the warlord **Usman Muntsygov** [entered the village of Benoi-Vedeno in the Nozhai-Yurt district](#), which remained under his total control for a few hours. The militants’ raid resulted in the killing of 3 persons, destruction of several (according to different sources, the number ranged from 3 to 5) households and 2 motorcars which belonged to the local residents – all of them were families of the local law enforcement officers. The local residents allege that the police and the military only came to the village in the morning, several hours after the militants left the village of Benoi-Vedeno completely unhampered (<http://www.memo.ru/hr/hotpoints/caucas1/msg/2008/06/m135931.htm>; Information Agency Kavkazsky uzel, 4.7.2008).

Following the attack on Benoi-Vedeno, **on June 18**, the President of Chechnya **Ramzan Kadyrov** held a meeting with the heads of the republican and the federal security services in Chechnya, where he fiercely criticized their work. He also demanded that they immediately hold a large-scale operation against the militant groups, saying, however, as usual, that the latter now numbered only 5 or 6 remaining persons. Nevertheless, Kadyrov thought it fit to involve not only the units of the Ministry of Defence troops, the special task ‘Sever’ and ‘Yug’ battalions of the Interior Troops of the Russian Ministry of Interior, but also the 2nd regiment of the police patrol guard service (the special task regiment of the Chechen Ministry of Interior named after the late Akhmat Kadyrov) (*website ‘Ramzan Akhmatovich Kadyrov’, 18.6.2008*). The Chechen Minister of Interior **R.Alkhanov** has recently confirmed the drastic rise in the militants’ activity alleging

that the latter had recently a new portion of financing from their Arabic sponsors (*IA Kavkazsky uzel*, 20.6.2008).

During the second half of June the troops mentioned by the President of Chechnya were introduced into the Vedeno and Nozhai-Yurt districts. The fragmentary information that had leaked into the media showed that the operation was a mixed success. The militants, ever faithful to their guerilla tactic, refrained from entering open confrontations opting widely for ambush tactic instead. Thus, in the evening of **June 27** several Chechen police officers fell into an ambush on the road entering the village of Dargo of the Vedeno district, which resulted in four of them being killed and four others wounded. However, according to the information which Kavkazsky Uzel was able to obtain from the eye-witnesses among the local residents, the fire exchange was very intensive and it is quite possible that the number of victims among Chechen police officers could in reality be far greater (*IA Kavkazsky uzel*, 28.6.2008).

On the night to June 29 a group of militants numbering up to 70 entered the village of Elistanzhi in Vedeno district of the Chechen Republic. They opened fire at the deployment location of a squadron of the 'Yug' battalion as well as at the base of the village police department, which normally consists of police officers on detached service from other regions of the Russian Federation. The militants killed a local resident who was the head of administration of the Vedeno district. He was taken by force out of his house and shot dead outside. Also, gunfire was opened at a passing car carrying officers of the 'Yug' battalion who were driving from the village of Agishbatoy to the village of Elistanzhi. The attack resulted in one battalion officer being killed. In the morning the militants left the village (www.memo.ru/hr/hotpoints/caucas1/rubr/28/index.htm).

The third case of seizure of a village by armed militants took place in August in **the Urus-Martan district**. Here an attack on *the village of Goy-Chu (Komsomolskoye) of the Urus-Martan district* took place on **August 15**. The fire attack on the local police department resulted in 3 police officers being gravely wounded. The militants left the village in cars which they took from the locals – this fact provided the police with sufficient ground to subsequently accuse them of collaboration with the terrorists (www.memo.ru/hr/hotpoints/caucas1/msg/2008/08/ml144665.htm).

The militant forces continue to escalate their activity in the **Republic of Ingushetia**. Last summer had hardly seen a day without coming news of attacks, fire exchange, blasts. The republic for the first time topped the list of the North Caucasus regions with regard to the number of casualties among security services officers. This is a fairly expected result of the way the events have been developing in the republic over the past years, where law enforcement and security officers have been perpetually and flagrantly violating the rights of the local residents in the course of the anti-terrorist operations. In actual practice, the security services are playing into the hands of the militants by contributing to further expansion of their mobilisable resources and shattering people's confidence in the authorities.

A new, previously unknown concept of "civil war" is now increasingly becoming a reality in the republic. One of the leaders of the Ingushetia opposition Magomed Khazbiev told the TV project Grani.Ru in his very frank interview that... "...under cover of darkness ordinary guys from our streets just go out and avenge their brothers by killing all and any officers of law enforcement services, which they happen to come across" (*Grani.Ru TV project*, 4.9.2008).

However, it is far from being a hard and fast rule that the militants exclusively choose officers of security services as their targets; civil servants and people, who have no connection to the authorities whatsoever, also infrequently become victims of their attacks. Militants, who are

followers of radical Islam, commit attacks on representatives of the official Muslim clergy, who, in their opinion, are mercenary accomplices of the authorities and security services. For example, on **August 2** the house belonging to the family of the imam of *the Altiyevsky municipal district mosque in Nazran* came under gunfire. The imam and his son were taken to hospital as a result of the attack. On August 21 a bomb exploded near the house of the imam of the mosque in the village of Maysky. In this case no harm was done. (*IA Kavkazsky uzel*, 21.8.2008).

The summary chronicles of the events over a span of a few days given below clearly shows the intensity and the density of militants' attacks in Ingushetia.

On July 2, at about 15.30, in *the city of Malgobek on Promyshlennaya street*, unidentified persons driving a silver-coloured VAZ-21110 vehicle without a licence plate, opened fire from automatic firearms at a VAZ-21310 vehicle carrying 5 officers of the temporary task group of the Ministry of Interior who were sent to serve on a mission from the Kurgan Province Department of Interior. All the police officers inside received gunshot wounds and two of them – operative officer **Alexander Malafeev**, born in 1985, and **Maksim Makarenko**, born in 1982, died of their wounds.

10 minutes later, at the intersection of *Fizkulturnaya and Oskanova streets* unidentified persons driving allegedly the same car opened fire at a VAZ-2107 patrol car of the Traffic Police Department of the Malgobek district Department of Interior, which was carrying officers of the Malgobek district Department of Interior and of the City Defence Forces of the Malgobek district department of the Russian Ministry of Interior. The attack resulted in inspector of the Road Patrol Service of the Traffic Police Department **Magomed Korigov**, born in 1983, and officer of the City Defence Forces **Denis Orlov**, born in 1980, receiving gunshot wounds (www.memo.ru/hr/hotpoints/caucas1/msg/2008/07/ml39527.htm)

On the night to July 5 [unidentified persons opened gunfire at the house belonging to a police officer in Karabulak](#), and also [set fire to the house of the Republican Prime Minister Bashir Aushev](#), who is in charge of supervising the security services in the republic.

In the afternoon of July 5 unidentified persons in Ingushetia [opened fire at the vehicle convoy carrying servicemen](#) on the road leading out of the village of *Sredniye Achaluki of the Malgobek district*. The fire was opened from a black VAZ-21110 vehicle. The attack resulted in one person being killed and two being wounded (www.memo.ru/hr/hotpoints/caucas1/msg/2008/07/ml39517.htm). An hour earlier on *the Malgobek-Sagopshi motorway* unidentified persons opened fire at officers of a mobile post of traffic police. One officer was wounded. On the same day a six-hour battle broke out in the Malgobek district, at the *sheep-yard of the Fargiev family between the villages of Sagopshi and Sredniye Achaluki*. In the course of this operation officers of the Russian Ministry of Interior and FSB Department killed four militants. Two servicemen were also killed, two others were wounded. On the same day, on Mulatieva street in Nazran a mobile police post came under gunfire opened by unidentified persons. One police officer was wounded as a result. (*Kavkazsky uzel*, 5.7.2008).

On the next day, July 6, the search for the militant attackers with whom the security services were fighting the day before resumed. A body of a militant and a wounded armed man were discovered at an abandoned farm in the vicinity of the village of *Sagopshi*, the wounded man started shooting back upon being discovered and was shot dead (*Kavkazsky uzel*, 7.7.2008). On the same day the head of the republican Department for Combating Organised Crime of Ministry of Interior, Magomed Bapkoyev, was gunned down while driving his car.

On the night from July 8 to July 9, the armed militants attacked the village of *Muzhichi in the Sunzhensky district*. For a while the village was completely under the militants' control, they were driving from one side of the village to another in cars which they had seized from the villagers and they were behaving in a loud and blatantly aggressive manner not only with representatives of the authorities but also with the local people. The militants shot ex-police officers **Kh.Torshkhoyev** and **R.Daliev** dead, having accused of being informers and wounded a

police officer I. Aushev. In response to loud and open expression of indignation at their actions on the part of 70-year-old **Ibragim Chapanov**, the old man was simply shot dead by them thus becoming the third victim of the village siege on that day (www.memo.ru/hr/hotpoints/caucas1/msg/2008/07/m138197.htm).

The number of militants seizing the village of Muzhichi given by various military services varied between 12 and 15. The militants' own websites spoke of a 100-men strong group. According to the local people, including the local staff of the Memorial, their number was approximately 15 – 20 people.

On the same night an attack was committed on the operational post of a regiment of the Ministry of Interior internal troops not far from *stanitsa Nesterovskaya*.

One has to acknowledge the ability of the militant groups to conduct several operations simultaneously and with apparent efficiency. It was no coincidence that after the attack on Muzhichi the following announcement was made: *"forces of the Ingushetia Ministry of Interior have been put on alert... the "Fortress" plan regime has been introduced: the security of facilities belonging to the Ministry of Interior as well as of governmental and administrative facilities, high-threat facilities and community facilities has been stepped up"* (*IA Kavkazsky uzel*, 9.7.2008). Thus, we can speak of the Ingushetia security services adopting the defensive tactic. Yet, the bosses of the Ministry of Interior, who arrived to Muzhichi a few days later, were unable to come up with something better than recommend the local people to create militia units for defending themselves. (www.memo.ru/hr/hotpoints/caucas1/msg/2008/08/m143677.htm). Thus, the republican authorities themselves practically undertake steps typical of a civil war situation.

At the end of the summer armed attacks on ethnic Russian civilians in Ingushetia resumed. On August 26, in the village of *Troitskaya in the Sunzhensky district* a garbage truck came under gunfire, as a result the driver and a woman sitting next to him were wounded. Both were ethnic Russians and employees of the Sunzhensky Production Office of the Housing Maintenance and Utilities Sector Yuri Ilyichenko, born in 1956, and 54-year-old Polyakova. (*Kavkazsky uzel*, 26.8.2008) On the night of August 27, a Russian family – father and daughter, 52-year-old Vassily Artemyev and 21-year-old Oxana – were shot dead in *stanitsa Ordzhonikidzevskaya* again in the Sunzhensky district. Their bodies were discovered by a neighbour (*IA Rosbalt-Yug*, 27.8.2008).

In general, according to the website *Ingushetiya.Ru*, Ingush police officers try to avoid open confrontations with the militants, they are demoralized, many want to quit their job at the police to avoid being targeted by militants or participating in unlawful suppression of their own fellow countrymen. The Minister of Interior frequently has to resort to promises of material benefits and threats in order to make them continue their work (*Ingushetiya.Ru*, 5,6./2008 etc). According to staff of the Memorial office in Nazran, instances of police officers leaving their work for fear of becoming a possible target for the militants do take place, yet far from being as widespread as *Ingushetiya.Ru* claims them to be. The total number of such cases may reach several dozens but definitely not hundreds of former police officers. Quite naturally, the information concerning the numbers of officers who quit their job is not disclosed by the republican Ministry of Interior, therefore, the scale of this trend can only be roughly estimated.

The situation in the Republic of Dagestan in summer 2008 was not much different from that in the neighbouring Chechnya and Ingushetia. On June 30 the Dagestan Minister of Interior **A. Magomedtagirov** recognized that the situation in the Republic of Dagestan had drastically deteriorated lately. According to him, there has been an escalation in the activity of militants of the underground bandit groups. Police car blasts, new attempts on lives of law enforcement

officers, constant new discoveries of arms and ammunition caches clearly testify of the intention of the militants to unhinge the situation in the region (*RIA Dagestan*, 30.6.2008).

According to the authorities, the epicenter of the terrorist activity is now found in the south of the republic – in Derbent and the Derbent district, the Tabasaransky and Suleyman-Stalsky districts. According to the data announced at the meeting of the anti-terrorist commission, “...today 150 followers of the Wahhabi teaching are on the police record in the mountainous regions of the Southern province. Yet, assessing the scale of terrorist activity, one can assume with a great degree of certainty that their real quantity is far greater...” According to A.Magomedtagirov, since the beginning of the year, 15 militants were killed and 8 terrorists and their accomplices were arrested in the Derbent area while offering armed resistance. The security services had also discovered 3 bunkers, 2 caches of weapons, 12 machine guns, 2 pistols, 5 improvised explosive devices and a large amount of ammunition had been seized. (*IA Kavkazsky uzel*, 24.7.2008).

The situation remained tense in *the Khasavyurt district* where bomb explosions as well as attacks on police officers continued to be a regular phenomenon. On **June 7 – 8** a large-scale special operation was conducted in *the town of Khasavyurt*. In the course of that operation the town was blocked which was followed by selective search and an indiscriminate round of visits to private households. The security services had seized a significant quantity of weapons and ammunition: four AT-26 grenade launchers, nine cartridges for AT-7, 11 firearms, among which were machine guns, pistols and carbines, 22 grenades, 5 kilogrammes of TNT, bullet-proof vests, battle uniforms, three portable Kenwood radio sets, telescopic sights and 15 silent weapon devices, two clandestine mini-factories specializing in conversion of air weapons into combat weapons, were liquidated, with confiscation of components for 120 items of fire weapons (*IA Kavkazsky uzel*, 8.7.2008).

The operation also brought 11 arrests on suspicion of links to the illegal armed groups. The remarkable fact about the search was that it was conducted not only in flats of ordinary people but also in the houses of municipal civil servants and of the bosses of certain security services: the superintendent of the Khasavyurt criminal police service **Raip Ashikov**, Chief of the Khasavyurt criminal investigation department **Rasul Saduyev**, his subordinate **Gadzhimurad Imamirzoyev** and of many other officers of the local police as well as a federal judge and an attorney. Eye-witnesses allege that search was only conducted in the houses of ethnic Avars and are inclined to see ethnic context behind the operation. Eye witnesses also said that following the end of the special operation many households that had been searched in the course of it were visited by a high-ranking police officer from Makhachkala who offered his apologies and urged people to refrain from possible intention to complain. It remained unclear whether the Khasavyurt authorities were suspected of having links with the militants. (*IA Kavkazsky uzel* 10.7.2008).

The first news of any considerable success in the work of the security services came from Dagestan in the early autumn. The result of several large-scale special operations in the Khasavyurt and Derbent districts on **September 4 and 7 – 8** were a total of 10 militants killed, including the veteran leader of the Khasavyurt armed group **Askhab Bidayev** and the leader of the Derbent militant group **Ilgar Abdurakhman-ogly Mollachiev**, both had long been wanted by the federal police. The latter was known to the Russian security as “the commander of the Dagestan front” and the successor of Rappani Khalilov who was killed several years ago and who was in charge of maintaining connections with the Al-Qaida sponsors (*New Times*, 8.9.2008).

It should also be noted that on **August 1** the anti-terrorist operation was unexpectedly terminated in *the village of Gimry of the Untsukulsky district*. The President of the Republic

Mukhu Aliev himself arrived to Gimry in a helicopter in order to break the news to the local population (<http://www.memo.ru/hr/hotpoints/caucas1/msg/2008/08/m146744.htm>). According to the official data, over the 8 months of the operation, two bunkers and two fortified trenches containing large caches with weapons and ammunition had been discovered. Over this period the security forces had succeeded in persuading 7 members of illegal armed groups to voluntarily surrender, among those 7 was **Bammatkhan Sheikhov**, who was commonly known to have been the leader of the Buinaksk clandestine terrorist group. In addition to that, the activity of one member of an illegal armed group was neutralized, 17 persons, who had been on the wanted list, were detained as were 19 persons suspected of aiding and abetting the armed underground groups. However, the special operation had clearly taken far longer that was intended and the further it went, the more negative social implications it was bringing to the local population who was sustaining ever greater economic losses. The operation was declared to have come to an end. Nevertheless, several block posts in the surrounding area remained as did the restrictions of freedom of movement for the local residents. (www.memo.ru/hr/hotpoints/caucas1/msg/2008/08/m143187.htm).

The situation also remained tense in **the Republic of Kabardino-Balkaria** – the fact which was recognized by the authorities themselves. People in the Republic continue to keep a large quantity of firearms in private use. Over the first 6 months of 2008 alone about 200 items of firearms, 1,000 items of ammunition and 32 kg of explosives had been seized. (*RIA Novosti*, 16.7.2008) The President of the Republic Arsen Kanokov demanded in his speech last summer to intensify the effort in combating terrorism and extremism (*Kavkazsky uzel*, 28.8.2008).

Developments in the Ingush crisis

The situation in Ingushetia is “*not simple, yet under control...Recently we have seen a rise in the number of attempts on lives of law enforcement officers. Yet one can speak of a notable improvement in the efficiency of work of our security forces*”, declared the Ingush Minister of Interior Musa Medov on **August 6** at a meeting with the President of the Republic in Magas. “*Law enforcement officers are resolved to continue waging an uncompromising battle against criminal elements*”, he added. (*‘Respublika Ingushetia’ website*, 6.8.2008). The federal authorities are offered a still more idyllic picture: the conversation between **Murat Zyazikov** with **Dmitry Medvedev** that took place on **August 27** revolved around schools, birth rates, gasification, tackling the dangers of avalanches. Each of these was the subject of praise for success achieved and both presidents were clearly satisfied with the results of their work (*Respublika Ingushetia website*, 27.8.2008).

However, the reports from human rights activists and journalists working in Ingushetia give a totally different picture. The Republic has been swept by waves of violence both on the part of the terrorists and those who are called to fight with them. This immersion of the republic’s life into total violence is chiefly detrimental to its civilian population. The authorities suppress any attempts of dissidence, nipping all political opposition wishing to operate within the framework of the Russian law in the bud and driving it into the underground. Human rights activists come under regular attacks. The last day of summer 2008 saw the political assassination of the old opponent of the Ingush president upon the arrival of the former into the republic.

The assassination of the owner of the only opposition website *Ingushetyia.Ru* **Magomed Yevloyev** at the *Magas* airport on **August 31** has become the most notorious and, to say the least, flagrant crime of the authorities over the recent years.

This assassination was preceded by other cases of attacks on people who were accusing the republican authorities and the law enforcement and military agencies of human rights violations.

On July 25 unidentified officers of law enforcement structures abducted the website editor of the *Mashr human rights organisation* **Zurab Tsechoyev**. Six hours later he was thrown out of

the car on the road between the villages of *Ekazhevo* and *Ali-Yurt*. Tsechoyev had been badly beaten and had to undergo long-term therapy in hospital. By the end of the summer the human rights activist was hardly able to move after the grave injuries he had received.

According to Tsechoyev's own words, the abductors had been beating him, accusing him of having put up lists containing addresses of the local law enforcement officers on the *Ingushetiya.Ru* website. Tsechoyev vehemently denied his involvement in such a publication, however, the abductors continued to torture him demanding information about who exactly had given those lists to the website editors. Several hours later, having understood that Tsechoyev knows nothing about the matter, the abductors threw him out onto the road having demanded that he quits his work for the human rights organization (<http://www.memo.ru/hr/hotpoints/caucas1/index.htm>; <http://www.memo.ru/hr/hotpoints/caucas1/index.htm>).

The criminal proceedings on the fact of abduction of Zurab Tsechoyev were initiated pursuant to Part 3a of Article 286 of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation (exceeding official powers without use of violence). Quite naturally, this qualification of the offence committed against him did not satisfy the victim, who justly believes that Part 3 of this Article is much more applicable to his case. Nevertheless, as of the time of publication of this bulletin none of the law enforcement officers suspected of having exceeded their official powers have been identified.

On August 13, 2008 at around 9 pm, in the city of *Karabulak*, *Ingushetia*, unidentified persons (allegedly police officers) opened fire in the vicinity of the office of the Mashr human rights organisation, targeting its head **Magomed Mutsolgov**. The fire was practically point-blank yet above Mutsolgov's head. The assailants were passing by in a car without number plates and according to Mutsolgov, at least one of the persons inside the car was wearing a police uniform. It is quite obvious that this attack was an ostentatious intimidation attempt (<http://www.memo.ru/hr/hotpoints/caucas1/msg/2008/08/m145156.htm>)

The authorities have only now begun to openly manifest a tendency to accuse their political opponents of connections with the terrorist underground. Thus, following a shooting attack on the house of the Ingushetia senator Isa Kostoyev, the Ingush President's administration declared that this may have been an intimidation attempt on the part of the republican opposition in response to Kostoyev's active support of the President **Murat Zyazikov** (*'Kommersant'*, 25.8.2008). Kostoyev had repeatedly sharply criticized the opposition going as far as calling them 'terrorists' in one of his interviews.

The abduction of Magomed Yevloev at the Magas airport which ended in the death of the latter was explained by law enforcement officers with their alleged intention to interrogate Yevloev in connection with the explosion near the house of a relative of the Deputy Chairman of the Ingush parliament.

Yevloev arrived from *Moscow* on the same flight as the President of Ingushetia **Murat Zyazikov**. This happened purely coincidentally: Yevloev arrived at the Moscow airport with a ticket to *Mineralniye Vody*, yet, learning that the Magas flight was delayed and that there were vacant seats in the business class, he changed his ticket. Having entered the cabin, he saw the President. Zyazikov and Yevloev were flying to Magas in the same cabin, yet did not communicate with each other during their journey.

Upon their arrival to Magas Zyazikov was met by the Ingush Minister of Interior **Musa Medov**. After the President's car moved away, several cars of the minister's motorcade carrying armed men approached the plane. The officers took Magomed Yevloev out of the plane, put him into an armoured UAZ-vehicle and drove off in the direction of *Nazran*. A large group of relatives and friends were awaiting Yevloev at the airport, among them was one of the opposition leaders **Magomed Khazbiev**. Their attempt to follow the car in which Yevloev was being taken away failed, one of the armoured cars blocked the route. A clash with the police

broke out and the officers opened fire above the people's heads but were then disarmed by the crowd. According to their identity documents, they were officers of the Guard of the Ministry of Interior. It is worth mentioning that the police officers were shouting in Ingush: *'We have no blood on our hands'*. At the time, the friends and relatives of Magomed Yevloev did not understand the meaning behind it. However, about half an hour after his arrest at the airport, Magomed Yevloev was delivered to the Central Clinical Hospital of Nazran with a grave gunshot wound in his head. Shortly afterwards he died in hospital.

Yevloev's funeral was held on **September 1** in the village of *Ekazhevo of the Nazran district*. The family of the assassinated opposition leader had departed from the usual funeral tradition: the funeral procession headed not for the village cemetery but for the city of Nazran. At about midday the procession stopped in the centre of the city near the bus station. A spontaneous rally gathered. Among those who spoke before the people were former member of the Ingush parliament **Bamat-Giri Mankiev**, representatives of the Ingush opposition **Maksharip Aushev**, **Magomed Khazbiev**, **Akhmed Kotiev**, and others. All of them believed the murder was not an accident and accused the leaders of the republican Ministry of Interior and President Murat Zyazikov of involvement in the assassination. In his speech Magomed Khazbiev called upon the leaders of Russia to remove Zyazikov from the government of Ingushetia. Should the Russian government fail to satisfy this demand, Khazbiev claimed that the opposition would bring up the question of secession of Ingushetia from the Russian Federation. After that, Yevloev's body was taken away to the village of *Ekazhevo* where he was buried at the village cemetery. The rally in Nazran was resumed. According to different sources and estimations, it had gathered about 1,000 participants which is an impressive figure for a city as small as Nazran, where over the past year all public actions and rallies were invariably harshly suppressed while participants in such were charged with various criminal offences (www.memo.ru/hr/hotpoints/caucas1/msg/2008/09/ml146723.htm, www.memo.ru/hr/hotpoints/caucas1/msg/2008/09/ml146312.htm).

Towards the evening, the majority of protesters left the square and went home and by the morning of September 1 there were only about 50 people left on the square. At around **5.40 am** the law enforcement officers, who were present at the rally and by that time had already outnumbered the number of protesters, began to disperse the demonstration. The participants attempted to resist by throwing stones at the policemen. This was met with several warning shots into the air. The rally was dispersed. Nobody was detained and there were no injuries. (www.memo.ru/hr/hotpoints/caucas1/msg/2008/09/ml146320.htm).

The reaction of the republican authorities was highly predictable. President Murat Zyazikov, who, according to his words, "had no personal acquaintance" with the victim, dismissed the incident with the conventional words about "a tremendous human tragedy" and "all necessary actions" being taken by the investigators: criminal investigation was launched pursuant to Article 109 Part 2 (infliction of death by negligence owing to improper discharge by a person of his professional duties) of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation (*Respublika Ingushetia website*, 1.9.2008). The only version upon which the investigators set off working from the first hours after the murder was "Yevloev had picked a squabble with the police officers inside the car attempting to whip the submachine gun off the hands of one of them. During the brief struggle a shot from the pistol followed and M.Yevloev was accidentally wounded in the head", said the Republican Public Prosecutor **Yu. Turygin** (*IA, Interfax*, 31.8.2008).

In its press release of August 31 the HRC Memorial declared the assassination to have been "another act of state terror" and "a demonstrative and cynical crime" (www.memo.ru/2008/09/01/0109081.htm). On September 4, 2008 the Russia human rights activists (**Ludmila Alexeeva**, **Svetlana Gannushkina**, **Oleg Orlov**, **Sergey Kovalev**, **Lev Ponomarev** and **Yuri Samodurov**) called upon the Russian authorities to create an extraordinary investigation team of the Prosecutor's General Office of the Russian Federation to investigate the circumstances of the assassination of Magomed Yevloev, suspend, at least for the duration of investigation, the President and the Minister of Interior of the Republic of Ingushetia

from their positions, since both of them appear to perfectly qualify as suspects in this case. They also called upon the authorities to choose in favour of a dialogue with Ingushetia's and Dagestan's civil society (www.memo.ru/hr/hotpoints/caucas1/msg/2008/09/m146722.htm).

None of these demands were ever satisfied. The investigation into the murder was declared completed in October 2008 and sent to the court with the prosecution statement remaining as it was in the beginning.

Thus, the Ingush opposition lost yet another one of its leaders. It should be reminded that another Ingush opposition leader **Maksharip Aushev**, who had also been target of persecution on the part of the authorities, had spent several months in detention in the early 2008. He and his "accomplices" (**Ismail Barakhoyev, Ramazan Kulov, Ruslan Khazbiev and Salman Gazdiev**) were charged with organization of, and participation in, an illegal rally in Nazran on January 24. Only on July 6-7, following declaration of a hunger strike, the detained were released from the Temporary Detention Unit under recognizance not to leave the city. As of the end of September the situation remained unchanged: the organizers of the rally were still under investigation, the restraint measures also remained the same.

12 days before the assassination of Magomed Yevloev, on August 18, the HRC Memorial published its new report *Ingushetia: New methods of counter-terror. Licence to kill?* (see www.memo.ru/hr/hotpoints/caucas1/msg/2008/08/m144162.htm), which focuses on the principal trend of development of the anti-terrorist operation in Ingushetia over the past 6 months (from the start of 2007). The trend can be summarized as follows: "*when conducting special operations in detention of persons suspected of participation in the activities of illegal armed groups, security forces most frequently opt for destruction of suspects rather than their detention. In the majority of cases eye witnesses claim that the killed people had offered no armed resistance, in fact, there were no attempts to even detain them*". According to the data collected by the Memorial, over 2007 alone security services had killed 26 persons suspected of membership in illegal armed groups in the course of special operations in allegedly their detention. Only three of those killed had apparently offered resistance. In all other cases we have every reason to believe that the people were killed in the course of simulated battle. Earlier we spoke about the further spread of this practice. From January until August 5, 2008, 26 others were killed in the course of a special operation, 12 of them had offered no resistance, according to eye witnesses

Here is a typical example in support of the above-said.

On August 2, 2008 in the *Plievsky municipal district of Nazran* federal military officers killed two local residents: **Khamzat Izmailovich Gardanov**, born in 1978, resident of *Gorchkhanova ul., 39*, and **Daud Magomedovich Chibiev**, born in 1982, resident of *Murzabekova ul., 21* (<http://www.memo.ru/hr/hotpoints/caucas1/msg/2008/08/m142893.htm>).

At about 1 pm unidentified persons driving a silver-coloured VAZ-21114 vehicle opened fire at a VAZ-21112 vehicle carrying two police officers. The incident happened at the intersection of the *Oskanova* and *Kotieva* streets. The police officers were wounded as a result of the attack. The place of the incident and the adjacent streets were blocked by federal security services and the republican police forces. Soon after the security forces let a passenger car in which two local residents, Gardanov and Chibiev, were driving back home from the market, inside the cordon. One of the security officers called out and suddenly opened gunfire at the passing car. Gardanov and Chibiev jumped out of it and attempted to flee. Dense fire for effect was opened in their backs from guns and an automatic machine gun. Gardanov received fatal wounds and was killed on the spot. Chibiev was wounded, according to eye-witnesses, yet he managed to escape into the nearest yard. Dense fire was opened targeting the nearby yards. Many eye witnesses claim that Gardanov and Chibiev did not offer any armed resistance.

There have been testimonies from eye witnesses who saw how the officers planted a pistol near Gardanov's body (having previously made several shots with it) and 3 cartridge clips. The next morning, August 3, the body of Daud Chibiev was discovered in one of the gardens not far from *ulitsa Sholokhova*. According to the statement of the Temporary Forces headquarters,

Gardanov and Chibiev were shot following their refusal to leave the secure area. The Military Prosecutor's had launched an inquiry into the legality of application of firearms in respect of the two passenger of the trespassing car. However, the families of the killed men are not allowed to see the materials of the case since they have not been recognized as victims. The Prosecutor's office a priori base their actions on the assumption that the killed men were members of militant groups.

It should be noted that Khamzat Gardanov was the brother of Adam Izmailovich Gardanov, born in 1985, killed by the officers of the FSB Department for Ingushetia on **February 7, 2007** in Nazran together with **Magomed Chakhkiev** under similar circumstances (see the report).

Nevertheless, in a situation when the civil confrontation in Ingushetia is increasingly spreading outside the boundaries of the legal framework, representatives of the civil society for the time being maintain possibilities for legal protection of their interests with judicial authorities. Two examples of this were the victories of the Province Public Movement "The Chechen Committee for National Salvation" in court. Starting from 2007 this organization has been subjected to regular audits of its charter and financial activities.

Since August 2007 representatives of the Chechen Committee for National Salvation were seeking repeal of the *Act on Counteraction* and of the written *Warning* unfoundedly issued in respect of this organization by the FSB Department in the Republic of Ingushetia based on the results of a so-called "unscheduled field check". As it emerged in the course of the court hearings, the ground for the check became a memorandum of the Head of the FSB Department in Ingushetia **Colonel Igor Bondarev** to the Department of the Federal Registration Service. This officer of the security service claimed that "*under cover of alleged human rights campaigning the RPM "The Chechen Committee for National Salvation" pursues other goals quite different from the ones indicated in its statutory documents, namely: officers of this organisation are actively collecting negative materials concerning the social and economic situation in Ingushetia, which is subsequently published on the Ingushetiya.Ru website in a deliberately distorted form*". Furthermore, Colonel Bondarev asserts that the analysis of the data available to the security services had shown that the organisation "*is the key information source of the Ingushetiya.Ru website, which has been demonstrating a pronounced anti-Russian stance and its aim to discredit the initiatives of the federal centre directed at stabilisation of the social and political situation in the republic and in the region on the whole*".

The fact that the Committee receives grants from international structures had served as the ground for the head of the FSB Department to suggest a possibility of "*them being financed by extremist movements from abroad*" and request from the Department of the Federal Registration Service for Ingushetia to carry out an audit of the organizations activities with a view to its compliance with its charter and the law on non-governmental organizations.

The audit resulted in the above-mentioned *Act on Counteraction* and *Warning*, which endow the authorities with instruments allowing them to bring up the possibility of closing down the organization in the future.

On July 10, 2008, the Panel of Judges of the Supreme Court of the Republic of Ingushetia examined the cassation appeal of the Chechen Committee for National Salvation against the decision of the Nazran District Court of **April 3, 2008** dismissing its action against the Federal Registration Service Department for Ingushetia.

The Chairman of the Panel of Judges **M.Daurbekov** examined the arguments of the attorneys of this organization with great thoroughness, taking an unbiased stance in consideration of every little detail. As a result, the Panel of Judges of the Supreme Court of the Republic of Ingushetia determined in favour of granting the petition of the plaintiff – the Regional Public Movement "The Chechen Committee for National Salvation" and reversing the decision of the Nazran District Court of April 3, 2008, sending the case for second consideration to the same court (www.memo.ru/hr/hotpoints/caucas1/msg/2008/07/m139273.htm).

On September 12 the Nazran District Court of the Republic of Ingushetia rendered its verdict on illegality of the actions of the former Department of the Federal Registration Service in respect of the Regional Public Movement “The Chechen Committee for National Salvation”. The interests of the latter were represented in court by attorney **Batyr Akhilgov**. (www.memo.ru/hr/hotpoints/caucas1/msg/2008/09/m146739.htm). We can therefore acknowledge a rare case of victory of representatives of the civil society over a Department of FSB.

It should be remembered that the charges of extremism against the Chechen Committee for National Salvation had been pending since 2004. At that time the action on recognition of the materials published by the Committee as containing extremist appeals was submitted to the court by the Prosecutor’s Office of the Republic of Ingushetia, yet in reality, the FSB Department in Ingushetia was behind those steps of the Prosecutor’s Office. However, the representatives of the Committee were able to avail themselves of highly qualified defence services during the trials, and the charges were somehow naturally “forgotten”. The materials provided by the linguistic expertise had been “lost”, and the Prosecutor’s Office no longer insisted on examination of its submission in court. (www.memo.ru/hr/hotpoints/caucas1/msg/2004/09/m23103.htm).

The Vostok battalion and its involvement in international and inter-clan hostilities

From the very onset of the Russian-Georgian war in August units of the Chechen-staffed battalion of the 126th motorized rifle regiment of the 42th guard motorized rifle division of the Russian Ministry of Defence, known as the Vostok battalion. According to the media agencies *Kavkazsky uzel* and *Interfax* the peace-keeping forces also included a squadron of another Chechen battalion of the Russian Defence Ministry Forces – the Zapad battalion. Later, in September President of Chechnya R.Kadyrov claimed that detachments of both battalions – Vostok and Zapad had taken part in the “peace-keeping” mission (Russia Today, 8.9.2008). In any event, the former had become a true news-making hero of the five-day war, while the latter had not been mentioned even once by the media in connection with the Georgian-Ossetian conflict, apart from the above-mentioned declarations.

Regarding the Vostok battalion, it is known for sure that several of its squadrons had been serving in South Ossetia since **autumn 2007** as part of the peace-keeping forces and following the breakout of active hostilities its main forces were brought into the territory of the unrecognized republic. According to the “*Russian Newsweek*”, those units broke into *Tskhinvali* on the night of **August 8**, having approached the town of *Zarskoy* via a bypass road (*Russian Newsweek*, 25- 31.8.2008).

The available data concerning the losses sustained by the Vostok battalion differ drastically and in all probability cannot be confirmed by open resources in the foreseeable future. Thus, according to the *IA Kavkazsky Uzel* website, one of the Vostok combatants spoke of the losses sustained by their battalion as having been “rather significant”. However, another member of these forces told an *IA Rosbalt* correspondent that out of 200 combatants who entered *Tskhinvali* during the open hostilities not a single one had been killed (*IA Rosbalt-Yug*, 15.8.2008). The Vostok major claimed that the battalion had three of its combatants wounded (*Utro.Ru*, 22/8/2008). Finally, later still the President of Chechnya Ramzan Kadyrov told in his interview to the Russia Today channel: “Our guys have not lost a single person, despite being in the very forefront of the battles all this time” (Russia Today, 8.9.2008).

One should also not fail to specifically note the moral effect made by the Chechen forces on both their adversary and on the Ossetian civilians and journalists. Almost everybody spoke of the proverbial brutality and the charm of the notorious war dogs who were frequently weaponed not at all according to their rank. The mentality of the Chechen combats themselves, who unexpectedly found themselves in the position of fighting outsiders in a war that was not their own, also deserves special attention. They undoubtedly perceive themselves as citizens of the

Russian Federation, members of the Russian armed forces, defending the interests of their country. Yet, they distance themselves in every possible way from the other army troops, yet not on the grounds of nationality or religion but on the grounds of their professionalism: “Why did they bring these lads out here? This time it should be up to us, elite professionals, to take up the fight”, such was their rhetoric, when looking at the draft soldiers passing by in armoured vehicles. – Hey guys! Relax! We are here with you!”. All the bodies of Georgian soldiers seen by media correspondents were accredited by the Chechen combats to their own exploits (*IA Rosbalt-Yug*, 15.8.2008).

What should be specifically stressed is the fact that the unexpectedly positive and even, in some sources, almost poetic image of the Vostok battalion (the “*Russian Newsweek*” described it as “StrakhBat” – “a battalion inspiring fear”) – is the product of this brief war between Russia and Georgia. It is no secret that when it came to the civil war in Chechnya, the battalion had until recently enjoyed quite a different sort of fame there, and was far from encouraging media representatives’ presence at the scene of their operations. Here, the Vostok suddenly found itself in the zone of hostilities which was swarming with journalists. Unlike other soldiers of the other military units and detachments, the battalion combats agreed to pose together with the journalists on top of their armoured vehicles. The result came in the form of dozens of articles in the media telling about the combat record of the battalion. The impressed correspondents did their best to emphasize the contrast between these bearded war dogs and the “apparently scared blondish boys” – the soldiers of the 58th army, many of whom, by the way, believed in the beginning that they were being sent to take part in exercises, not a real war.

On the whole, regardless of the differing opinions concerning the activities of the Vostok battalion and its chief inside Chechnya, one has to recognize that its active participation in the Russian-Georgian war had done a lot in the way of promoting the identification of Chechens as co-citizens in the Russian public conscience.

Another detail not to be omitted is the fact that the battalion operated under the command of Colonel **Sulim Yamadayev** – the very one who had spent the preceding months at daggers drawn with the President of Chechnya R.Kadyrov and whose discharge and arrest were actively sought by the latter. In our spring bulletin we featured the conflict between Kadyrov and the Yamadayev clan as the central factor responsible for destabilizing the situation in the region (see www.memo.ru/2008/07/06/0607081.htm). According to *IA Grozny-Inform*, in early August this year (the date was not indicated) the Gudermes inter-district investigative department declared Yamadayev wanted on the federal level (*IA Grozny-Inform*, 22.8.2008, see also: *IA Kavkazsky uzel*, 6.8.2008). Nevertheless, photos of a smiling Yamadayev with his Hero of the Russian Federation Star and six rows of service ribbons were actively presented by the Russian media alongside with his interviews during the war (*IA Rosbalt-Yug*, 15.8.2008). Direct questions of media correspondents as to why he was fighting in the midst of the war instead of being in prison, were parried by Yamadayev with jokes as he claimed he had recently been undergoing a course of treatment at a Moscow hospital up until **August 8** and was far from hiding from anyone before being “invited” to fight for Russia (*Russian Newsweek*, 25-31.8.2008). The latter claim appears to be rather strange considering that he was officially discharged from commanding the battalion back in June (*Kommersant*, 23.8.2008). That had been confirmed by members of his family even before the war broke out (*Kommersant*, 7.8.2008).

Apparently, the personal loyalty of the members of the Vostok battalion to **Sulim Yamadayev** has not been shattered in the least, despite the reshuffles that had affected the combatant capacity of the battalion and the long absence of its chief away from Chechnya. The situation of Yamadayev himself in Chechnya remains unchanged – he is an undesirable element in the eyes of its authorities. The fact that the Chechen media had completely “overlooked” all involvement of the Vostok battalion in South Ossetia, -although they would have been expected to be the first to jump at the opportunity to praise the exploits of their combats, - is not at all coincidental.

The outcome of yet another round of the power struggle of the President of Chechnya with the rebellious security services was witnessed on **August 21, 2008**, when the news came of the discharge of Sulim Yamadaev to join the reserve forces while retaining his military rank taking effect on that very day. The order was signed by the Minister of Defence **A.Serdyukov** (*RIA Novosti*, 21.8.2008). It is interesting that the Chechen Investigative Department of the Investigative Committee of the Prosecutor General's of the Russian Federation promptly announced that the ex-combat is no longer wanted on suspicion of his involvement in a murder since his whereabouts have been established. It remained unclear whether the charges against him had been dropped. At any rate, it was made clear that he was no longer subject to prosecution (*Kommersant*, 23.8.2008). This served as a perfection confirmation Yamadaev's own words claiming that his persecution by the prosecuting authorities had the sole purpose of ousting him out of Chechnya.

Thus, Ramzan Kadyrov came as a winner in yet another one of his clashes with the law enforcement authorities. His influence at a racing show in Moscow, among the top ruling circles is extremely strong. It is quite obvious that his appearance in Moscow shortly before the order on his discharged was sign was no coincidence (*Kommersant*, 18.8.2008). Considering the sad fate of some past adversaries of the President of Chechnya out of the security services ranks, Sulim Yamadayev should probably believe himself lucky having got out of this episode of his life safe and sound, and even retaining his rank and his awards. According to '*Kommersant*'s sources, he may even be offered the position of the Defence Minister of South Ossetia or Abkhazia (*Kommersant*, 23.8.2008).

P.S. On **September 25** the former brigadier general of Maskhadov's army, the former deputy of the military commandant of the Chechen Republic, the former head of the regional division of the United Russia Party in Chechnya, the former member of the State Duma Ruslan Yamadayev was shot dead *in the centre of Moscow*, in the vicinity of the governmental complex.

Practice of abductions by security services resumed in Chechnya

Over the period since **May 2008** the Memorial Human Rights Centre has registered a rise in the number of abductions occurring in Chechnya. This increase came after a considerable period of relative tranquility when only a few isolated cases of abductions and enforced disappearances were registered... On the whole, the Memorial statistical data show that the total number of person abducted over the three summer months was 15, of whom 8 were abducted in the month of August alone (www.memo.ru/2008/06/19/1906081.htm). Quite naturally, these numbers cannot be considered to be exhaustive. Earlier we believed that our statistical data cover between 50% and one third of this type of crime. However, recently the percentage of such crimes that never comes to the knowledge of either the Prosecutor's Office or human rights organizations has obviously increased.

Four persons abducted were released by their abductors a few days later. However, the victims of abductions and their family members normally decline to provide staff of the Memorial with any details concerning the incidents. This problem of reluctance to testify is quite common in Chechnya (the same goes for frequent refusals of eye witnesses of abductions to give their testimonies, of medical personnel to register bodily injuries etc) and quite clearly demonstrates the degree of fear of the uncontrolled and unpunished arbitrariness of security services ruling among the population of the republic. Another four abductees were discovered by their families several days after their abduction at district departments of interior. By that time police officers would have normally succeeded in obtaining from them confessionary statements, mainly through use of torture. Seven persons of the total number of the abducted remain missing to date.

Below we will examine several cases of such abductions as an example.

On June 24 in *Grozny* a local resident **Mayrbek Amkhatovich Magomadov**, born in 1986, was abducted presumably by officers of the Chechen Republican OMON. According to eye witnesses, Mayrbek was taken away from his 'workplace' - a multi-storey building in which he was working as a plasterer. In the evening of that same day the Magomadov family was visited by armed men wearing OMON officer uniform. They searched the house without producing any identification or authorising documents. The family was able to find out that the first 24 hours after his arrest were spent by Mayrbek at the deployment base of the republican OMON in Grozny, after that he was handed over to the Department for Combating Organised Crime (OBOP) and yet two days later he was returned to the OMON base. All information concerning the whereabouts of Mayrbek was received through unofficial channels, who had sources inside the OMON and OBOP units. No official explanations or comments have ever been provided concerning the detention of Mayrbek Magomadov. The Magomadov family appealed to the Memorial Human Rights Centre with a statement as well as filed a complaint with the Public Prosecutor's Office (www.memo.ru/hr/hotpoints/caucas1/msg/2008/06/m138036.htm).

One and a half months after his abduction, on August 12 the Memorial office received another statement from Amra Magomadova – the mother of Mayrbek Magomadov. She stated that her son was back at home and she, therefore, was asking for cancellation of her previous statement. Amra Magomadova declined, however, to tell the Memorial about the whereabouts of Mayrbek at that time. (www.memo.ru/hr/hotpoints/caucas1/msg/2008/08/m143677.htm).

On July 18 at 2.00 am in the village of *Pobedinskoye in the Grozny (rural) district of the Chechen Republic* officers of unidentified security service abducted a local resident - **Muslim Nurdyevich Yeshurkayev**, born in 1989, resident of *Mirnaya st., 56*, from his home. The security service offices (numbering up to 20 persons) drove to his house in four cars. Without giving any explanations, they seized Muslim Yeshurkayev and took him away in an unknown direction. A day earlier, on July 17, at dawn, Muslim's half-brother (his mother's son from her first marriage) **Said-Emin Almanovich Isupkhadzhev**, resident of the borough of "*Novaya ostanovka*" of the *Staropromyslovsky district of Grozny*, was abducted from his home.

For two subsequent days the families of the abducted men were unable to establish their whereabouts, after which they turned for help to an acquaintance of theirs who served in the Chechen security forces and who was able to tell them that M.N.Yeshurkayev and S.-E. A. Isupkhadzhev were being kept at the temporary detention facility of the Achkhoy-Martan Department of Interior. According to the family members of the abducted men, when they arrived at the Achkhoy-Martan Department of Interior, its officers were bewildered and perplexed upon discovering that the family had been able to trace the two brothers. The parents of Yeshurkayev succeeded in obtaining an opportunity to meet with Muslim and from his words they learnt that he and Said-Emin had been tortured with electric current, beaten on the backs of their heads with a bottle filled with water. They were forced to acknowledge involvement in laying a cache on the edge of the village of *Stary Achkhoy*. Under the pressure and tortures Muslim agreed to lead the security officers to the location of the alleged cache laid by him together with his uncle, **Abu Abumuslimovich Isupkhadzhev**, who was killed last May in the course of a special operation, when he was also photographed while pointing at the weapons with his finger. Having found out the whereabouts of the two brothers, their parents hired an attorney to defend Muslim. The interests of Said-Emin are represented by a public defender.

The investigators demand from the brothers to stick to their initial testimonies which were obtained under pressure. They have been promised that if they obey, their sentences would be reduced as they would be convicted pursuant to Article 208 Part 2 of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation (as if they had only been accomplices of their late uncle Abu in hiding the

weapons). The defence attorney of Yeshurkayev, **Makhmud Dzhaparovich Magamadov**, has been recommending his client not to confess to crimes he had not committed and believes that such bargain would be unacceptable. The defence attorney of Isupkhadzhev, **Ziyaudi Madiev**, suggests that his client agrees to the proposed bargain. The investigation of the case is currently nearing its completion and will soon be transferred to court. (www.memo.ru/hr/hotpoints/caucas1/msg/2008/07/m143679.htm).

On August 3, 2008 in the city of *Grozny* unidentified persons wearing camouflage uniform abducted **Mokhmadsalah Denilovich Masayev**, born in 1966, in the village of *Itum-Kale*, *Chechen Republic*, up to the moment of his disappearance he was residing in Moscow.

According to the brother of the abducted man, **Oleg Masayev**, Mokhmadsalah arrived to Chechnya on **August 2** to attend the funeral of his older sister. Having spent the entire day at the funeral, Mokhmadsalah took a taxi to *the village of Sernovodsk in the Sunzhensky district of the Chechen Republic* to see his wife and children who were staying with some relation of theirs. The next day the family learnt that Mokhmadsalah had been seized by men wearing camouflage uniform in the central mosque of Grozny where he would normally go to perform namaz.

Having obtained this information, Oleg Masayev went to report disappearance to the Zavodskoy district Department of Interior but his report was not accepted. From his conversation with the police officers there he learnt that his brother had been detained upon orders from the republican authorities. Only after repeated and insistent demands of human rights activists, the police authorities declared that the fact of refusal to take a report on abduction was being investigated by them and search activities were underway with the purpose of establishing the whereabouts of Mokhmadsalah Masayev. No criminal proceedings have been initiated so far.

Earlier, on March **18, 2008** Mokhmadsalah Masayev was recognized as a victim in criminal case No 55096 on his unlawful detention in the mosque of *the town of Gudermes* together with **M.A.Deniev** and **V.A. Sigauri**. They spent four months in an illegal prison. After his release Masayev appealed for help to Russian and international human rights organisations, among them were Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International, Memorial.

On July 10, 2008 he gave an interview to "Novaya gazeta" in which he testified against the Chechen President Ramzan Kadyrov. According to Masayev, he arrived to Chechnya from Moscow in September 2006 with the purpose of peaceful preaching of Islam to believers: "*A preacher as I am, I teach people to respect laws and the authorities, to keep peace and maintain faith in one God*". However, his first attempt to preach in one of Grozny's mosque ("*We had spent a few hours at one of the mosques: I was praying, preaching peace to Muslims...*") already encountered hostility on the part of its mufti. He spent one night in detention at a police station. The second preaching attempt of Masayev and his friends ended up in their four months imprisonment at a military base in the village of Tsentoroy, where they were kept in an empty coach body all the time. Masayev had repeatedly undergone severe beatings. On several occasions he was taken out to meet Ramzan Kadyrov, who assumed a patronizing and condescending attitude and finally released Masayev and his friends telling them that they had been imprisoned "upon orders from the mufti of Chechnya **Sultan Mirzayev**" (www.memo.ru/hr/hotpoints/caucas1/msg/2008/08/m143077.htm).

Later on in this bulletin we will describe in greater detail why the official civil authorities and religious leaders of Chechnya demonstrate extreme suspicion of, and hostility towards, any attempts to preach the Islamic faith on an unofficial basis, perceiving such actions as propaganda of Wahhabism and religious extremism.

The fate of Mokhmadsalah Masayev remains unknown to date. We have every reason to believe that his disappearance may have come as revenge from the republic's authorities for the fact that he, unlike many others in his situation, was not afraid to openly demand investigation of violations committed against him. Speaking of this, it has to be noted that the other person who

was kept together with Masayev in illegal detention in Tsentoroy for four months was killed in a car crash in Chechnya last July.

On August 16 at 5.00 am in the village of Mesker-Yurt in the Shali district of the Chechen Republic officers of unidentified security forces abducted local resident Ayub Khizrievich Muslimov, born in 1983, residing at *Tsvetochnaya str.*, 6. Up to 30 armed men wearing masks and camouflage uniform broke into the house of the Muslimov family. Ayub himself and his parents, who attempted to defend him, were beaten up. After that Ayub was dragged outside and forced into one of the cars in which the abductors came and the cars drove off in an unknown direction. Ayub Muslimov works together with his uncle at one of the construction sites in the city of Grozny. His colleagues and villagers speak highly of him, while his parents are at a loss as what the reasons for such abduction may have been. As of the date of publication of this bulletin, the whereabouts of Ayub Muslimov remained unknown.

It has also come to the knowledge of the Memorial Human Rights Centre that over the period from August 16 to 17 another two locals had also been abducted in the village of Mesker-Yurt: **Isa Lechievich Sinborigov**, born in 1977, attorney, and **Ismail Salavdievich Minkailov**. They were released on **August 19**. The grounds for, and the place of, their detention remain unclear as both men have declined to comment on the incident (www.memo.ru/hr/hotpoints/caucas1/msg/2008/08/m146317.htm)

On August 18 at about 7.30 pm in the Leninsky district of Grozny, officers of an unidentified security force abducted **Tamerlan Dakayevich Nasipov**, born in 1988, from his home at *Bolshaya str.*, 77. Unidentified armed men wearing masks and camouflage outfits broke into the house of the Nasipov family. They seized Tamerlan Nasipov without any explanations and without introducing themselves took him away with them.

Tamerlan had already been taken away by ORB-2 officers in early **August 2008**. His parents only learnt about it on Saturday, when they were contacted by an unidentified individual on the phone and told that Tamerlan and Akhmed were in the village of Goyty of the Urus-Martan district and suggested that the parents come and pick them up. That person did not identify himself and did not say where exactly Tamerlan and Akhmed could be found.

The family of Tamerlan of Tamerlan went to the village of Goyty. According to his father, **Dokka Nasipov**, it was by pure chance that they found their boys and were able to take them home (Dokka Nasipov declined for the time being to elaborate on what exactly had happened in the village of Goyty). On **August 18** the parents of Tamerlan filed a written complaint on the fact of his abduction with the Leninsky district Department of Interior. The complain was accepted yet the officers of the Department refused to register it alleging that they first needed to visit the scene of abduction and examine it as well as interrogate eye witnesses.

Tamerlan Dokkayevich Nasipov is a 5-year student of the Chechen State Oil Institute.

Three days after his abduction Tamerlan Nasipov came back home. Any attempts to find out who had abducted him and where he had been kept failed since the Nasipov family declined to comment on the matter (www.memo.ru/hr/hotpoints/caucas1/msg/2008/08/m146318.htm).

Talking of the resumed practice of abductions in Chechnya, one has to mention the unlawful detention of several of the Memorial staff members in the village of Goyty which, fortunately, caused them no more than stress and moral damage.

On June 17, 2008 at about 5.15 pm several staff members of the Memorial office in Grozny – **Shakhman Akbulatov**, **Zarema Mukusheva**, **Milana Bakhayeva**, and their driver **Yaragi Gayrbekov** - were detained in the village of Goyty in the Urus-Martan district.

The alleged reason for the arrest was unauthorized video recording of the premises belonging to the 'Solnechny' state farm. On a purely formal basis the premises were owned by the village

police department. However, numerous sources alleged that inside this building abducted and illegally detained people were frequently kept. Some of them had subsequently gone missing.

Men wearing plain clothes introduced themselves as “security officers” and first took away the documents and the camera of our detained colleagues and then took the people themselves to the Urus-Martan district police department. In response to the question whether that was an official detention, they said that it was a regular identity check.

Inside the Department of Interior building, police officers learnt that the detained were staff members of the Memorial and started bringing most preposterous charges against them for their alleged involvement in transferring information to various websites disloyal to the current authorities, like KavkazCenter and Ingushetiya.Ru, and of them being paid for it with “the Wahhabi money”. The documents carried by the Memorial staff and their car were searched without any warrant.

Finally, one person in plain clothes, who was apparently some kind of chief there, declared that human rights campaigners had allegedly described him as *“the leader of a gang which practises kidnapping and killing of people”* and that that was just the right moment “to confirm their suspicions”: *“You have been poking into where you shouldn’t have and now you are going to regret it bitterly”*. One of the officers present there said: *“We should have taken them to Alkhazurovo, where our comrades were killed and shoot them down there”* (the reference is apparently to the militants’ attack on that village on March 19, 2008). This threat was voiced again in another room later.

In the meantime, news of human rights workers having been arrested were broadcast by the Interfax agency, the ‘Ekho Moskv’ radio station and other media resources. The publicity did serve its purpose.

At about **7:30 pm** the detained human rights activists were released. Before that, however, Akbulatov and Mukusheva were required to give written explanatory statements. The video recording made in Goyty was destroyed.

The Memorial Human Rights Centre considers the arrest of its staff members in the village of Goyty and the confiscation of the video recording made by them to be a blatant violation. The police officers of the Urus-Martan Department of Interior had also broken the rules of criminal procedure, for example, regarding their refusal to allow the detained get in touch with their attorney. Finally, the repeatedly voiced death threats contain constituent elements of offence. The Memorial Human Rights Centre appealed to the Public Prosecutor’s Office in connection with this incident and is pressing for an inquiry into this violation and for punishment for those responsible despite the apparent reluctance of law enforcement officers to initiate any measures in this regard (www.memo.ru/hr/hotpoints/caucas1/msg/2008/06/m135934.htm).

Cases of Human Rights Violations in Dagestan

New instances of abduction and torture have been registered in Dagestan, where such cases are normally attributed to the activities of the so-called “6” or “The Sixth Department” and its officers commonly known as “shestoviks” (the term used in Dagestan to refer to the local UBOP (Department for Combating Organised Crime) and UBEiUT (Department for Combating Extremism and Criminal Terrorism). These names have long become just as proverbial in Dagestan as ATTs² or ORB-2 used to be in Chechnya in their own time.³

One of those who had undergone severe tortures at the hands of these services, German Hidirov, quoted the words he had heard from his torturers in his statement sent to the human rights movement “Mothers of Dagestan.”

“We are the new jama’at, who has declared a war on such Muslims like yourself. We are all elite, first class fighters in our department, who have gone through a rough school and we all have blood of such bastards as you and your uncle on our hands”. These words are very characteristic of the way the “shestoviks” tend to perceive their role themselves. The people who

were torturing Hidirov had repeatedly attempted to enter into ‘religious disputes’ with him, as if attempting to convince him that they were pursuing a godly purpose by destroying Hidirov and the ilk.

The story of disappearance of **Ilyas Sharipov**, who was arrested on **May 1, 2008** in *Khasavyurt*, had its sequel. Over the period following his arrest his whereabouts were frequently unknown to his family and lawyers and when they would finally manage to find him and meet with him, his body bore apparent marks of beatings and torture and he himself was in an inadequate mental condition. Following numerous appeals and complaints from his father, Rasul Sharipov, to various authorities as well as participation of the latter in all possible protest actions, torture practices ceased yet his son’s condition continued to rapidly deteriorate. Nothing had been done in the way of investigation of the beatings he had been subjected to and no official recognition of the fact of application of tortures has been achieved, although medical expertise had confirmed presence of haematomae on his body (*IA Kavkazsky uzel*, 21/7/2008).

Two similar arrests with subsequent disappearance of the suspects, out of their families’ sight at least, took place on **July 24 and 25**, when 30-year-old **Ali Zalitinov** and 29-year-old Idris Guchakayev were detained in the presence of eye witnesses by armed men in plain clothes, who introduced themselves as officers of the “sixth department” and were taken away in an unknown direction. On **June 27**, the family members of the abducted men held a picket in the centre of Makhachkala blocking a major thoroughfare – Prospect Yargskogo – and only agreed to leave following a promise from the Republican Public Prosecutor **I.Tkachev** to clarify the situation with the men’s current whereabouts. Very soon the family members were told that the detained men were kept at the Makhachkala and Buynaksk temporary detention facilities, however, it remained unclear what exactly they had been charged with (*IA Kavkazsky uzel*, 4.7.2008). Later the defence attorney of Ali Zalitinov told the Memorial that he was only able to meet with his client 9 days after his actual arrest. By that time Zalitinov had been placed into hospital because of his precarious condition, his body bore marks of beatings. The attorney took photos of those marks with his mobile phone, including a large hematoma on the right side of his body. According to Zalitinov’s and Guchakayev’s testimonies, they had been beaten in order to force them to confess their involvement in commission of various crimes. Guchakayev had suffered especially grave harm to his health, which continues to affect his current condition. As of October 2008, the investigation was underway. Zalitinov and Guchakayev had been charged with criminal offences pursuant to the following articles of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation: Art. 105 (murder), Art. 317 (Encroachment on the life of an officer of a law-enforcement agency), Art. 222 (Illegal Transfer of Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives, and Explosive Devices). After the families had found attorneys to defend the two detained men, both of them retracted the testimonies given by them under torture.

Another factor to be mentioned here is a number of rather questionable operations, which resulted in the deaths of some of the Republic’s prominent personalities. For example, **R.Gazilaliev**, a lecturer at the faculty of foreign languages of the Dagestan State Institute of Education, his wife and an unidentified man were shot dead in Makhachkala. The official version alleges that they first refused to surrender and then shot at each other “*in despair*” (*RIA Dagestan*, 28.6.2008). According to the Republican Minister of Interior **A. Magomedtagirov**, all of them were members of the extremist movement “Hizb-ut-Tahrir”. According to the information provided by Kavkazsky Uzel, at the very start of the operation the father of R.Gazilaliev arrived to his house, which had already been cordoned off by the police, and asked to be given a chance to try and persuade his son to surrender, yet he was not allowed into the cordon zone and no negotiations were ever conducted with the besieged people (*IA Kavkazsky uzel*, 28.6.2008). The population of Dagestan has expressed its just indignation at such special operations and the capital Makhachkala has already seen a few protest rallies. The main reproach for the operation came from the President of the Republic himself who declared that operations

of that level of organization do nothing in the way of improving the public image of the law enforcement services but “degrade them”, and that “such practice must be completely eliminated” (*RIA Dagestan*, 23.7.2008). It has been mentioned that almost three months later, on September 17, at a meeting with chiefs of the security services Mukhu Aliev again came down with harsh criticism on those in charge of inquiries into that special operation (*RIA Dagestan*, 17.9.2008); we can therefore conclude that no progress had been made in that respect.

Meanwhile, the republican authorities seem to be concerned with creating a positive image of the law enforcement services and of their struggle against terrorists. During the meeting of the republican anti-terrorist commission **on July 23** the President of Dagestan Mukhu Aliev specifically stressed the necessity to cover the positive experience in combating terrorism. For all that, he declared that he fully welcomed healthy criticism of violations in the work of the security forces, yet he called to draw a clear distinction between freedom of speech and “manipulating public opinion with filthy purposes” (*RIA Dagestan*, 23.7.2008). This calls to mind the infamous slogan encountered in the “Tale of the Troika” by the Strugatsky brothers: “*People do not need unhealthy sensations. What people do need are healthy sensations*”. It is rather hard to draw a distinction between the healthy sensations and the unhealthy ones, when one has the job of describing the counter-terror practices in the republic that is why, various media are regularly declared to have fallen out of the authorities’ grace.

Summer 2008 saw the beginning of a true hunt against the Chernovik newspaper who had repeatedly published articles denouncing the illegal methods of countering terror in Dagestan. One of such publications was the article entitled “*No 1 Terrorists*” (see: ‘*Chernovik*’, 4.7.2008), where its authors directly allege that the inadequately cruel and indiscriminate methods employed by the authorities in their backlash in respect of not only terrorists but the republic’s religious youth in general were the driving force behind the expansion of the terrorist underground. In addition to that, the editors of the local weekly demonstrated a strongly negative attitude to officers of the Prosecutor General’s Office, the Investigative Committee and other law enforcement structures who were delegated from Moscow and who, in the opinion of the newspaper’s editors, were ignoring the cultural and mentality-related peculiarities of the local population and were too straightforward and indelicate in their actions. This article can be perceived as a certain response to the notorious article published by another Dagestan weekly “*Novoye delo*” (23.5.2008), in which one such officer serving on a mission voiced sweeping accusations of the human rights organization “Mother of Dagestan” as being linked to the terrorist underground. The authors also addressed the highly sensitive religious issues of Dagestan claiming that traditional Sufism is increasingly losing its popularity in the Republic (the ongoing spread of radical Islam, especially, in the south of the Republic, in Derbent, had also been mentioned by the President of Dagestan Mukhu Aliev as one of the key issues in his speech – see *RIA Dagestan*, 23.7.2008). The appendix to the article cited a long extract from the appeal of the Dagestani militant leader **Rappani Khalilov**, who had been killed a couple of years earlier, to the people of Dagestan. This was the text that the Public Prosecutor of the Republic of Dagestan Igor Ivanov deemed as containing elements of extremist propagating. According to the information obtained by a correspondent of *Kavkazsky uzel* at the Public Prosecutor’s Office of Dagestan, a linguistic expertise had been appointed to examine the publication of July 4 as well as publications found in other issues of the *Chernovik* newspaper for the year 2008. (*IA Kavkazsky uzel*, 17.8.2008).

According to the results of the expertise, on **July 31** a criminal case was opened against the editor-in-chief of the controversial newspaper **Nadira Isayeva** on suspicion of propaganda of extremism committed with the use of mass media (Part 2 of Art.280 of the Russian Criminal Code) and Incitement of Enmity and Hatred (Part 1 of Art.282 of the Russian Criminal Code). On **August 8** the premises of the *Chenovik* weekly were searched with up to 30 officers of various security structures of the Republic of Dagestan participating in the search. The purposes

as well as the results of that search remain unknown (*Chernovik*, 15.8.2008, see also: www.memo.ru/hr/hotpoints/caucas1/msg/2008/08/m143184.htm).

Meanwhile, the attempts to discredit the human rights organisation “Mothers of Dagestan” continued. This was again done via the republican weekly “*Novoye Delo*”. The article of July 4 entitled “*The evil flat*” alleged, again based on information obtained via an anonymous source in law enforcement agencies, that **Sevda Abdullayeva**, who was killed during the special operation of the security forces *in the suburb of Separatory of Makhachkala*, had been collaborating with “Mothers of Dagestan” and knew one of its leaders **Gyulnara Rustamova** in person. The same article alleged that the son of one of the co-chairpersons of the organisation Svetlana Isayeva, who went missing on **April 26, 2007**, was allegedly married to a woman who had previously been in four marriages to different guerilla militants. In reality, Isa Isayev had never been either married or member of illegal armed formations, and was not on the police wanted list.

The Russian human rights community (namely, Ludmila Alekseeva, Sergey Kovalev, Oleg Orlov, Svetlana Gannushkina, Lidia Grafova, Lev Ponomarev) responded to the defamation campaign against the organisation with an appeal to President Mukhu Aliev demanding from him to ensure the safety of its members and to hold a meeting with them for discussion on establishing regular and mutually-beneficial cooperation. (www.memo.ru/hr/hotpoints/caucas1/msg/2008/07/m139271.htm). Considering that the targeted persecution of the *Chernovik* newspaper began right after the publications in support of the “Mothers of Dagestan” came out, it is possible to assume that the appeal of the human rights activists was not heard.

Nevertheless, even the apparent impunity and lack of control over the security service, the pressure on the civil society and the Dagestan mass media, justice can still sometimes be achieved at the courts of the Republic of Dagestan. Charges based on confessions mainly obtained under torture do not hold up to examination by juries. Admittedly, a significant part of this is due to effective work of attorneys and attempts to draw the attention of the wider public to the case. Unfortunately, it is far from the rule that defendants are able to benefit from the services of a qualified attorney and only a share of fabricated cases result in successful efforts of human rights activists in drawing public attention. What is most appalling is that in not a single fabricated case, where the fact of falsifications and torture were clearly disclosed, had any of the civil servants involved sustained relevant punishment.

Thus, **on June 19, 2008** the jury of the Supreme Code of the Republic of Dagestan acquitted **Ilyas Abutalibovich Dibirov**, born in 1983, and he was released straight in the courtroom. His defence was conducted by attorney **Aziz Kurbanov** provided by the Memorial Human rights Centre.

The Memorial Human Rights Centre had already reported on the abduction of Ilyas Dibirov and the torture used in the course of investigation as well as on attempts to fabricate a criminal case against him (see: <http://www.memo.ru/2007/12/18/1812071.html>, <http://www.memo.ru/hr/hotpoints/caucas1/msg/2007/12/m118216.htm>, <http://www.memo.ru/hr/hotpoints/caucas1/msg/2007/12/m118269.htm> etc).

Ilyas Dibirov was abducted on **November 15, 2007** in the town of *Izberbash of the Republic of Dagestan* by officers of the Republican Ministry of Interior. At the time of his arrest Ilyas Dibirov attempted to escape, the officers opened fire, which resulted in Dibirov being shot twice in the leg. He was taken to the temporary detention facility of Izberbash, however, the members of his family and the attorney hired by them knew nothing about his whereabouts for a few subsequent days.

In the temporary detention facilities of Izberbash and Makhachkala in which he was kept for several weeks, he was subjected to cruel torture and inhumane treatment. In December **Svetlana Gannushkina**, member of the Expert Council of the Ombudsman of the Russian Federation and

member of the Memorial Center of Human Rights Council, reported this case to the Human Rights Ombudsman of the Russian Federation V.P.Lukin who contacted one of the deputies of the Russian Prosecutor General. This indeed put an end to use of torture. At that time Dibirov was kept at the Makhachkala temporary detention centre. In **March 2008** the investigation was completed and the case was submitted for examination to the prosecutor. Dibirov was charged with six criminal offences pursuant to Art.208, Art.222, Art.317 (Participation in an Illegal Armed Formation, Illegal Storage of Firearms, Encroachment on the life of an officer of a law-enforcement agency) of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation.

The investigating committee of the Public Prosecutor's Office of the Republic of Dagestan had severed investigation into cruel treatment of Ilyas Dibirov as a separate criminal case, although no persons possibly involved in this crime have been identified so far (www.memo.ru/hr/hotpoints/caucas1/msg/2008/06/m136357.htm).

Despite his release and rehabilitation, the misfortunes of Ilyas Dibirov do not seem to have come to an end. In early September representatives of the "Mothers of Dagestan" reported that Dibirov had been put under surveillance by unidentified individuals who move around in cars without number plates. It should be noted that during the investigation of the criminal case against Ilyas Dibirov, numerous and repeated threats addressed to him and declaring that even if he is acquitted, he would still be secretly transferred to Chechnya where he would be executed extra-judicially, had been registered (www.memo.ru/hr/hotpoints/caucas1/msg/2008/09/m146720.htm).

In **the middle of August** the Supreme Court of Dagestan acquitted nine defendants who were charged with conspiring to blow up the Juma mosque in Makhachkala as well as with planning the murder of Sheikh **Said-Afandi Chirkey** and of the head of the Ministry of Interior Criminal Expertise Centre **Nabi Akhadov**. The leader of the criminal gang was declared to be a Tajik migrant worker Zair Khakimov. The other members of the gang included his co-workers from his crew and the owners of the flat in which they were doing repair work. In **December 2007** the President of Dagestan Mukhu Aliev announced the suppression of a dangerous Wahhabi group, while the security services of Dagestan were honoured with the President's praise for their efficient work. However, in court the inquest failed to produce any details of preparation of the crime. All the defendants were charged pursuant to Art.208 and Art.222 of the Russian Criminal code (Participation in Illegal Armed Formations and Illegal Storage of Firearms). It is true that at the time of arrest some of the arrested were carrying firearms with them, yet all of them alleged at the trial that those had been planted by the security services. Also some of them recognized that they had been subjected to tortures and this resulted in their giving testimonies, which later became the basis of the indictment. The jury considered these testimonies to be insufficient and rendered the verdict of not guilty (*Kommersant*, 19.8.2008).

Yet there are also examples of cases when the court fails to consider both the fact of abduction of the suspect by the security services as well as the fact that the charges are based entirely on confessional statements obtained under torture.

One example of this is the 3-year sentence of German Hidirovich Hidirov who was convicted pursuant to Article 222 Part 1 of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation (Illegal Acquisition and Storage of Firearms and Ammunition). The Memorial had publications concerning the abduction of Hidirov and the tortures to which he was subsequently subjected. (www.memo.ru/hr/hotpoints/caucas1/msg/2008/03/m129505.htm, www.memo.ru/hr/hotpoints/caucas1/msg/2008/03/m129008.htm etc).

On August 7, German Hidirov appealed with a statement to the human rights organisation "Mothers of Dagestan". In that statement he described in detail the events of the past months. Confessional statements with regard to his own involvement as well as involvement of a number of other persons in various crimes were obtained from him by way of subjecting him to sadistic torture including rape. In his statement Hidirov claimed that following the inhumane

treatment to which he had been subjected, he was suffering from temporary dementia and loss of memory which resulted in self-incrimination.

The court failed to take into account numerous violations of the basic human rights sentencing German Hidirov to imprisonment, despite the fact that this Part of Art.222 provides for a fairly wide range of punitive measures not involving imprisonment. It should be noted that Hidirov's case was examined in court in the absence of jury – the norms of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation do not make this obligatory in case of defendants accused pursuant to Art.222.

Radical Islam and the state counter-propaganda

The Muslim religious communities in many republics of the North Caucasus are divided into the followers of the "traditional Islam" and the recently emerging movements considered "non-traditional" for this part of the world. The state authorities of Ingushetia, Dagestan and Chechnya fully support the so-called "tariqahs" – "way, path", a tradition within the Sufi Islam, which has firmly established itself here over the recent centuries and to which the vast majority of the religious people in the republics of the North Caucasus adhere. In the late 90s of the past century the North Caucasus encountered a new phenomenon – preachers of a different, fundamentalist tradition arriving from abroad and calling upon people to return to the "original, pristine" Islam, while rejecting a lot of aspects of the "traditionally adopted" practice as being against the Q'uranic teaching; this includes worshipping saints, performing Islamic rituals in exchange for monetary reward. The adherents to this movement, which has been officially labeled as "Wahhabi" in Russia (its members never use the term themselves, calling themselves "salafis" or simply "Muslims"), live under close surveillance of the security services since it was precisely the radical Islamist ideology that came to serve as the ideological basis for the militant underground.

According to the news coming from the North Caucasus, the local authorities are indeed concerned about the recently marked trend indicating a new rising wave of religious fundamentalism and violent rejection of the "traditional" Islam, which is represented in the republics by institutes identified by many with the authorities or as being closely associated with them, and which in the eyes of many epitomize the typical vices of those in power: corruption, self-indulgence, hypocrisy. In one of his interviews the first President of Ingushetia Ruslan Aushev described the spiritual life of the modern youth in the following way: *"You can pick up any imam and he will read any sermon you like. The muftiyat is crooked and rotten to the core. They [the young people] do not believe such preachers! They say, is that your faith?! Is that the purity in religion you had promised us?!"* (Novaya Gazeta, 7.8.2008).

When investigating crimes and attacks occurring in the republic, the security forces primarily work through the lists of "non-traditional" Muslims, who are by definition regarded as suspects. People belonging to this category primarily become victims of unlawful actions of the security officers, law enforcement officers, army servicemen. This only further contributes to driving followers of the "non-traditional" Islam into the armed underground towards their greater radicalisation.

In reality, the signs of the spreading influence of the religious extremists in the region are abundant. In Dagestan and Ingushetia a number of attacks on, and murders, of fortune-tellers and sorceresses (the latest was committed on **August 14** in Nazran), attacks on shops selling alcohol (a message containing threats addressed to the owner was found near the shop which was set on fire on **August 2** in Nazran) have been registered. **Summer 2008** saw the outbreak of a true hunt after the official Muslim clerics in Ingushetia. Rumours were circulating concerning the arrival of prominent Islamic preachers to the North Caucasus calling upon the youth to join the ranks of **Doku Umarov's** militants. One example of such proselytism is the sermons of a certain Said Buryatsky (son of a Russian father and a Buryat mother), an ardent neophyte who has

nevertheless already gained sufficient authority in the Islamic theological circles. His sermons were disseminated by means of mobile phones.

In the summer, the two presidents – **Mukhu Aliev** and **Ramzan Kadyrov** – who held their special meetings with representatives of the security forces and executive authorities in charge of controlling the official information policy on **July 23 and 24 respectively**, delivered lengthy declarations on counteracting the radical Islamist movements. Both presidents stressed that the official state propaganda channels were apparently losing in their information battle against the militant underground. In Dagestan all the propaganda and educational work has long been reduced to pure formalities. According to M.Aliev's estimates, this work had apparently reached a deadlock, since the methods employed were purely formalistic and only applied on an irregular basis. The effectiveness of such work is low, while the younger generation is seeking and craving for real, living knowledge, claimed the President of Dagestan in his appeal to the civil servants (*RIA Dagestan*, 23.7.2008).

On the same day a seminar-type meeting was held with the editors-in-chief of the local newspapers and the directors of the municipal television studios entitled "The role of municipal media in ideological counteraction of extremism". It was pointed out that, unlike the all-republican level newspapers and television, the district and local media are yet relatively little involved in the ideological struggle against extremism (*RIA Dagestan*, 23.7.2008).

The names of events organized and of topics of discussions held there speak for themselves: the Dagestani authorities and civil servants have immersed themselves mind and soul into the world of meaningless officialese proclamations. It remains unclear how they are hoping to break the wall of mistrust on the part of the religious youth using methods like these.

Ramzan Kadyrov was probably more decisive and inventive in his methods of counteracting religious extremism. The active and massive "anti-Wahhabi" propaganda has long become part and parcel of the republic's life with all possible means of influencing the thinking of the masses being generously employed to serve this purpose. The republican authorities often appear to be rather innovative here seeking to fill in every spare moment in the life of Chechen people with assertive propaganda of traditional Islam and the traditional values of the Vainakh culture. Over the recent months alone the TV companies in Chechnya have produced 55 promos advertising the desired ideology. Monitors broadcasting desirable programmes have been installed in public transport. Journalists, historians, religious leaders are actively involved in intensive lecturing (*website 'Ramzan Akhmatovich Kadyrov*, 11.8.2008). The religious board of Muslim believers of the Chechen Republic has long adopted the practice of sending out unified theses for Friday sermons to the imams of all the republican mosques.

Chairing a meeting with the heads of district administrations, superintendents of district police departments, representatives of the clergy in the *town of Gudermes* on **July 24**, Kadyrov demanded that they intensify their work in educating the republican youth and take concrete measures in counteracting terrorism and extremism. He, just as the President of Dagestan before him, spoke of outrageous negligence in the work of the heads of district administrations and superintendents of police departments, who, in his view, had no control over the situation at the grass-root level, nor were they sufficiently well informed about it. Kadyrov directly and openly charged the Islamic clergy with responsibilities in outreach and propaganda, declaring that currently *"this type of work is not being done the way it should be. I especially have a lot to say to the muftiyat (the association of religious communities) and the district qadis, who have been lax in performing their responsibilities relating to youth work. Some of these qadis do not even seem to know what kind of people regularly gather in their mosques and what kind of talks and discussions are held at these meetings"*. (*website 'Ramzan Akhmatovich Kadyrov'*, 24.7.2008). *"Someone comes from Buryatia and is now preaching Islam to our young guys hiding in the woods. And they are ready to listen to him but no-one cares for what you say. Your sermons are useless and senseless. It is nearly impossible to infer from your teachings whether you yourselves support the Wahhabis or the tariqahs, - declared R.Kadyrov. The Kavkazsky uzel*

website explains that the person in question is the Muslim preacher *Sheikh Said* who arrived to Chechnya from Buryatia and is now working alongside the leader of the militants Doku Umarov – the fact which was confirmed by the militants’ websites (*IA Kavkazsky uzel*, 24.7.2008).

But, in addition to the aggressive anti-Wahhabi and anti-extremist propaganda, which is in many respects far too stereotyped and superficial, the republican authorities operate with far more affordable and straightforward means of spiritual consolidation of the population, such as promotion of positive examples and role models among the younger generation. One of the “peaceful” lines of propaganda, not exploiting images of contrast of good and evil, is the promotion of sports and healthy lifestyle. Martial arts and football are extremely popular in the North Caucasus. In summer 2008 the wrestlers of all of the North Caucasus republics had achieved remarkable victories in Beijing winning gold medals for their country. In Chechnya, Ingushetia, Dagestan and Kabardino-Balkaria their victories had become an occasion for public celebration.

The first three gold medals won by Russia’s Olympic team and in different weight categories were won by athletes from the North Caucasus: **Nazir Mankiev** (Ingushetia), **Islambek Albiev** (Chechnya), **Aslanbek Khushtov** (Kabardino-Balkaria). The following gold medals were also won by the Dagestani athletes **Mavlet Batirov**, **Shirvani Muradov** and the Chechen **Buvaysar Saytiev**. And at the closing of the Olympic Games a gold medal was won by the Ingushetian boxer **Rakhim Chakhkiev**. Among the gold medal winners of the last Olympic Games was also the North Ossetian foilswoman Aida Shanayeva, who had won the championship as part of the Russian national women’s team (*Respublika Ingushetia* website, 25.8.2008). Thus, the athletes from the North Caucasus republics had won 7 out of the 23 gold medals earned by the Russian national team in single combat and one was won in a team event.

On August 28 the Ingush Olympic winners were triumphantly greeted at the Magas airport in the best of the Caucasus traditions of honouring winners returning home. According to the *Ingushetiya.Ru* website, thousands of people had gathered at the airport and shooting in the air burst out when the athletes appeared on the ramp. The champions were escorted by a convoy consisting of several hundred cars driving in four rows along the Kavkaz route until they reached Nazran. The shooting continued en route to the capital (*Ingushetiya.Ru*, 28.8.2008). The President of Ingushetia awarded the gold medal winners with flats in the city of Magas and their parents were awarded new cars (*Respublika Ingushetia* website, 28.8.2008). This was probably the first time over many months that the President of Ingushetia and his people were rejoicing over the same event (though no information is available as to whether they were doing this together).⁴

Fathers held answerable for their sons

The urgency with which the issue of armed resistance has marked itself over the recent years, again and again compels the authorities in the republics of the North Caucasus resort to pacifist rhetoric and suddenly remember about the necessity to give the last chance to those who have gone astray. Time and again they organize rather successful self-promotional events seeking to demonstrate not only their generosity and readiness to forgive old sins but also their cordiality and joy at seeing former opponents return to peaceful, law-abiding life. The ex-health minister in Aslan Maskhadov’s government **Umar Khambiev** was welcomed in a pompous ceremony upon his return from abroad. Ramzan Kadyrov himself came out to meet him at the airport (*Vremya novostey*, 15.8.2008). The President of Chechnya apparently meant it as a demonstrative hint for all others “who have not laid down arms” yet: we are waiting for you to come, we need you and we do care...

Another instrument of bringing pressure upon people who have joined the underground militant groups hiding in the mountains, which deserves special examination, is work with the family members of such persons, who often continue in some way or other to maintain contact with their militant relatives. This makes it possible to exploit the moral authority of the parents or older relatives in order to persuade their sons to return. The local authorities must play a central role in this approach.

“Undoubtedly, a great amount of responsibility lies with the municipal authorities, said the President of the Republic of Dagestan **Mukhu Aliev** at the meeting of the republican anti-terrorist commission held on **July 23**, – today we have discussed in detail what exactly they have to do in this respect. I hope that all of them without exception will be prepared to confront this problem and engage into active work with each and everyone who has gone astray, with their family members, relatives and friends” (*RIA Dagestan*, 23.7.2008). Extending a helping hand to those who are currently hiding in the woods was also one of the key points in the appeal of the Minister of Interior of Dagestan (*RIA Dagestan*, 30.6.2008). Yet in Dagestan this line work has so far been reduced to the scope of a pure formality and rather ineffective.

In Chechnya the issue of using relatives as a tool for influencing the militants was, on the contrary, tackled in the most radical manner. Over the period of active disarmament of the militants in 2004 – 2006, the Chechen authorities fully exploited their families as a means of pressurizing the armed underground. The security services stopped at nothing, going as far as taking hostages from among the relatives of militants in order to impel the latter to surrender (*See: www.memo.ru/hr/hotpoints/caucas1/msg/2005/03/m33235.htm*). In the summer 2008 the practice of harsh pressure on family members and relatives, which was nothing more but a grave violation of the law, was resumed. Thus, in early August the authorities of the third biggest city in Chechnya – *Argun* – issued an official decree on eviction (!) of the families, who had militants among their members, from the city. This was orally announced to these families who were summoned especially for that purpose to the city administration hall by the city mayor **Ibragim Temirbayev**. The family members of the “enemies of the people” were vainly trying to explain to Temirbayev that they cannot possibly be held responsible for the actions of their sons and brothers who had made their own independent decision to take up the arms and join the ranks of the militants, that they know nothing of their whereabouts and maintain no contact with them. Those arguments were not accepted. Unable to believe that they may really be forcefully evicted from their houses, many families continued to live there until on **August 4** when armed men came to their homes and, failing to produce relevant documents (what documents can be produced with regard to authorization of evictions on the basis of family ties with militants!?), demanded that the people move out immediately. Two families succumbed to pressure and left. Only on August 6, apparently acting on the orders received from above, Temirbayev again spoke before the family members of militants, no longer threatening them with eviction, but trying to persuade them to do all that is within their power to make their young men return from the woods. (*see: www.memo.ru/hr/hotpoints/caucas1/msg/2008/08/m144307.htm*).

On July 4, in the village of *Samashki*, officers of unidentified security services set fire to the house of the Musikhanov family.

On July 12, a group of armed men in camouflage outfits and masks broke into the house of **Sherpudin Demelkhanov**, in the village of *Geldagan*, *Kurchaloyevsky district*. All the members of the household were thrown out into the yard. **Sherpudin** himself and his son were beaten and after that the house was set on fire. The house had burnt down completely, together with all the possessions and the money kept in there which were borrowed from the relatives to cover the costs related to defence in their son’s criminal case.

On the same night of July 12 an attempt was made to burn down the house of the 51-year-old **Sheikha Yusupov**, in the village of *Kurchaloi*, *Sovetskaya street, 9*, yet the neighbours were able to put out the fire.

On **July 13**, the house of **Ibragim Magomadov** in the village of *Khidi-khutor* was burnt down by arsonists who had also set fire to the tractor belonging to the Magomadov family.

On **July 16** armed men in camouflage outfits and masks broke into the house of **Ilyas Umarov** in the village of *Nikikhita*, forcing all the inhabitants out and setting the house on fire, thus, leaving the family with no shelter or means of subsistence. The house of his cousin **Akhmed Umarov** was also burnt down in the same way.

On **July 17** came the turn of the **Abdulkhanov** family with their house in the village of *Aslanbek-Sheripovo of the Shatoi district*. On the same day the house of the elderly **Yusupov** couple was set on fire in the *village of Gikalo of the Grozny district*. The neighbours were awoken and helped to put out the fire, yet the beds, carpets, curtains and some of their clothes had burnt; the furniture was also seriously damaged. The security services believe that the sons of **Hamid Yusupov**, **Magomed** and **Ramzan**, had “gone into the mountains”. (www.memo.ru/hr/hotpoints/caucas1/msg/2008/07/m146741.htm).

On the night from **July 21 to 22** the house of **Ramzan Abdrakhmanov** in the village of *Tsentoroi of the Kurchaloi district* was also set on fire.

On the night from **July 29 to July 30** the houses of **Elimkhanov** and **Makhmud Azizov** in the village of *Alleroy in the Kurchaloi district* were set on fire.

On the night from **August 27 to August 28** five households were burnt down in the town of **Shali**. Three of them belonged to the **Ebishev**, **Yusupkhadzhev**, **Musliev** families. The owners of the other two households burnt down in **Shali** on the same night have not to date been identified. On the same night the house of the **Aliev family** was burnt down in the village of *Mesker-yurt of the Shali district, Islamskaya st, 8*. The wife of **Hamid Aliev**, their four sons, the youngest of which was only three, had not been told to leave the house before it was set on fire. **Aliev** managed to rescue them from the burning house himself. The neighbours witnessed the event.

The staff of the Memorial learnt the details of the arsons of the **Muslievs’ and Alievs’** households. The arsonists declared that the **Musliev** family were being punished because of **Abubakar Musliev**, who had gone missing earlier, on **August 8**. Following his disappearance, on **August 13**, his family submitted a statement to the Prosecutor’s office. Yet, instead of assistance in the search, the police speculated that **Abubakar** had decided to join the illegal armed groups and demanded from his father **Yunus** to find his son hiding in the mountains and force him to return home. Since that day he would be almost daily summoned to the police department and the administration and threatened with expulsion of his family from the community (www.memo.ru/hr/hotpoints/caucas1/msg/2008/08/m146310.htm). In the case with the **Alievs**, the family was not even forewarned of the arson being planned. In the middle of the night the house was approached by two cars out of which about 10 people came running. They broke into the yard and, having thrown several bottles with petrol inside the house, set it on fire. Immediately after that they left. **Khasanbek** dashed into the house where his wife and four sons, the youngest of which was only 3 years old, were sleeping. He only managed to pull them out of the house through the window - the door and the adjacent space were wrapped in flames. Almost immediately the neighbours came running: the house and the people were saved, yet the property was seriously damaged. **Khasanbek** needed no explanations to understand that he was being punished for his oldest son who had joined the militant groups last May. Since that time, he and his two oldest sons had been repeatedly summoned to the police, sometimes police officers would come in the middle of the night demanding that he tells them where his son is hiding. After the arson **Khasanbek Aliev** lodged a complaint to the police, yet the law enforcement services have to date showed no reaction to the committed crime (www.memo.ru/hr/hotpoints/caucas1/msg/2008/08/m146742.htm). The HRC Memorial has been providing help to the **Musliev** and **Aliev** families in writing the complaints and submissions to the Prosecutor’s office.

Efficiency of negotiations between the militants and their families appears to be rather hard to assess in those cases where such take place since such negotiations are quite understandably not conducted in the open. It is also quite clear that it is simply not enough for young people to be ready to quit their activities – nobody is going to allow them to come back from hiding in the woods all that easily. The families who agree to conduct negotiations with the militants find themselves in a dilemma – on the one hand, they are constantly experiencing the pressure on the part of law enforcement agencies, on the other, they are constantly in danger of revenge from the militants. One example of such tragic situation was the notorious slaughter in the vicinity of the village of *Roshni-Chu* of the *Shatoi* district, where two locals – **Ismail Makhmudovich Tazurkayev**, born in 1969, resident of the settlement of *Novye Aldy* of *Grozny*, and **Zaidat Abdurakhmanovna Khusenova**, resident of the village of *Proletarskoye* of the *Grozny* (rural) district, accompanied by two officers of the department of interior of the *Shatoi* district: the superintendent of the criminal investigation department of the *Shatoi* district department of interior, police lieutenant **Islam Abdulov** and the police senior lieutenant **Akhdan Arsanukayev**, came to meet their two nephews **Salman Umarovich Musikhanov**, born in 1982, and **Mikail Umarovich Musikhanov**, born in 1986, who were members of an illegal armed group and six other militants who had promised to surrender. Zaidat Khusenova was informed about their intentions by phone. However, the four mediators were killed in the wood and several days later unidentified armed men kidnapped the younger brother in the Musikhanovs' family, Israpil, whose whereabouts currently remain unknown. (www.memo.ru/hr/hotpoints/caucas1/msg/2008/07/m138199.htm).

New ECHR judgments in cases from Chechnya

On July 3, the European Court of Human Rights delivered judgments in yet another three cases from Russia. The applicants in the case of **Musayeva v Russia** and **Umarov v Russia** were represented by the staff lawyers of the Memorial Human Rights Centre (Moscow) under the auspices of the European Human Rights Advocacy Centre (London). The applicant in the case of **Akhiyadova v Russia** was represented by the staff lawyers of Stitching Russian Justice Initiative (Moscow).

In all the three cases the European Court of Human Rights found Russia guilty of violations of the following articles of the Convention: Article 2 (right to life) in respect of the abducted; Article 3 (prohibition of torture and inhumane or degrading treatment) in connection with cruel treatment by federal servicemen and the failure of the Russian authorities to conduct an adequate and effective investigation which resulted in causing the applicant suffering; Article 5 (the right to liberty and security of person) in connection with the abduction of 4 residents of Chechnya; Article 13 (the right to effective legal remedies) in connection with the failure of the Russian Federation authorities to provide their citizens with effective means of legal protection. In respect of the repeated refusal of the State to provide the Court with the criminal investigation materials a violation of Article 38 § 1 of the Convention (obligation of the State to furnish all necessary facilities for effective examination of the case matter by the Court) has been found.

The total compensation amount for moral and material damage in all the 3 cases was 175,000 euro (www.memo.ru/hr/hotpoints/caucas1/msg/2008/07/m138035.htm)

Case of Khapta Musayeva v Russia

During the “mopping-up operation” in the *Oktyabrsky district of Grozny* on **February 5, 2000**, which the local residents had been warned of in advance, military personnel wearing camouflage outfits had taken **Yakub Iznaurov**, born in 1966, father of five and the youngest son of the applicant, **Khapta Musayeva**, away for “a checkup”. The reason for detention was the fact that Yakub Iznaurov’s official domicile was in the Republic of Kalmykia.

Near the tram line the serviceman who had decals of sub-colonel on his uniform ordered Yakub and the other three men taken to stand on their knees and raise their hands having previously stripped themselves off down to the waist. The servicemen tied the hands of the detained men with a metal wire and pulled their hats on their faces. All this was being recorded by the servicemen on a camera.

The detained were kept in this position for about 2 hours during which they were not allowed to move. After that, they were forced into the armoured personnel carriers. The applicant and the relatives of the other detained persons were told that the latter would be taken to Staraya Sunzha for interrogation. The men in camouflage also said that they were officers of the St Petersburg OMON (special purpose police forces). The armoured personnel carriers started off in the direction of **Novye Aldy**.

The applicant and the relatives of the other persons detained began to search for them. They visited temporary detention facilities, talked to military personnel, appealed to various authorities, yet all this brought no result – Yakub Iznaurov did not appear on any of detainee lists. His fate currently remains unknown.

According to the data collected by the Memorial, on February 5, 2000 at least 60 civilians were killed in the villages of Novye Aldy and Chernorechye south of Grozny (see the report *“Novye Aldy settlement - February 5, 2000. Intentional Killings of Civilians”*.)

In 2002 the applicant lodged an application with the European Court of Human Rights with the help from the staff lawyers of the Memorial and the European Human Rights Advocacy Centre. The court has ordered to pay to the applicant 35,000 euros in compensation for the material damage caused, 10,000 euros in compensation for the moral damage as well as 8,000 euros in compensation of the legal and other court submission related fees.

Case of **Ruslan Umarov v Russia**

At 6 am on **May 27, 2000** a group of armed men wearing camouflage and masks broke into the house of **Ruslan Umarov** and started hurling insults at his wife and daughter and beating the master of the house. After that, they dragged Ruslan out into the yard where the beating continued. Hearing the screams, Ruslan's son, **Magomed Umarov**, came out running from the backhouse where he was sleeping and asked the armed men why they were beating his father. Magomed was dragged into the Ural vehicle, which drove off leaving the members of the household without explanations. According to the neighbours' testimonies, the car belonged to the Staropromyslovsky Police Department of Grozny. Magomed was not even allowed to change into something warmer, the armed men took Magomed's passport and his student ID card (he was a student of the Grozny State Institute of Oil),

Three hours later Ruslan Umarov arrived at the Grozny Public Prosecutor's Office. He was able to identify one of those who attacked him in the morning among the police department officers, yet no information about his son could be obtained there. Some time later Ruslan Umarov managed to meet with the Magomadov brothers and a certain Butenko, who had seen Magomed being kept a prisoner on the territory of the military base in Khan-kala. Ruslan Umarov has repeatedly appealed to the Prosecutor's Office, to courts, to officials of every rank, he also attempted to achieve result through involving unofficial channel. Yet all his attempts resulted in nothing.

The Court has ordered to pay to Ruslan Umarov a compensation in the amount of 15,000 euro for the material damage, 40,000 euro for the moral damage, as well as reimburse him for all legal fees and sue charges.

Case of **Esila Akhiyadova v Russia**

On February 13, 2002, at about 11 am, a group of armed men wearing camouflage outfits and masks broke into the house of the **Khumaidov** family in the village of **Makhkety**.

According to the applicant, they were federal military officers, while the Government's submissions refer to them as 'unidentified persons'.

The applicant herself, her husband, their daughter, who was only 15 days old, and her father-in-law, Kharon Khumaidov, born in 1932, were at home at the time. The armed men failed to produce any identification documents or any documents justifying their conduct. They searched the house and detained the applicant's husband and father-in-law without any explanations as to the reasons. Despite the fact that Magomed and Kharon Khumaidov were only wearing trousers and shirts, they were not allowed to either put on something more substantial or take any clothes with them. The armed men forced them into a military UAZ vehicle without number plates and took them away to the FSB base in the village of **Khatuni**. According to the information that was available to the applicant, a number of residents of Makhkety witnessed the arrest of her husband and father-in-law.

After that both Magomed and Kharon Khumaidov disappeared. Subsequent search for them brought no result. Despite the fact that the Prosecutor's Office had established the involvement of the servicemen of the 45th regiment in the abduction, nobody has so far been held liable as a result of the inquest. (*For more detail see the website of 'Stitching the Russian Justice Initiative', 7.6.2007*).

¹ Quite naturally, these data are not exhaustive.

² The Anti-Terrorist Centre.

³ The Operational Investigative Bureau of the Ministry of Interior Department for the Southern Federal District.

⁴ Yet four days later Magomed Yevloyev was assassinated at that very Magas airport.