

Peace in Chechnya?

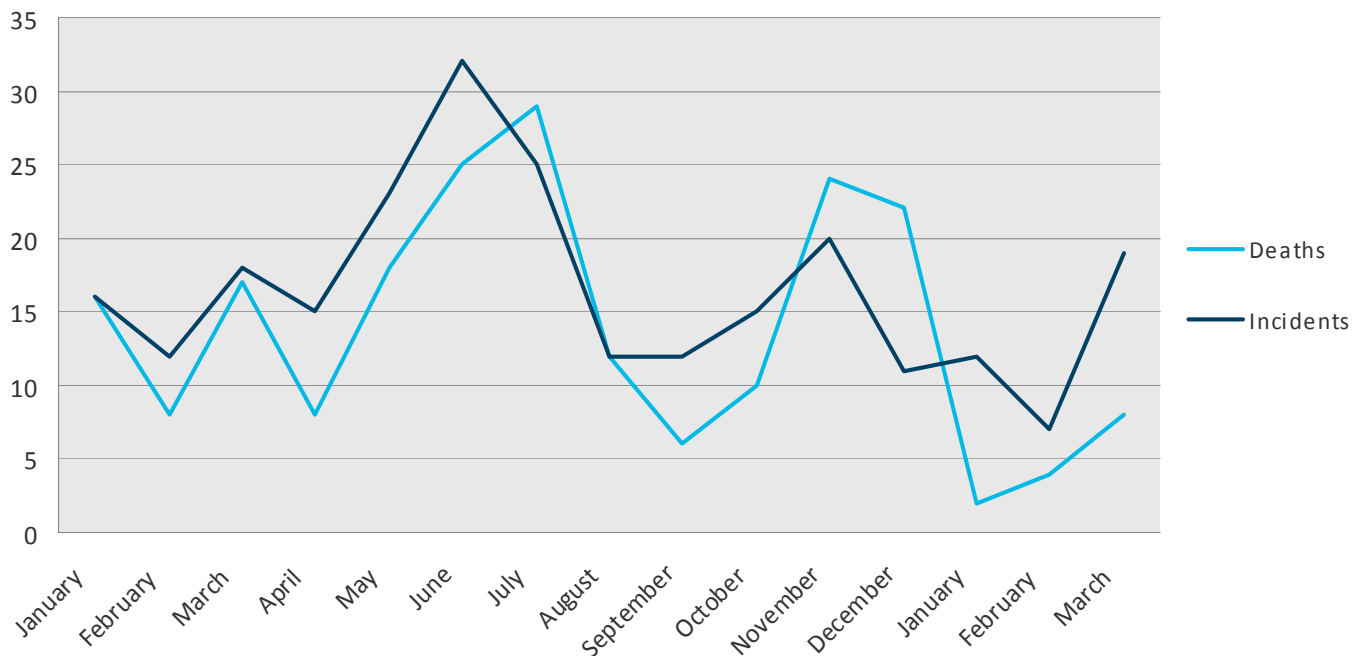
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Sarah E. Mendelson

The Kremlin Withdraws

The Kremlin declared an end to its decade long “anti-terrorist” operation in the North Caucasus republic of Chechnya on April 16, 2009. This declaration will result in the withdrawal of up to 20,000 military and security personnel. What is driving this decision? Is this a virtual victory or a real one? For one answer, let’s look at the number of violent incidents and related deaths in Chechnya over the last year.¹ Could the timing of this declaration be driven more by economic needs than conditions on the ground?

Violent Incidents and Deaths due to Violent Incidents in Chechnya January 2008 – March 2009



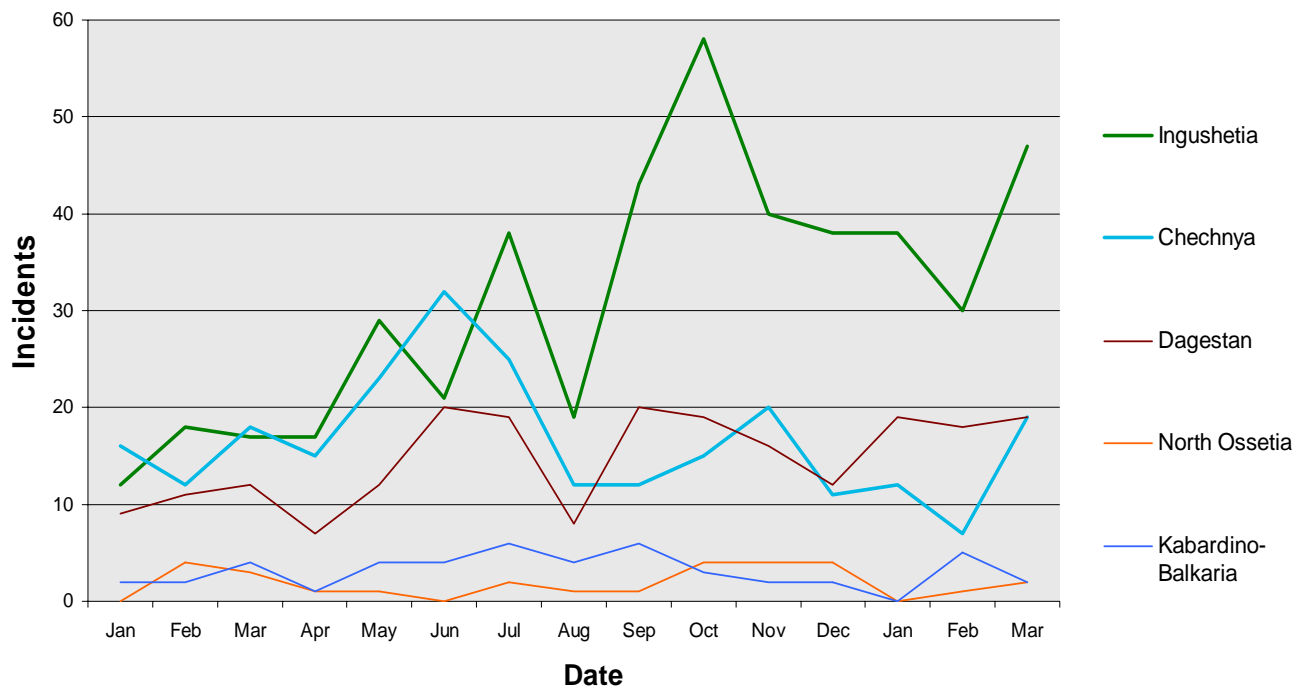
¹ Since January 2004, CSIS staff have collected, almost daily, data that track violent incidents occurring in the North Caucasus. “Violent incidents” refers to abductions of military personnel and civilians, bombings, assassinations of key civilian and military leaders, rebel attacks, police or military operations against suspected militants, destruction of property by militants, and the discovery of weapons. “North Caucasus” refers to Chechnya, Ingushetia, Kabardino-Balkaria, North Ossetia, and Dagestan. For more information on violence in the region, see our quarterly reports available on our website: <http://www.csis.org/hrs/northcaucasus/>. The next quarterly report, with support from the Open Society Institute, will be issued in early May, 2009.

Sources for incident tracking: Caucasian Knot, Ria Novosti, ITAR-TASS, Chechnya Weekly, The Jamestown Foundation, RFE/RL, The Moscow Times, The New York Times, Reuters, and The International Institute for Strategic Studies.

How peaceful is Chechnya compared to its neighbors?

As illustrated below, Chechnya is the second most violent republic in the North Caucasus. Ingushetia has clearly experienced the worst rates of violence over the last eight months, but the levels of violence in neighboring Chechnya and Dagestan also remain consistently high.

Violent Incidents in the North Caucasus January 2008 – March 2009



What next?

The Russian government and the international community should focus on ways to decrease the violence. For concrete recommendations on how the Russian government and the international community can increase stability in the region, see *49 Steps to Improve Human Rights and Security in the North Caucasus*, a report of the CSIS Human Rights and Security Initiative and the Robert Bosch Stiftung.

Report available here: http://www.csis.org/index.php?option=com_csis_pubs&task=view&id=4045