



**Monterey Terrorism Research and Education Program
(MonTREP)
Monterey Institute for International Studies**

**Islam, Islamism and Politics in Eurasia Report
No. 2, 20 November 2009**

CONTENTS:

- **THE CAUCASUS EMIRATE'S NEW GROOVE: THE 2009 SUMMER OFFENSIVES**

By Gordon M. Hahn

Senior Researcher, Monterey Terrorism Research and Education Program and Visiting Assistant Professor, Graduate School of International Policy Studies, Monterey Institute of International Studies, Monterey, California; Senior Researcher, Center for Terrorism and Intelligence Studies (CETIS), Akribis Group; and Analyst/ Consultant, Russia Other Points of View – Russia Media Watch, www.russiaotherpointsofview.com. Dr Hahn is author of two well-received books, *Russia's Islamic Threat* (Yale University Press, 2007) and *Russia's Revolution From Above* (Transaction, 2002), and numerous articles on Russian and Eurasian politics.

~~~~~

**THE CAUCASUS EMIRATE'S NEW GROOVE: THE 2009 SUMMER OFFENSIVE**

## **Pre-History**

In 2002, with the combined nationalist and jihadist forces of the Chechen Republic of Ichkeria (ChRI) defeated on the traditional battlefield, the Caucasus mujahedin absconded to the mountains and forests of the region to organize an underground government and active insurgency campaign against the Russian “occupiers” and “infidels.” From then on, the insurgent ChRI was increasingly dominated by radical Islamic jihadi-oriented fighters from within and outside the Caucasus, who expanded the jihad into Ingushetia, Dagestan, and other republics, bringing mass terror to Moscow, Beslan, and elsewhere in Russia. With ChRI President Aslan Maskhadov’s death in March 2005, the jihadists consolidated their control under his successor, the younger and more-jihadi-oriented sheikh Abdul-Khalim Sadulaev. Sadulaev created the North Caucasus and Dagestan Fronts under the ChRI, institutionalizing the jihad’s expansion across the North Caucasus begun by Shamil Basaev’s building and coordinating a network of combat jamaats across the region.<sup>1</sup>

The insurgency went through rough times in the year following the deaths of its amir, Abdul-Khalim Sadulaev, and its leading organizer, the charismatic terrorist Shamil Basaev, in the summer of 2006. But there was little reason to believe that the jihadi insurgency was finished and that Russian security, military, and law enforcement personnel would no longer have their hands full in the region.<sup>2</sup>

## **The Caucasus Jihad’s New Groove**

Sadulaev’s successor was the seemingly more traditional Sufi and national separatist Doka Umarov. Though his first year of command was a difficult one, the ChRI began to rebound by the summer of 2007. In 2006, he created the Volga and Urals Fronts and began targeting Tatarstan, Bashkortostan and likely other ‘Muslim lands’ on Russian territory. Umarov appointed as military amir the ethnic Ingush Akhmed Yevloev, alias ‘Magas’, and shifted much of the ChRI’s operational activity to Ingushetia. The new strategy yielded dividends. The CE’s operations in 2007 increased over those in 2006 in number and deadliness.<sup>3</sup>

In late October 2007, ‘amir Dokka Abu Usman Umarov’ institutionalized the long-time *de facto* jihadization of the ChRI insurgency under a newly declared an Islamist ‘Caucasus Emirate.’ The once mixed movement of jihadist and nationalist pedigree was acknowledged to be ancient Caucasus history. The Caucasus Emirate now claimed sovereignty from the Caspian to the Black Sea, calling for the liberation of virtually all of Russia from “infidel” rule and declaring jihad against all those fighting against jihadists in Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Palestine and Lebanon. With this, the Caucasus Emirate made official something else that had been extant for years – the North Caucasus jihadists’ alliance with the global jihadi movement.<sup>4</sup>

Since the CE’s establishment, the jihad in Russia’s North Caucasus has seen a steady revival of its fortunes. The CE’s first full year in 2008 saw greater progress for the Caucasus jihadists than

---

<sup>1</sup> Gordon M. Hahn, *Russia’s Islamic Threat* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2007).

<sup>2</sup> Gordon M. Hahn, “The *Jihadi* Insurgency and the Russian Counterinsurgency in the North Caucasus,” *Post-Soviet Affairs*, Vol. 24, No. 1, January-February 2008, pp. 1-39.

<sup>3</sup> Hahn, “The *Jihadi* Insurgency and the Russian Counterinsurgency in the North Caucasus”.

<sup>4</sup> Hahn, *Russia’s Islamic Threat*.

they achieved in 2007 when they began to rebound from their post-war nadir in 2006. In 2008, CE fighters carried out some 373 jihadi attacks and violent incidents in Russia, 371 of them in the North Caucasus (see Table 1 below). This means more than one attack or violent incident

**Table 1. Jihadist Terrorist Incidents in Russia, 2008 - Incident and Casualty Estimate and Range.** [Estimate is Based on the Average of the Jihadi-Reported Minimum Figures and of the Average Between the Minimum and Maximum Figures from the Non-Jihadi Reports, from Data Compiled by the Author. (Estimate is in Bold-Face and Larger Type)].

| Region                         | Number of<br>Terrorist<br>Incidents | Servicemen<br>and<br>Civilian<br>Officials<br>Killed | Servicemen<br>and<br>Civilian<br>Officials<br>Wounded | Civilians<br>Killed            | Civilians<br>Wounded     | Jihadists<br>Killed         | Jihadists<br>Wounded | Jihadists<br>Captured and<br>Surrendered |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------|------------------------------------------|
| Chechnya                       | <b>128</b><br>130-126               | <b>199</b><br>323-75                                 | <b>178</b><br>214-141                                 | <b>10</b><br>3-17.5            | <b>3</b><br>0-6          | <b>34</b><br>21-46.5        | <b>8</b><br>12-4     | <b>37</b><br>2-71.5                      |
| Ingushetia                     | <b>138</b><br>115-160               | <b>133</b><br>197-69                                 | <b>172</b><br>183-161                                 | <b>7</b><br>1-13.5             | <b>4</b><br>1-6          | <b>43</b><br>22-63          | <b>0</b><br>0-0.5    | <b>6</b><br>1-11                         |
| Dagestan                       | <b>62</b><br>53-70                  | <b>62</b><br>68-56                                   | <b>62</b><br>82-41                                    | <b>2</b><br>1-2                | <b>2</b><br>1-3.5        | <b>43</b><br>35-51          | <b>2</b><br>0-4      | <b>22</b><br>0-43                        |
| Kabardino-<br>Balkaria         | <b>28</b><br>36-19                  | <b>11</b><br>13-9                                    | <b>20</b><br>28-12                                    | <b>2</b><br>2-1                | <b>2</b><br>1-3          | <b>5</b><br>4-6.5           | <b>2</b><br>3-0      | <b>7</b><br>0-14                         |
| Karachaevo-<br>Cherkessia      | <b>5</b><br>5-4                     | <b>3</b><br>1-5                                      | <b>2</b><br>2-2                                       | <b>0</b><br>0-0                | <b>0</b><br>0-0          | <b>3</b><br>3-3             | <b>1*</b><br>1-1     | <b>1*</b><br>1-1                         |
| Adygeya                        | <b>0</b><br>0-0                     | <b>0</b><br>0-0                                      | <b>0</b><br>0-0                                       | <b>0</b><br>0-0                | <b>0</b><br>0-0          | <b>0</b><br>0-0             | <b>0</b><br>0-0      | <b>0</b><br>0-0                          |
| North<br>Ossetia               | <b>9</b><br>3-14                    | <b>3</b><br>3-4                                      | <b>2</b><br>0-4                                       | <b>15**</b><br>14**-<br>15.5** | <b>43**</b><br>43**-43** | <b>2**</b><br>0**-<br>3.5** | <b>0</b><br>0-0      | <b>2</b><br>1-2                          |
| Other<br>Caucasus<br>Regions   | <b>4</b><br>0-8                     | <b>1</b><br>0-1                                      | <b>2</b><br>0-3.5                                     | <b>3</b><br>0-5                | <b>9</b><br>0-17         | <b>0</b><br>0-0             | <b>0</b><br>0-0      | <b>3</b><br>0-6.5                        |
| North<br>Caucasus<br>Total     | <b>371</b><br>342-401               | <b>412</b><br>605-219                                | <b>436</b><br>509-363.5                               | <b>38</b><br>21-54             | <b>63</b><br>46-80.5     | <b>129</b><br>85-173        | <b>13</b><br>16-10   | <b>75</b><br>5-144                       |
| Tatarstan                      | <b>0</b><br>0-0                     | <b>0</b><br>0-0                                      | <b>0</b><br>0-0                                       | <b>0</b><br>0-0                | <b>0</b><br>0-0          | <b>0</b><br>0-0             | <b>0</b><br>0-0      | <b>0</b><br>0-0                          |
| Bashkira                       | <b>0</b><br>0-0                     | <b>0</b><br>0-0                                      | <b>0</b><br>0-0                                       | <b>0</b><br>0-0                | <b>0</b><br>0-0          | <b>0</b><br>0-0             | <b>0</b><br>0-0      | <b>0</b><br>0-0                          |
| Other<br>Regions               | <b>2</b><br>0-3                     | <b>0</b><br>0-0                                      | <b>3</b><br>0-5                                       | <b>0</b><br>0-0                | <b>0</b><br>0-0          | <b>0</b><br>0-0             | <b>0</b><br>0-0      | <b>1</b><br>0-2                          |
| Russian<br>Federation<br>Total | <b>373</b><br>342-404               | <b>412</b><br>605-219                                | <b>439</b><br>509-366.5                               | <b>38</b><br>21-54             | <b>63</b><br>46-80.5     | <b>129</b><br>85-177        | <b>13</b><br>16-10   | <b>77</b><br>5-149                       |

SOURCES: My estimate is based on a daily tally of incidents as reported on the Caucasus Emirate's websites, especially *Kavkaz tsentr* ([www.kavkazcenter.com](http://www.kavkazcenter.com)), as well as non-jihadi sources such Russian media outlets like *Kavkazskii uzel* ([www.kavkaz-uzel.ru](http://www.kavkaz-uzel.ru)).

\* Wounded jihadist is the one who was captured.

\*\* These casualties include the November 6 suicide bombing in Vladikavkaz that Russian security forces have characterized as a *shakhidka* suicide bombing, but no one from the Caucasus Emirate proper has claimed responsibility. The late Shamil Basaev's 'Riyadus-Salakhin' group of suicide bombers, thought no longer to exist after Basaev's death in July 2006 claimed responsibility on November 15. See "Zayavlenie Islamskogo batal'ona shakhidov 'Riyadus-Salakhin'," *Hunafa.com*, 15 November 2008, 10:10, <http://hunafa.com/?p=496#more-496>.

**Methodology:** The data in this table are estimates. The estimates for the figures in the table's various categories represent the average of the minimum jihadi-reported figures and of the average of the minimum and maximum figures from non-jihadi sources. The logic behind this methodology is based on the tendency of Russian and local government and non-jihadi Russian and local media (often tied to or dependent on government reporting) to underreport the number of terrorist incidents and their resulting casualties as well as the tendency of jihadist sources to exaggerate the jihadists' capacity by sometimes claiming responsibility for attacks carried out by others for criminal, ethnic, or clan purposes and exaggerating the numbers of casualties caused by their own attacks. Incidents include not only attacks carried out, but also successful and attempted arrests. They do not include prevented attacks (deactivated bombs, etc.).

---

occurred per day. Most mujahedin attacks were assassinations of law enforcement and civilian officials, assassination attempts, ambushes, and IED or mine explosions targeting police posts, military convoys, and various law enforcement organs' headquarters.

The year 2008 saw Ingushetia consolidate its position since summer 2007 as the jihad's center of gravity in terms of operational activity. Ingushetia suffered from 138 jihadi attacks compared with 128 in Chechnya, 62 in Dagestan, 28 in Kabardino-Balkaria, 5 in Karachaevo-Cherkessia, and 9 in North Ossetia. Terrorist incidents in Russia killed 412 and wounded 435 civilian and law enforcement officials and servicemen and killed 36 and wounded 55 civilians. On the jihadists' side, the Caucasus mujahedin saw at least 129 of their ranks killed, 13 wounded, and 76 captured (including a very few who surrendered). This would mean the CE lost at least 218 fighters in 2008.<sup>5</sup>

### **The CE on the Eve of the 2009 Summer Offensive**

As winter 2008-2009 ended, the CE seemed poised for even greater operational capacity. CE claims and outside reports suggested a growing number of young Muslims heading 'to the forest.' The CE jihadists' numbers surely exceed the estimate of 400-500 jihadi fighters operating in the North Caucasus made by Russian MVD Internal Troops commander, Gen. Nikolai Rogozhkin and render absurd Chechen President Ramzan Kadyrov's claim that there remained only 40-50 in Chechnya. In January 2009, Deputy MVD Chief Arkadii Yedele

---

<sup>5</sup> Gordon M. Hahn, "Russia's Counter-Terrorism Operation in Chechnya Ends - the Jihadi Insurgency Continues," *Russia - Other Points of View*, 11 May 2009, [www.russiaotherpointsofview.com/2009/05/russias-counterterrorism-operation-in-chechnya.html](http://www.russiaotherpointsofview.com/2009/05/russias-counterterrorism-operation-in-chechnya.html).

claimed there were as many as 500 jihadi fighters in Chechnya alone and as many as 120 jihadi fighters and 1,237 jihadi militants in Ingushetia alone. He gave no figures for Dagestan, where there is a strong jihadi underground, or for the other North Caucasus regions.<sup>6</sup> Ingushetia President Unus-bek Yevkurov claimed in a February 2009 interview that Ingushetia's jihadists include "thousands" of fighters and facilitators.<sup>7</sup> The CE probably controls over one thousand fighters plus a reserve of many thousands of facilitators such as informants, safe house providers, messengers, and suppliers.

The past winter had been the most successful year for the mujehedin of the North Caucasus since 2005. Yet on April 16, 2009, the Kremlin announced it was officially terminating its counter-terrorist operation or CTO instituted during the second post-Soviet Chechen war. This decision would have a cosmetic effect on the jihadi insurgency and Russia's counter-insurgency operations in the North Caucasus. Its main effect would be socio-economic and political rather than militaristic. Chechnya's Grozny airport was opened for international flights and the republic received its own customs service. The CTO was therefore an obstruction to the Kremlin's efforts to normalize the situation in Chechnya under the harsh rule of Chechen president Ramzan Kadyrov. Symbolically, it served little purpose as well. The second Chechen war ended in its conventional form in 2002, so as a pseudonym for war, its utility had long expired when the counter-insurgency began. In addition, Chechnya has not been the jihad's center of gravity since early 2007, that title now belongs to the neighboring republic of Ingushetia. Rather than extending the CTO to Ingushetia and Dagestan, Moscow chose a policy of declaring more localized CTOs, limited to one or several districts in a given republic.

Although there was a brief springtime lull in CE operations in mid-April, this was simply the proverbial calm before the storm, as the present author warned at the time.<sup>8</sup> Moscow's April 16<sup>th</sup> termination of the official counter-terrorist operation in Chechnya could not have been more poorly timed. The CE sent out numerous signals that they were well prepared for the summertime peak in operations. In contrast to his 2006 lament that the movement was financially strapped and more recent complaints that finances did not meet the demands of growing number of youth heading to the forests to join the jihad, amir Doka Abu Usman Usmanov was more confident in his assessments of the CE's capacity (see below). Indeed, Dagestan's 'Shariat Jamaat' warned in mid-April that the CE would soon be conducting "large scale troop operations" against Russian military and MVD troops in Dagestan as well as elsewhere across the North Caucasus, warning civilians to stay away from *siloviki* and large gatherings like those traditional for May Day and May 9<sup>th</sup>'s Victory Day.<sup>9</sup> An inordinate number of jihadi caches were being uncovered in Chechnya during April, already six by April 20<sup>th</sup>.<sup>10</sup> Quite properly, federal forces seemed to expect attacks on several fronts. Subsequently, the

---

<sup>6</sup> "Tsyganok: dannye prezidentov Chechni i Ingushetii o boevikakh otlichayutsya ot dannykh MVD i FSB, *Kavkaz uzal*, 26 May 2009, 04:15, [www.kavkaz-uzel.ru/articles/154588](http://www.kavkaz-uzel.ru/articles/154588); "Imarat Kavkaz. Moskva pereschitala modzhakhedov. Ikh okazyvaetsya 1500 boitsov," *Kavkaz tsentr*, 20 May 2009, 17:51, [www.kavkazcenter.com/russ/content/2009/05/20/65749.shtml](http://www.kavkazcenter.com/russ/content/2009/05/20/65749.shtml); "Yedelev: v Chechnye deistvuyut do 500 boevikov," *Kavkaz uzal*, 21 January 2009, 14:30, [www.kavkaz-uzel.ru/articles/148344](http://www.kavkaz-uzel.ru/articles/148344); and "MVD: v Chechnye deistvuyut ne menee 400 boevikov," *Kavkaz uzal*, 6 February 2008, [www.kavkaz-uzel.ru](http://www.kavkaz-uzel.ru).

<sup>7</sup> [www.novayagazeta.ru/data/2009/013/14.html](http://www.novayagazeta.ru/data/2009/013/14.html)

<sup>8</sup> Hahn, "Russia's Counter-Terrorism Operation in Chechnya Ends - the Jihadi Insurgency Continues".

<sup>9</sup> [www.jamaatshariat.com/content/view/1051/34/](http://www.jamaatshariat.com/content/view/1051/34/).

<sup>10</sup> "Na yuge Chechni obnaruzhen tainik boevikov," *Kavkaz tsentr*, 20 April 2009, 13:30, [www.kavkaz-uzel.ru/articles/153164](http://www.kavkaz-uzel.ru/articles/153164).

jihadists reported that a large column of Russia military and MVD forces moved into Khasavyurt.<sup>11</sup> On April 20<sup>th</sup>, Russian forces began counter-terrorism operations near Ingushetia's village of Verkhnei Alkun, in Chechnya's Vedeno, and in another large village (unidentified in reports), in response to reports of large concentrations of mujahedin.<sup>12</sup> Within days, mujahedin began attacks in Chechnya especially but also in Dagestan and Ingushetia.

Some of the jihadi and authorities' movements might have been connected with the arrival of the jihad's top command for the annual spring Majlisul Shura. This meeting would set out the CE's plans for the year's peak insurgency campaign that typically runs from spring to fall. The Shura met on April 25<sup>th</sup> in Shatoi, Chechnya, where the Russian security organs declared a localized counter-terrorist operation. In attendance at the Shura were: CE amir Umarov; Umarov's naib Supyan Abdullaev; CE military amir Magas; amir of Chechnya Abdul Aziz; amir of Chechnya's eastern front Aslanbek; Aslanbek's naib Hussein; amir of a jamaat in Urus-Martan district Islam; naib of the amir of Chechnya's southwestern sector Khamzat; amir of Itum-Kalinskii district Khadis, amir of Shali district Assad; amir of the Naur district Muhammad; representative of Abubakar, the amir of Grozny; and representatives of the amirs of various combat jamaats and sectors in Chechnya, of the amirs of Dagestan, Kabardino-Balkaria, and others absent "for respectable reasons."<sup>13</sup> That all of these amirs could convene inside Chechnya from all across and outside a republic that Chechen President Ramazan Kadyrov was touting as an island of calm in an unstable North Caucasus, was clearly a gesture of defiance by Umarov and a direct challenge to Kadyrov and the Kremlin. Umarov emphasized the point in his post-Shura statement, noting that despite efforts by "Kafyrov" (an Arabic play on Kadyrov's name and the Arabic word for 'infidel' *kafir*) to portray Chechnya "as an oasis of well-being on the territory of Russia": "I, amir of mujahedin of Caucasus and the military amir of mujahideen of Velayat Nokhchicho (Chechnya), the entire headquarters of Caucasus mujahedin, and all main forces are located on, and all decisionmaking is done on the territory of Velayat Nokhchicho, praise be to Allah."<sup>14</sup>

The Shura convened for the stated purpose of "working on a plan of action for the year, coordinating actions, and resolving problems" connected, according to Umarov's post-shura declaration, with "the changing situation in the world and in order to establish the Word of Allah in the Caucasus and in the whole world as soon and as best as possible, do more for Jihad, and devote greater effort to become closer to Allah."<sup>15</sup> Thus, the April 2009 shura marked a major turning point in the radicalization of the Caucasus jihad. For the first time, the top ChRI or CE leader had declared openly that one of the Caucasus mujahedins' goals is to assist the global jihadi movement of Al Qaeda, the Taliban, and other sundry jihadi groups fighting for

<sup>11</sup> "Vilaiyat Dagestan: V Khasavyurt vvedeny voennye podrazdeleniya," *Kavkaz tsentr*, 21 April 2009, 11:51, [www.kavkazcenter.com/russ/content/2009/04/21/65193.shtml](http://www.kavkazcenter.com/russ/content/2009/04/21/65193.shtml).

<sup>12</sup> "V odnom iz sel Ingushetii vveden rezhim KTO," *Kavkaz uzel*, 20 April 2009, 12:51, [www.kavkaz-uzel.ru/articles/153163](http://www.kavkaz-uzel.ru/articles/153163).

<sup>13</sup> See the video "Majlis al-Shura of the Caucasus Emirate – 25 April 2009," *You Tube*, accessed 10 and 23 October 2009, [www.youtube.com/watch?v=DQQKPNfmo1U](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DQQKPNfmo1U). For the English translation of Umarov's post-Shura declaration with a link to his downloadable video statement in Russian, see "Emir Dokka Abu Usman: 'This Year Will Be Our Offensive Year'," *Kavkaz tsentr*, 17 May 2009, 15:17, [www.kavkaz.tv/eng/content/2009/05/17/10700.shtml](http://www.kavkaz.tv/eng/content/2009/05/17/10700.shtml).

<sup>14</sup> "Emir Dokka Abu Usman: 'This Year Will Be Our Offensive Year'".

<sup>15</sup> "Majlis al-Shura of the Caucasus Emirate – 25 April 2009" and "Emir Dokka Abu Usman: 'This Year Will Be Our Offensive Year'".

establishment of the rule of the Koran and Sunna worldwide. Umarov's statement that the Caucasus mujahedin regarded all those fighting mujahedin across the globe as their enemies in his announcement declaring the establishment of the CE eighteen months earlier was not so clear, though the message was clear enough.

The CE had ambitious plans for its front in the global jihad during the 2009 peak spring-to-fall insurgency season. In his post-shura video, Umarov announced that 2009 would be a year of "offensive." All the Caucasus combat jamaats and communications between them had been restored, Umarov said, after the winter hibernation in the mountain forests. Moreover, he warned that the mujahedin's situation was "better than it was in 2006, 2007, and 2008."<sup>16</sup>

One of the problems the Shura resolved was the issue of violence against civilians. In order to ensure the offensive's success, the Shura had agreed and Umarov had decreed the restoration of the notorious "'Riyadus Salikhin', Jamaat of our dear brother Shamil (Basaev), who, Allah willing, was martyred."<sup>17</sup> The RS specialized in preparing suicide martyrs and was organized by Basaev and Al Qaeda operative Khattab. Many of these suicide bombers were involved in the October 2002 Dubrovka theatre suicide hostage-taking and massacre, a series of suicide bombings throughout 2003 in Moscow and elsewhere, and the September 2004 Beslan school suicide hostage-taking and massacre. Thus, RS's return seemed to signal a return to suicide bombings targeting large gatherings and population centers or at least a disregard for the safety of civilians. Indeed, Umarov rationalized the return to suicide bombings and attacks targeting civilians by way of moral and legalistic arguments in his post-Shura statement.<sup>18</sup>

This policy is a sharp departure from the declared policy during Umarov's first years as amir of the ChRI and from that of his predecessors, who routinely renounced terrorism against civilians, even while they encouraged or tolerated its practice. The one exception is ChRI amir/president Abdul-Khalim Sadulaev, who seemed to successfully put a stop to such tactics during his brief reign from March 2005 to June 2006.<sup>19</sup> This policy would contribute the bulk of infidel casualties during the summer offensive.

### **The CE's Summer Offensive**

Summer 2009 would be the deadliest in years for Russian and local officials, police, military, security personnel, and rank-and-file civilians. A new level for the CE was attained in terms of the kinds of targets and tactics being used in their attacks, which included standard ambushes, IED attacks, and assassinations.

The CE remained quite open about its assassination policy. The Ingush jihadists published a list of 99 officials and others helping the 'infidel' regime who were targeted for liquidation. The CE's Ingushetia, Dagestan, and Chechnya Vilaiyats claim to have shariah courts that have been passing judgement on such figures, paving the way for their liquidation. In some instances, the mujahedin post warnings to officials, their facilitators, and informers urging them to abandon the local regime or face the judgement of Shariah law. The assassination tactic has been carried out

---

<sup>16</sup> "Emir Dokka Abu Usman: 'This Year Will Be Our Offensive Year'".

<sup>17</sup> "Emir Dokka Abu Usman: 'This Year Will Be Our Offensive Year'".

<sup>18</sup> "Emir Dokka Abu Usman: 'This Year Will Be Our Offensive Year'".

<sup>19</sup> See Hahn, *Russia's Islamic Threat*, Chapter 3

in numerous cases by snipers. The goal of targeting MVD officials and police is apparently intended to discourage local Muslims from joining or assisting the police in combating the CE and to damage the local governments' prestige, impressing upon citizens and police that the regime cannot protect them.

The beginning of the year saw the sudden appearance of, and then an increase in, the number of sniper attacks. Sniper activity culminated and then tailed off in early summer, after one or perhaps two snipers from a 'special operational group' of Dagestan's Jamaat Shariat managed to assassinate the republic of Dagestan's MVD chief Aldigirei Magomedtagirov and wound seven others at a wedding on June 5<sup>th</sup>.<sup>20</sup> Soon after, a series of jihadi movements and engagements by larger units of mujahedin numbering 20-30 began attacking convoys of military and police. However, the joint Chechen-Ingush counter-terrorist operation begun in May in the mountains seemed to have had some effect in forcing those larger formations to break up into smaller units, maintain a lower profile, and shift back to the tactic of smaller-scale ambushes and later suicide attacks.

There was not much emphasis on 'preventive propaganda' that emerged last summer when mujahedin units entered villages and lectured the populace on Islam and the need to support the jihad. This occasionally included punishing deviants or apostates ('murtads') for betraying Islam and/or helping the local regime.<sup>21</sup> Instead jihadi websites warned citizens to avoid police, security, and military personnel if they wish to be safe.

The most striking aspect of the CE's new groove was the revival of Riyadis Salikhin martyrs' terrorist battalion and subsequent suicide bombings, which returned to the North Caucasus mujahedin's tactical repertoire with a vengeance. Though there has not been a clearly discernible return to the intentional explicit targeting of civilians, the CE would show a new disregard for civilian life in its summer 2009 suicide bombing campaign, the subject of the next Islam, Islamism and Politics in Eurasia Report.

The abovementioned mid-April lull in jihadi operations came to an abrupt end with the first suicide bombing on May 16<sup>th</sup> - one month to the day after Moscow's April 16<sup>th</sup> termination of the CTO in Chechnya. This was the first of such incidents since a 2008 attack in Vladikavkaz, North Ossetia that killed some 20 and wounded some 40 civilians. The May 16<sup>th</sup> attack at the central market in Chechnya's capitol, Grozny, killed four MVD militia and wounded five civilians.<sup>22</sup> In June, a second suicide bomber exploded his car bomb in Ingushetia as the car of the republic's president Yunus-bek Yevkurov passed by, seriously wounding Yevkurov and killing two of his bodyguards. Yevkurov had to be flown to Moscow for emergency care for serious wounds to his head, limbs, rib cage, and liver. He would not return to active duty for two months. On August 17<sup>th</sup>, the fourth suicide martyr of the summer campaign detonated a truck bomb completely destroying the GOVD headquarters building in downtown Nazran, killing himself and 24 MVD servicemen, while wounding approximately 260 people including 11

---

<sup>20</sup> "ZAYAVLENIE DZHAMAATA 'SHARIAT': SPETSIAL'NOI OPERATIVNOI GRUPPOI UNICHTOZHEN ZLEISHII VRAG ALLAKHA," *Jamaat Shariat.com*, 9 June 2009, [www.jamaatshariat.com/content/view/1109/34/](http://www.jamaatshariat.com/content/view/1109/34/).

<sup>21</sup> Gordon M. Hahn, "The Caucasus Emirate's New Tactics," *Mideast Monitor*, Vol. 3, No. 3, December 2008, [www.mideastmonitor.org/issues/0812/0812\\_4.htm](http://www.mideastmonitor.org/issues/0812/0812_4.htm).

<sup>22</sup> "V Chechne proiskhodit spetsoperatsiya," *Kavkaz uzel*, 16 May 2009, 22:00, [www.kavkaz-uzel.ru/articles/154234](http://www.kavkaz-uzel.ru/articles/154234).



children, according to the authorities.<sup>23</sup> As noted in the first IIPER, Sheikh Said Abu Saad Buryatskii organized this attack and the mujahedin media PR campaign that surrounded it, maximizing its terrorism effect on the target audience of young Muslims, siloviki, and officials in Ingushetia and across the Caucasus.<sup>24</sup> This was the largest terrorist attack in Russia since the October 13, 2005 raid by over 200 mujahedin on Kabardino-Balkaria's capital that ended in the deaths of tens of servicemen and nearly a hundred mujahedin. The last suicide martyr and fifth shakhidka of the campaign was shot before she was able to detonate on November 2<sup>nd</sup> in Khasavyurt, Dagestan.<sup>25</sup>

Clearly, one attack caused the bulk of the casualties; the suicide truck bomb attack on the MVD headquarters in Nazran, Ingushetia organized by Buryatskii. Nevertheless, the number of attacks and casualties, according to my own account, show the greatest scope of mujahedin operations since the end of the conventional stage of the second Chechen war and the beginning of the broader Caucasus jihad in 2002-03. The CE's summer operations pushed the overall level of operational activity beyond that of 2008. According to my own count, based on the same methodology used in Table 1, by late August the number of successful jihadi attacks and jihadi-related incidents perpetrated by the CE's mujahedin during 2009 in three key North Caucasus republics – Ingushetia, Chechnya, and Dagestan – exceeded the number of incidents in those regions during all of 2008. In 2008, the CE executed 328 attacks/incidents in those three republics. However, by the end of August 2009 the mujahedin were involved in 355 violent incidents or self-initiated attacks there: 128 in Ingushetia (more than one every other day, there were 138 in all of 2008), 117 in Chechnya (128 in 2008), and 110 in Dagestan (62 in 2008). Another 14 attacks/incidents were carried out in the KBR in the same period compared to 28 in all of 2008, bringing the total for 2009 to 369 attacks. It should be noted that attacks approximately outnumbered incidents by a factor of ten and that there have been no reliably reported attacks/incidents this year in any other region of the North Caucasus or Russia as a whole. Thus, the CE surpassed its entire output of 370 attacks/incidents in the North Caucasus and 372 nationwide in 2008 by the beginning of September, that is, within approximately the first eight months of 2009. The summer offensive from May 1<sup>st</sup> to August 31<sup>st</sup> saw the bulk of these incidents - 311. Those 311 incidents left approximately 242 killed (223 state officials and servicemen and 19 civilians) and 511 wounded, the overwhelming majority of the latter being state officials and servicemen.

As the data shows, the CE continues to concentrate its efforts in the North Caucasus, unlike the period of 2002-04 when the mujahedin were able to go beyond the Caucasus to infiltrate Moscow with suicide bombers. There is no reason as yet to give credence to the separate claims of responsibility made by 'Riyadus-Salikhin' and a hitherto unknown ethnic Russian jamaat calling itself 'al-Muvahidun' for what Russian authorities and media have characterized as an technological or human error accident at the Sunzhenskii Dam in the Republic of Khakassiya in eastern Siberia.

---

<sup>23</sup> "Aleksandr Tikhomirov (Sheikh Said Abu Sadd al-Buryatii – Said Buryatskii)," *Kavkaz uzal*, 17 August 2009, 17:02, [www.kavkaz-uzel.ru/articles/158565](http://www.kavkaz-uzel.ru/articles/158565).

<sup>24</sup> See the video "Said abu-Saad," *Hunafa.com*, 5 September 2009 (dated 4 September on video), 4:28, <http://hunafa.com/?p=1971> and Gordon M. Hahn, "Sheikh Said Abu Saad Buryatskii: New Basaev of the Caucasus," *Islam and Islamism in Eurasia Report*, Vol. 1, No. 1, 3 November 2009.

<sup>25</sup> Mikhail Lukanin, "Shkola shakhidov na Kavkaze podgotovila novykh smertinits," *Trud*, 2 November 2009, [http://trud.ru/article/02-11-2009/231412\\_u\\_terrora\\_ghenskoe\\_litso.html](http://trud.ru/article/02-11-2009/231412_u_terrora_ghenskoe_litso.html).

## **Conclusion**

The data reveals an impressive increase in the frequency and quantity of attacks and incidents in the North Caucasus. This surge of activity indicates a significant restoration of the Caucasus mujahedin's capacity after it declined and bottomed out from November 2005 through winter 2006-2007. It appears that the only thing that will be lacking in the CE's record for 2009 in comparison with the unprecedented wave of terrorism carried out by the ChRI in 2003-2005 (especially during the summer of 2004) will be high profile, mass casualty attacks against civilians in Moscow.

For a comparative perspective, the State Department reported in an April 2009 report that the number of jihadi attacks in Pakistan more than doubled in 2008 to 1,839 from 890, and they killed 2,293 people in 2008 compared with 1,340 in 2007.<sup>26</sup> The number of Russian and local servicemen and officials killed by mujahedin in the North Caucasus in August 2009 appears to have considerably exceeded the number of U.S. military killed in Afghanistan in the same month: approximately 69 Russian and local servicemen and officials killed (and 179 wounded) compared to 51 U.S. combat deaths. The latter figure was a monthly high for the war in Afghanistan. Moreover, whereas the Afghan theater of insurgency is distant from the U.S. homeland, the North Caucasus is part of Russia, a country that possesses the world's largest stockpiles of materials and weapons of mass destruction. In short, the Caucasus Emirate jihadi insurgents present Russia and the world with a serious security dilemma.

---

<sup>26</sup> Mark Landler and Elisabeth Bumiller, "Now, U.S. Sees Pakistan as a Cause Distinct From Afghanistan," *New York Times*, May 1, 2009, p. A4.