

ISLAM, ISLAMISM, AND POLITCS IN EURASIA REPORT

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### **EVENTS BRIEFING**

#### **CAUCASUS EMIRATE (CE) MUJAHEDIN**

##### **CAUCASUS EMIRATE (CE) SHARIAT COURT QADI ANZOR ASTEMIROV-SEIFULLAH JUSTIFIES WMDT TERRORISM**

**January 9** - The site of CE's United Velayat of Kabardia, Balkaria, and Karachai, the amir of which is the Qadi (Chief Judge/Magistrate) of the CE's Shariah Court and the CE Shura's Shariah Committee Anzor Astemirov (aka Seifullah), published an article by Sheikh Nasr Al' Fahd laying out the various Shariah legal justifications for the use of weapons of mass destruction against the 'infidel'. (See "Исследование о правовом статусе использования оружия массового поражения против неверных," 9 January 2010, 12:37, [www.islamdin.com/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=614:2010-01-09-13-06-19&catid=4:2009-02-04-14-07-09&Itemid=28](http://www.islamdin.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=614:2010-01-09-13-06-19&catid=4:2009-02-04-14-07-09&Itemid=28).) This is the first time that the CE has openly published an article justifying WMD terrorism and should be of deep concern not to Moscow but to the entire international community. Combined with the progressive radicalization of the Caucasus jihadists since the declaration of the CE in October 2007, including the declaration jihad against the U.S. and the West in general that accompanied the announcement of the CE's creation and last spring's decisions to target Russian civilians and resume suicide bombings, the justification of WMDT represents a real threat. The growing ambitions of operatives and ideologues like Seifullah and Said Abu Saad Buryatskii and the CE's increasing operational capacity suggests that the CE or elements within it could seek to secure and deploy WMD in the coming years.

#### **THE CE LOSES THREE KEY OPERATIVES IN JANUARY**

January and the first days of February 2010 saw the CE lose three key amirs: the amir of Dagestan, al-Bara (January 6) and the amir of Chechnya's Urus-Martan district, Abdul Malik (January 19); and a leading amir of the Shura's military committee, the Egyptian jihadist, fifteen-year veteran of the Chechen wars and Caucasus jihad, and likely Al-Qa`ida operative, Seif-Islam (February 3).

#### MOVLADI UDUGOV CLAIMS LARGE-SCALE OPERATIONS IN THE OFFING

Jamaat Shariat carried a *'Kavkaz Online'* interview with the editor of the CE site *'Kavkaz tsentr'*, Movladi Udugov, in which he stated that the CE was not far from carrying out large-scale operations. "M. Udugov: Nachalo masshtabnykh voennykh operatsii protiv Russkikh okkupantov ne tak uzh daleko," *Jamaat Shariat*, 4 February 2010, 13:17, [www.jamaatshariat.com/ru/content/view/407/29/](http://www.jamaatshariat.com/ru/content/view/407/29/).

#### APPROXIMATELY 16 CE ATTACKS IN JANUARY 2010

According to the methodology used in IIPER, Nos. 2, 7, and 8 for estimating the number of jihadi violent incidents (jihadi attacks and clashes between jihadi forces and the authorities' forces) and casualties, Russia saw approximately 16 attacks in January 2010. All occurred in the North Caucasus Ingushetia leading with 7 and Dagestan following with at least 5. The attacks left some 7 state agents and 3 civilians killed and 19 state agents and 1 civilian wounded. The CE mujahedin suffered 4 killed, 2 injured and perhaps 1 captured. Numerous facilitators, perhaps more than 20, were captured, according to Russian press reports and official statements.

#### DOKA UMAROV'S BROTHER COMMENTS ON CE MUJAHEDIN

CE amir Doka Umarov's brother Vakha, who has lived in Istanbul since 2005, gave an interview to Reuters in which he claimed there are up to 5,000 mujahedin active in the North, 3,000 of whom are active in Chechnya. He claimed the mujahedin receive funding from ministers and bureaucrats in the Chechen government and people in Kadyrov's inner circle who claim their loyalty to him. He also said that many of the sons of the Chechen diaspora in Turkey are joining the CE jihad.(1) The CE site *'Kavkaz tsentr'* posted an article summarizing the interview.

(1) Thomas Grove, "Local Chechen officials help rebel chief-brother," Reuters, 25 January 2010, 11:17, [www.reuters.com/article/idUSLDE6000L3](http://www.reuters.com/article/idUSLDE6000L3).

(2) Ваха Умаров: «На Кавказе действуют до 5 тысяч моджахедов», 26 января 2010 г., 13:11, [www.kavkazcenter.com/russ/content/2010/01/26/70257.shtml](http://www.kavkazcenter.com/russ/content/2010/01/26/70257.shtml).

#### VELAYAT OF DAGESTAN, CAUCASUS EMIRATE

Dagestan was the center of gravity of Caucasus Emirate operations in January 2010. On **January 6** the first suicide bomber of the year struck in Dagestan's capitol Makhachkala killing 5 MVD militia officers and wounding 15 militia officers and 2 civilians.(1) In a special operation security forces tracked down and killed two mujahedin involved in the suicide attack. One was amir Al-Bara, amir of the CE's Dagestan Velayat, a major kill for the authorities. An FSB officer was killed during the operation. (2)

- (1) “МВД Дагестана назвало имена погибших в результате теракта милиционеров,” *янв. 07 2010, 14:00*, [www.kavkaz-uzel.ru/articles/163967/](http://www.kavkaz-uzel.ru/articles/163967/); “Мощность взрыва в Махачкале составила 50 кг тротила, его жертвами стали 6 человек (Видео),” *янв. 06 2010, 12:00*, [www.kavkaz-uzel.ru/articles/163932/](http://www.kavkaz-uzel.ru/articles/163932/); “В Махачкале террорист-смертник подорвал мощную бомбу, несколько милиционеров погибли,” *янв. 06 2010, 09:35*, [www.kavkaz-uzel.ru/articles/163929/](http://www.kavkaz-uzel.ru/articles/163929/); and В спецоперации в Дагестане погиб сотрудник ФСБ из Ставропольского края, *янв. 10 2010, 01:51*, [www.kavkaz-uzel.ru/articles/164032/](http://www.kavkaz-uzel.ru/articles/164032/).
- (2) В спецоперации в Дагестане погиб сотрудник ФСБ из Ставропольского края, *янв. 10 2010, 01:51*, [www.kavkaz-uzel.ru/articles/164032/](http://www.kavkaz-uzel.ru/articles/164032/); В Дагестане в ходе штурма жилого дома убиты два предполагаемых боевика, *7 янв. 2010, 10:45*, <http://www.kavkaz-uzel.ru/articles/163963/>.

**January 7** – The Caucasus Emirate continues to align itself with Al Qa`ida and the global jihadist social movement. The website of the Caucasus Emirate’s Dagestani Velayat, the so-called combat jamaat ‘Jamaat Shariat’, posted a long article titled “Sheikh Osama bin Laden – Imam of the Our Epoch’s Mujahedin” by frequent contributor, Abu Ubeidullah. It cited many of the global jihad’s most prominent sheikhs, scholars, and thinkers praising and defending Al Qa`ida’s Osama bin Laden. Quotes and works were gathered from various Arab and Middle Eastern jihadist sites and include those of the following: Sheikh Ibn Jibrin, Sheikh Mohammed Ibn Abdel’ Maksud, Sheikh Abu Mohammed Al’ Maqdisi, Sheikh Hamud Ibn Ukla Ash-Shuaibi, Sheikh Ali Al’ Hudeira, Sheikh Hamid Al’ Ali, Sheikh Abdullah Azzam, Sheikh Abdullah Ar-Rushud, Sheikh Nasyr Al’ Fahd, Sheikh Mohammed Hassan, Sheikh Hamid Al’ Ali, Sheikh Mohammed Ibn Solikh Al’-`Useimin, and Sheikh Yasir Burkhami. (See “Sheikh Usama Bin Laden – Imam Mudzhakhidov Nashei Epokhi,” *Jamaat Shariat*, 7 January 2010, 12:53, [www.jamaatshariat.com/ru/content/view/414/29/](http://www.jamaatshariat.com/ru/content/view/414/29/).) As noted above, an article written by the abovementioned Sheikh Nasr Al’ Fahd laying out the various Islamic scholarly and Koranic justifications for the use of weapons of mass destruction against the ‘infidel’ was posted two days later.

## **RUSSIAN FEDERAL AUTHORITIES**

### **NEW NORTH CAUCASUS FEDERAL DISTRICT FORMED**

On **January 19** President Dmitrii Medvedev reorganized Russia’s federal district system by paring off 7 regions from the Southern Federal District to form a new North Caucasus Federal District (SKFO) composed of the republics of Chechnya, Ingushetia, Dagestan, Kabardino-Balkaria (KBR), Karachaevo-Cherkessia (KChR), and North Ossetia and Stavropol Krai. Pyatigorsk, Stavropol was designated the new district’s capitol. Now only Krasnodar Krai, Astrakhan, Volgograd and Rostov Oblasts, and the republics of Adygea and Kalmykia make up the Southern Federal District (YuFO). The reorganization places Circassian-oriented republics in two different federal districts with the Circassian Kabards’ KBR and the Circassian Cherkessians’ KChR now located in the SKFO and Circassian Adygs’ Republic of Adygeya remaining in the YuFO. This could cause some consternation among the Circassian nationalists, some of whom who seek a united Circassian region that would include all Circassian-populated areas in the North Caucasus. Medvedev’s appointment of Krasnoyarsk Governor Aleksandr Khloponin as presidential plenipotentiary for the SKFO takes most of the North Caucasus out

from under the control of the ‘silovik’, YuFO presidential envoy and former Russian General Prosecutor Dmitrii Ustinov, and hands it to a civilian with no experience either with the Caucasus or the siloviki. Khloponin is a former businessman close to the relatively liberal oligarch Vladimir Potanin, head of the InterRos holding company. Khloponin’s simultaneous appointment as deputy prime minister makes him the only FO envoy with such status. All this is an effort by Medvedev to get socioeconomic development moving in the jihad-plagued North Caucasus and perhaps build his own team of loyal political clients.

On **January 23**, Prime Minister Vladimir Putin visited Pyatigorsk, Stavropol to meet with the heads of the regions of the new North Caucasus Federal District. He called on the local authorities to ensure the safety of civil rights lawyers and activists working in the region. This is unprecedented step by Putin, who neglected to make such a public statement in defense of the NGO community throughout his two terms as Russian president. This is another example of the ongoing political thaw and federal policy changes in the North Caucasus and across Russia. (“Glava pravitel’stva, Kavkaz uzel, 24 January 2010, 1:15, [http://karabakh.kavkaz-uzel.ru/articles/164584/.](http://karabakh.kavkaz-uzel.ru/articles/164584/))

## **NORTH CAUCASUS AUTHORITIES**

### **CHECHNYA**

**January 11** – Chechen president Ramzan Kadyrov demanded that the Chechen MVD capture or kill Caucasus Emirate amir Doka Abu Usman Umarov.(1) He also instituted a special counter-terrorist operation to search for and destroy Umarov and any other CE mujahedin security forces found. The operation was declared in the Urus-Martan and Achkhei-Martan districts of Chechnya, focused on the forested areas in those districts. This was the second localized counter-terrorist operation declared in 2010 in Chechnya; the first was declared on January 4. Mid-December operations led to the killing of 8 mujahedin and the discovery of several mujahedin hideouts and underground supply storages.(2) On January 18, Kadyrov opened another counter-terrorist operation covering an expanded zone extending from Nozhai-Yurt to Achkhei-Martan designed to capture Umarov and led by Adam Delikhanov, who oversees Chechnya’s power ministries. The CE site *Kavkaz tsentr* claimed Kadyrov had been removed from his post recently by President Medvedev for a few days and was reinstated upon the initiative of Russian Prime Minister and former President Vladimir Putin.(3) One local operation, reportedly led by Kadyrov himself,(4) immediately claimed success with the killing of four mujahedin, including close Umarov associate and amir of the Urus-Martan district, Abdul Malik (born Chingiskhan Gishaev).(5)

(1) “Кадыров потребовал от МВД Чечни поймать или убить Умарова, янв. 12 2010, 10:00, [www.kavkaz-uzel.ru/articles/164126/.](http://www.kavkaz-uzel.ru/articles/164126/)

(2) “В горной и предгорной частях Чечни продолжаются поиски боевиков,” янв. 07 2010, 13:30, [www.kavkaz-uzel.ru/articles/163966/.](http://www.kavkaz-uzel.ru/articles/163966/)

(3) “ВИЛАЙЯТ НОХЧИЙЧОЬ. Главарь муртадов объявил об очередной «спецоперации» против моджахедов,” 19 января 2010 г., 16:55, [www.kavkazcenter.com/russ/content/2010/01/19/70162.shtml](http://www.kavkazcenter.com/russ/content/2010/01/19/70162.shtml).

(4) Muslim Ibragimov, В ходе спецоперации в Чечне убит сподвижник Докку Умарова, янв. 19 2010, 18:51, [www.kavkaz-uzel.ru/articles/164392/.](http://www.kavkaz-uzel.ru/articles/164392/)

(5) “ВИЛАЙЯТ НОХЧИЙЧОЪ. Командование моджахедов подтвердило гибель амира Абдул-Малика,” 29 января 2010 г., 11:47, [www.kavkazcenter.com/russ/content/2010/01/29/70311.shtml](http://www.kavkazcenter.com/russ/content/2010/01/29/70311.shtml).

## INGUSHETIA

### PRESIDENT YUNUS BEK YEVKUROV

February 3 - On February 3, Ingushetia's president, Yunus-bek Yevkurov claimed there are only 15 mujahedin active in the republic and that 16 mujahedin were convinced to turn themselves during 2009.(1) Yevkurov has been aggressive in trying to talk young radical Muslims out of joining or into leaving the jihad, working with the councils of village elders and teip or clan councils. In early January, rumors had it that Yevkurov had requested 20 units of additional GRU forces for the republic.(2)

(1) Sergei Minenko, “”Al’-Kaida’ na ‘Zhigulyakh’,” *Vremya novostei*, 4 February 2010, [www.vremya.ru/246760.html](http://www.vremya.ru/246760.html).

(2) “Евкuroв запросил дополнительно 20 подразделений спецназа ГРУ,” 4 января 2010 г., 19:58 <http://kavkazcenter.com/russ/content/2010/01/04/69927.shtml>.

## RESEARCH AND ANALYSIS



Who Was Mr. Seif-Islam?

By Gordon M. Hahn

On February 3, Russian forces announced the killing of two mujahedin; one was identified as one the leading CE amirs, the Egyptian and likely Al-Qa`ida operative Seif Islam (sword of Islam). Seif Islam, born as Mokhmad Mohamad Shahbaan, was a native of Egypt and had been fighting in the North Caucasus probably for at least 15 years. CE sources claim he had fought in the region for 15 years, but the Russian FSB claimed he had been in the North Caucasus since 1992. (“Vilaiyat Dagestan. Kafiry zayavili, chto v Botlikhskom raione ubit amir Seif-Islam,” *Kavkaz tsentr*, 3 February 2010, 14:15, [www.kavkazcenter.com/russ/content/2010/02/03/70423.shtml](http://www.kavkazcenter.com/russ/content/2010/02/03/70423.shtml) and Sergei Minenko, “”Al’-Kaida’ na ‘Zhiglyakh’,” *Vremya novostei*, 4 February 2010, [www.vremya.ru/news/246760.html](http://www.vremya.ru/news/246760.html).) The 48-year old ‘sword of Islam’ was killed in a shootout with police in Dagestan's mountainous Botlikh District. Dagestan has been perhaps the main focus of CE operations in early 2010 and the locus of the year's only suicide bombing so far. In addition to another mujahed killed in the

operation, Ibragin Magomedov, a Botlikh district MVD officer, Magomedkamil Khadzhaev, also died from wounds sustained in the shootout. According to the Dagestan FSB, they received intelligence indicating that Seif Islam would be leaving an apartment with Magomedov and be traveling along the road between Muni and Botlikh on which police then tried to stop the vehicle, sparking the shootout. (Yulia Rybina, “Al’-Kaida’ podala v zasadu FSB,” *Kommersant*, 4 February 2010, [www.kommersant.ru/doc.aspx?DocsID=1315545](http://www.kommersant.ru/doc.aspx?DocsID=1315545).)

Seif-Islam’s prominence within the CE was reflected in recent years by his profile being one of only eleven leading CE amirs shown in head-shot photographs at the very top of the opening page of the CE-affiliated website, *Kavkaz tsentr*. ([www.kavkazcenter.com](http://www.kavkazcenter.com)) He never gave interviews but has had a long association with Chechen separatists and Caucasus jihadists. According to the FSB, Seif Islam was on the international wanted list on the request of Egyptian authorities. (Yulia Rybina, “Al’-Kaida’ podala v zasadu FSB,” *Kommersant*, 4 February 2010, [www.kommersant.ru/doc.aspx?DocsID=1315545](http://www.kommersant.ru/doc.aspx?DocsID=1315545).)

An FSB spokesman said Seif Islam had seen action in Afghanistan in the 1990s, and “was also in Sudan, Somali, Libya and Georgia.” He was sent to Chechnya through channels of the Muslim Brotherhood, according to the FSB, and upon arrival he helped begin organizing the North Caucasus branch of al-Qaeda with Saudi-born AQ operative Ibn Al-Khattab. (Yulia Rybina, “Al’-Kaida’ podala v zasadu FSB,” *Kommersant*, 4 February 2010, [www.kommersant.ru/doc.aspx?DocsID=1315545](http://www.kommersant.ru/doc.aspx?DocsID=1315545) and Sergei Minenko, “Al’-Kaida’ na ‘Zhiglyakh’,” *Vremya novostei*, 4 February 2010, [www.vremya.ru/news/246760.html](http://www.vremya.ru/news/246760.html).) It should be noted that an organization explicitly titled ‘AQ in Russia’ or ‘AQ in the Caucasus’ has never been declared, unlike in Iraq, Afghanistan, the Maghreb, etc. However, if he entered Chechnya in the early to mid-1990s and/or worked with Khattab, a known AQ operative, it is likely true that he was from AQ. Egyptians dominated in the upper echelons of AQ at the time, and it would be unusual for an Egyptian to join the jihad in Chechnya independently of the global jihadists, given the lack of a Chechen or Caucasus diaspora in Egypt.

Seif Islam fought in both post-Soviet Chechen wars and worked in the leadership under both Chechen Republic of Ichkeria presidents and amirs Dzhokar Dudaev, Aslan Maskhadov, Abdul-Khalim Sadullaev and ChRI, then CE amir Doka Aby Usman Umarov. During the inter-war period (1996-1998), according to the FSB he ran the North Caucasus branch of the Saudi Islamist ‘philanthropy’ ‘The Benevolence Foundation International’ in Grozny. It was used to recruit militant fighters and fund training camps in Chechnya, where Seif Islam led training in mine and IED warfare. (Yulia Rybina, “Al’-Kaida’ podala v zasadu FSB,” *Kommersant*, 4 February 2010, [www.kommersant.ru/doc.aspx?DocsID=1315545](http://www.kommersant.ru/doc.aspx?DocsID=1315545).)

In the course of the second Chechen war, according to the FSB, Seif Islam was religious advisor of President Maskhadov and a close associate of Shamil Basaev, who in April 1994 visited AQ’s training complex in Khost in 1994, where he may have met Seif Islam. (Oleg Ionov, “UFSB Dagestana nazvalo Seif Islama organizatorom terakta vozle bazy DPS v Makhachkale,” *Kavkaz uzal*, 3 February 2010, 15:40, [www.kavkaz-uzel.ru/articles/165000/](http://www.kavkaz-uzel.ru/articles/165000/).) He was identified in an official mujahedin communiqué as an advisor of Umarov in September 2006. (“Video: Vystuplenie prezidenta, Amira GKO-Madzhlisul’ Shura ChRI Dokki Umarova,” *Kavkaz tsentr*, 30 September 2006, 17:59, [www.kavkazcenter.com/russ/content/2006/09/30/47272.shtml](http://www.kavkazcenter.com/russ/content/2006/09/30/47272.shtml).) According to the Dagestan FSB, Umarov appointed him chief of the “general staff,” but he was more likely amir of the Islamic Special Forces Regiment (Islamskii Polk Osobogo Naznacheniya) once headed by Arbi Baraev. It is known, however, that amir of the Ingushetia Velayat Akhmed Yevloev (alias Magas) has

been the CE's military amir since early in Umarov's tenure. Regardless of his 'official' post, Seif Islam has been a close associate of CE amir Umarov.

According to the Dagestan FSB, Seif Islam has been instrumental in planning major operations and from October 2009, after Russian forces eliminated Doctor Mohhamed, an alleged AQ operative in charge of Dagestan, he was charged with organizing jihadi operations in Dagestan, rejuvenating the Dagestan Velayat's mujahedin, and restoring communications lines through Georgia for the supply of explosives and other weapons. He was the organizer of the numerous railroad bombings and attacks on energy infrastructure this past summer and fall in Dagestan and the January 6, 2010 suicide bombing in the republic's capitol, Makhachkala that killed 5 MVD servicemen. (Oleb Ionov, "V Dagestane ubityi egiptyanin opasnan kak osnovatel' 'Al'-Kaida' na Severnom Kavkaze," *Kavkaz uzal*, 3 February 2010, 13:59, [www.kavkaz-uzel.ru/articles/164994/](http://www.kavkaz-uzel.ru/articles/164994/); Oleg Ionov, "UFSB Dagestana nazvalo Seif Islama organizatorom terakta vozle bazy DPS v Makhachkale," *Kavkaz uzal*, 3 February 2010, 15:40, [www.kavkaz-uzel.ru/articles/165000/](http://www.kavkaz-uzel.ru/articles/165000/); Yulia Rybina, "'Al'-Kaida' podala v zasadu FSB," *Kommersant*, 4 February 2010, [www.kommersant.ru/doc.aspx?DocsID=1315545](http://www.kommersant.ru/doc.aspx?DocsID=1315545).)

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