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POSSIBLE CAUCASUS EMIRATE PLOT TO ASSASSINATE VLADIMIR PUTIN FOILED

The mainstream media and academic communities have either laughed off the alleged plot to assassinate Russian president-elect Vladimir Putin as a election campaign ploy or ignored the possibility that the Caucasus Emirate (CE) might have been involved, as Ukrainian and Russian security services claim as reported by Russia's state-run 'First Channel' television on the morning of February 27th.¹ Although the timing was almost certainly determined by Putin's presidential election, the possibility that the CE would attempt such an operation is real. The CE mujahedin have committed 36 suicide bombings since November 2008, several of which were attempts to assassinate republic presidents as were several more traditional attacks.

Released details of the alleged plot are as follows. On January 4th an explosion occurred in a home in the Ukrainian city of Odessa in the Crimea. Initially, Odessa's fire department personnel thought that the

¹ "Spetssluzhby Ukrainiy Rossii sorvali plany terroristov, gotovivshikh pokushenie na Vladimira Putina," *Pervyi Kanal*, 27 February 2012, 09:00, www.1tv.ru/news/crime/200014.

explosion was an accidental propane gas-induced event. However, after an intensive investigation in which traces of explosive materials were confirmed to be present on the premises, a new version of events emerged. It holds that the explosion occurred as three alleged plotters – 26-year old Ruslan Madaev, 31-year old, Adam Osmaev, and 28-year old Ilya P’yanzin, were building an improvised explosive device (IED). The explosion killed Madaev, and wounded Osmaev and P’yanzin, who were subsequently captured and gave evidence. They both appeared in videos on Russian news reports with wounds to their faces, apparently resulting from the explosion. Osmaev was seen admitting: “The ultimate aim was to travel to Moscow and try to assassinate Premier Putin.”² All three of the plotters occupied the same Odessa apartment, where a laptop was found containing video footage of the Putin’s motorcade and maps containing indications of the motorcade’s route. Osmaev had been on Russia’s wanted list for years, was a suspect in an alleged Chechen plot to assassinate Chechnya Republic President Ramzan Kadyrov, and is alleged to have been residing in London prior to his arrival in Odessa.³

According to the evidence given by P’yanzin, he and Madaev flew to Odessa from the United Arab Emirates through Turkey with “precise instructions” from CE amir Doku ‘Abu Usman’ Umarov’ to prepare an assassination of Putin after his election as president first by training in IED attacks through operations targeting economic infrastructure targets in Ukraine. A focus on economic and transport infrastructure targets has been a long-standing, publicly declared policy of Umarov’s – hence, the numerous CE attacks on railroad transportation in 2009, including the November 2009 Moscow-St. Petersburg ‘Nevskii Express’ bombing that killed tens and wounded approximately one hundred, the February 2011 Elbrus ski resort attacks in the republic of Kabardino-Balkariya, and the 2011 attack on the Baksan Hydroelectric Power Station in the same republic, and the January 2011 Moscow Domodedovo Airport suicide bombing that killed nearly 40 and wounded more than one hundred civilians.

By their last names, Osmaev and Madaev appear to be ethnic Chechens and likely residents of Russia’s Republic of Chechnya or, much less likely, the Republic of Ingushetiya. The third of the alleged plotters, P’yanzin, is reported to be a citizen of Kazakhstan.⁴ There is clear evidence of recent and ongoing ties between the CE and Kazakhstan’s recently emerged mujahedin, who undertook a series of explosions and suicide attacks last year. Ethnic Kazakhs and citizens of Kazakhstan have been found fighting under the CE in the North Caucasus over the years, and, moreover, groups of Kazakhstan-based mujahedin have been sending messages to the CE, explicitly regaling the CE mujahedin as key allies in the global jihadi revolutionary movement.

As reported in IIPER, No. 30, the first tie between Kazakhstani mujahedin and the CE was an appeal by the former sent to the CE’s Ingushetiya Republic-based network, the Galgaiche Vilaiyat (GV), which was promptly posted on the GV’s website, Hunafa.com, in November 2010. A jihadi jamaat from Kazakhstan calling itself ‘Ansaru-d-din’ appealed to the CE GV mujahedin and Hunafa.com to help in promoting its call to Kazakhstan’s Muslims to make jihad using the material in “a file with information highlighting the theme of jihad” called ‘The Commandment of Jihad and Related Situations’ (*Hukm dzhikhada i polozheniya, svyazannyye*

² “Spetssluzhby Ukrainiy Rossii sorvali plany terroristov, gotovivshikh pokushenie na Vladimira Putina,” *Pervyi Kanal*, 27 February 2012, 09:00, www.1tv.ru/news/crime/200014.

³ “Predotvrashyon terakt protiv prem’era Putina,” *Ekho Moskvy*, 27 February 2012, 18:30, <http://echo.msk.ru/news/862923-echo.html> and “Chechen native Adam Osmayev confessing to the plot on Channel One,” *Moscow Times*, 28 February 2012, www.themoscowtimes.com/news/article/suspicious-cloud-purported-plot-to-kill-putin/453847.html#ixzz1noO2IEip.

⁴ “Grazhdanin Kazakhstana gotovil pokushenie na Vladimira Putina?,” *Regnum.ru*, 27 February 2012, 14:44, www.regnum.ru/news/1503249.html.

s etim)." The appeal contains a link to "*Hukm dzhikhada i polozheniya, svyazannyye s etim*", and both the appeal and the propaganda article call Kazakhstan's Muslims to the global jihadi revolutionary movement.⁵

As noted in IIPER, No. 37, months later a leading global jihadi theo-ideologist, Sheikh Abul-Mundhir Al-Shinkiti, issued a fatwa posted on CE websites in March 2011 asserting the legality of attacking police and beginning jihad in Kazakhstan, despite weakness and small numbers of mujahedin in the country. The Sheikh points to the first battle where the enemy outnumbered the Muslims at Badr as a precedent. In advising the Kazakhstani mujahedin not be patient but to engage jihad, Shinkiti added that it is an obligation to go to jihad especially in Palestine and Chechnya. The fatwa was discussed on the CE GV's Hunafa.com and reposted on the CE's main website *Kavkaz Tsent*r. I noted that "Hunafa.com of late has been publishing articles on jihad in Kazakhstan, suggesting at least joint propaganda efforts between the GV and radical Kazakhstani Islamists, who may be preparing to take up arms."⁶

Eight weeks later the first successful suicide attacks ever to occur in Kazakhstan took place on 17 May and 24 May.⁷ July saw firearms attacks by four alleged mujahedin in the villages of Kenkiyak and Shubarshi that killed two policemen.⁸ A Kazakhstani jihadist group calling itself 'Jund al-Khilafa' (sometimes 'Jundallah al-Khalifa') or JaK, meaning 'Soldiers of the Caliphate', claimed responsibility for two 31 October 2011 blasts that killed one civilian in Atyrau, Kazakhstan. The attack was said to be a warning against the government of

⁵ "Obrashchenie Kazakhstanskogo dzhamaata 'Ansaru-d-din'," *Hunafa.com*, 10 November 2010, 1:01, <http://hunafa.com/?p=3839> and Gordon M. Hahn, "Kazakhstan Jamaat 'Anasru-d-din' Issues Call to Jihad," *IIPER*, No. 30, 29 November 2010.

⁶ "Vopros o zakonnosti voennikh deistvii v Kazakhstane," *Hunafa.com*, 18 March 2011, 1:01, <http://hunafa.com/?p=4831#more-4831>; "Vopros o zakonnosti voennikh deistvii v Kazakhstane," *Kavkaz tsentr*, 19 March 2011, 12:16, www.kavkazcenter.com/russ/content/2011/03/19/80081.shtml; and Gordon M. Hahn, "Shintiki Fatwa on the Permissibility and Obligation to Carry Out Jihad in Kazakhstan," *IIPER*, No. 37, 30 March 2011.

⁷ Kazakhstan Suicide Bombing Puts Spotlight on Western Regions," *Eurasianet.org*, 24 May 2011, 2:10, www.eurasianet.org/node/63549; "Two die in Kazakhstan car blast," AFP, 24 May 2011, <http://news.smh.com.au/breaking-news-world/two-die-in-kazakhstan-car-blast-20110524-1flzk.html>; and "Suicide Bomber has Shahid Belt in Blast in Kazakhstan," *RETWA*, 17 May 2011, www.retwa.com/home.cfm?articleId=11372. The first blast occurred near the security services headquarters in Aqtobe and was committed by a 25-year-old Rakhimzhan Makhatov in Aqtobe and injured three people, including a member of the security services. Makhatov reportedly wore a suicide bomber's vest filled with explosives. Makhatov had previously committed crimes, was part of an organized criminal group, had converted to Islam on the demands of his fiancé, and reportedly joined an underground Islamist group to which she belonged. "Kazakh City Hit By Suicide Blast, First Known Attack Of Its Kind," *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty*, 17 May 2011, http://www.rferl.org/content/kazakhstan_suicide_bomber/24177028.html and "Suicide bomber attacks Kazakh secret police HQ," *Telegraph*, 17 May 2011, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/asia/kazakhstan/8518895/Suicide-bomber-attacks-Kazakh-secret-police-HQ.html>. The second attack, a car bomb, occurred outside the Kazakh security service detention facility in the capitol city of Astana and killed two, but authorities quickly began casting doubt on the version that this second explosion was indeed a terrorist attack. "Blast Kills Two Outside Kazakh Security Service Building," *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty*, 24 May 2011 09:02, www.rferl.org/content/blast_outside_security_service_building_kazakh_capital/24184422.html.

⁸ Two of the four men received 14-year jail terms and the other two, who were the leaders, were sentenced to life in prison. "Kazakhstan Imposes Tougher Measures to Stem the Rise of Religious Extremism," *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, 21 October 2011, <http://soc.kuleuven.be/iieb/cee/aggregator?page=5>; "Kazakhs Sentenced For Islamic Extremism And Shoot-Out With Police," *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty*, 7 October 2011, www.rferl.org/content/kazakhs_sentenced_for_islamic_extremism/24351916.html; Yelena Altman, "Four Sentenced for Jihadi Attacks in Kazakhstan," *IIPER*, No. 46, 31 October 2011.

Kazakhstan to repeal a recent ban on prayer in state institutions.⁹ Kazakhstani security captured three perpetrators alleged to be followers of the CE GV's notorious suicide attack operative Sheik Said Abu Saad Buryatskii.¹⁰ As IIPER readers will know, Buryatskii, born Aleksandr Tikhomirov and a Buryat-Russian, was based in Ingushetiya with the GV but worked closely with the CE's suicide operations jamaat, the Riyadus Salikhiin Martyrs Birgade (RSMB), until his demise at the hand of Russian forces in March 2010.¹¹ Kazakhstani authorities were said to have been aware of the creation in summer 2009 of a jamaat comprised of several Kazakhstani citizens for purposes of unleashing jihad in the country.¹² On 12 November 2011 there was a series of attacks across Kazakhstan. The most deadly occurred in the southern city of Taraz (Dzhambul) and killed seven people. The man responsible for this attack is 34-year-old, Maksut Kariyev, a Kazakhi citizen.¹³ Other incidents on that same day around Kazakhstan have led authorities to believe that Kariyev was part of a larger plot. Another bombing attempt also in Taraz was foiled that day. A checkpoint attack and another shootout between two policemen were not.¹⁴

In December 2011, the CE's main website *Kavkaz tseñtr* reported on the claim of responsibility for last year's series of attacks in Kazakhstan by the Kazakh-staffed and Waziristan-based jihadi 'Jund al-Khalifat' or JaK. The JaK claimed responsibility for the December 3rd clash with Kazakhstani security forces in southern Kazakhstan and threatened Russia with attacks for its alleged "call for the murder of the Muslims of Kazakhstan."¹⁵ Thus, Kazakhstan mujahedin indeed have been emerging within the global jihadi revolutionary movement, training and operating in Waziristan, Pakistan alongside mujahedin from Turkey and other Muslim countries.

Indeed, in November 2011 CE websites posted two videos featuring Kazkhstani mujahedin based with the IJU in Waziristan. One was an inspirational videotape produced by Badr al-Tawhid, the media arm of the Pakistan-based Islamic Jihad Union (IJU), an offshoot of the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) active across Central Asia and in recent years internationally. Like the CE, both organizations are allied with the

⁹ "Kazakhstan: The responsibility for the bombings in Atyrau took the "Soldiers of the Caliphate"," *Fergana News*, 1 November 2011, www.fergananews.com/news.php?id=17570&mode=snews.

¹⁰ "Kazakh Officials Say Terrorist Group Involved In Atyrau Bombings," *Radio Free Europe/ Radio Liberty (RFERL)*, 9 November 2011, www.rferl.org/content/kazakh_officials_say_terrorist_group_involved_in_atyrau_bombings/24385923.html.

¹¹ Gordon M. Hahn, "Sheik Said Abu Saad Buryatskii: New Basaev of the Caucasus," *Islam, Islamism, and Politics in Eurasia Report*, No. 1, 3 November 2009, www.mii.edu/media/view/19011/original/KAVKAZJIHAD_MonTREPsite_BuryatskiiArticle_3.doc.

¹² "Kazakh Officials Say Terrorist Group Involved In Atyrau Bombings."

¹³ "Kazakhstan: The terrorist underground is, and it does not intend to sit idly by," *Fergana News*, 23 November 2011, www.fergananews.com/article.php?id=7183 and Yelena Altman and Gordon M. Hahn, "Jihad Comes in Force to Kazakhstan," *IIPER*, No. 48, 12 December 2011.

¹⁴ According to *Fergana News*, Kariyev first shot two employees of the Department of National Security Committee of Dzhambul region, then attacked the owner of a Mazda-626, stole the vehicle, and continued to a gun shop. There, he killed a security guard and fatally wounded a passerby. After picking up semi-automatic weapons, a "Saiga" and CZ", and ammunition, he managed to kill two police officers. Kariyev continued home where he took an RPG-26 and arrived at the regional department of the National Security Committee. There, he shot at the walls and windows of the building. After 12 hours and 45 minutes of running loose and managing to wound two more officers, Kariyev was finally detained. However, while being arrested he was able to detonate an explosive device killing both himself and the arresting officer. "Kazakhstan: suicide bombers carried out a series of attacks in Taraz. Seven people were killed," *Fergana News*, 14 November 2011, www.fergananews.com/news.php?id=17619&mode=snews.

¹⁵ "Dzhundallah al-Khalihat o boe v Yuzhnom Kazakhstane," *Kavkaz tseñtr*, 9 December 2011, 18:35, www.kavkazcenter.com/russ/content/2011/12/09/87270.shtml and see Gordon M. Hahn, "Islamic Brigade 'Jundallah Al-Khalifat' Claims Responsibility for Kazakhstan Attacks," *IIPER*, No. 50, 25 January 2012.

global jihadi revolutionary movement and Al Qa`ida. Both videos are combined in a single video titled ‘Appeal of the Kazakh Mujahedin Taking Part in the Jihad to the Muslims of Kazakhstan’ (*Obrashchenie Kazakskikh mudzhakhidov, uchastvuyushikh v Dzhikhade, k musul'manam Kazakhstana*). The video of the *obrashchenie* disappeared from the right-hand video bar on the CE’s main website Kavkaz tsentr before it could be downloaded by IIPER. The first video introduces some 10-15 mujahedin, some identified as shakhids. Most are identified by film subtitles as coming from Kazakhstan. Others were identified as coming from Uzbekistan, Turkey, and “East Turkestan,” that is Uighuristan or Xingjiang. The second video is an appeal (*obrashchenie*) to the Muslims of Kazakhstan, in which an Russian- and Arabic-speaking amir, seated with five other fighters, says that although the jamaat takes part in military operations in Afghanistan, its main sphere of interest is Central Asia, in particular Kazakhstan, for which they are preparing mujahedin. He extends a special greeting to the mujahedin of the CE, noting that they have chosen an amir and fight on the path of Allah. The Kazakh amir emphasizes that although the CE mujahedin hail from different North Caucasus republics, they have united ideologically and asks why the mujahedin of Central Asia have not been able to do the same.¹⁶ All of the above suggests the possibility of a joint CE-IJU-JaK plot to assassinate Putin.

There is strong evidence of CE-IJU ties.¹⁷ Numerous Caucasus and CE fighters have trained and fought with the IJU in Waziristan, where there are numerous Central Asian fighters. Some have fought in the Caucasus, gone train with the IJU in Waziristan, and returned to fight for the CE.¹⁸ Some analysts even assert that the IJU’s formation had a connection with developments involving the North Caucasus and the Taliban. The Norwegian Defense Research Institute, for example, has suggested that the Taliban were pressured by various countries to withdraw jihadis from Xinjiang, Pakistan, and the North Caucasus, who ended up with the IMU fighters who had fled from Uzbekistan and Tajikistan into northern Afghanistan.¹⁹ The Libyan Abu Laith al-Libi, an important field commander of Osama bin Laden, functioned as the Central Asian envoy of Al Qa`ida and often facilitated communication between the IJU, Al Qa`ida, and other jihadi groups, probably including the

¹⁶ See Gordon M. Hahn, “IJU Video Appeal from Kazakhstani Mujahedin in Waziristan,” *IIPER*, No. 49, 30 December 2011.

¹⁷ For a complete overview of CE-IJU ties see Gordon M. Hahn, “More Evidence of CE Ties to the Global Jihadist ‘Islamic Jihad Union,’” *IIPER*, No. , 45, 10 october 2011.

¹⁸ For example, the website of the CE’s Dagestani network, the Dagestan Vilaiyat (DV) *VDagestan.info*, praised a DV mujahed killed fighting in Dagestan, ‘Abu Khattab’ Magomed Bagilov, who underwent training with the AQ-tied global jihadist organization Islamic Jihad Union (IJU) based in northern Waziristan, Pakistan after receiving religious education in Egypt. According to *VDagestan.info*, after hearing of Bagilov’s qualities, Rasul Makasharipov, the amir of the jihadist Jannat and then Shariat Jamaats in 2003-2005 pursued Bagilov and brought him to Islam himself. He then began fighting with Murad Lakhiyalov, a well-known Dagestani mujahed, who was killed circa 2006-2007. Bagilov was arrested and almost convinced to give up jihad until he heard his jailers celebrating Makasharipov’s death in 2006. After his release from prison, he went to Egypt to receive Islamic “knowledge” and then went to Waziristan, Pakistan and trained with the IJU, an offshoot of the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU), both having close ties with the Taliban and Al Qa`ida. After returning to his homeland he became the naib of the Makhachkala Jamaat’a amir Khalid and, according to the site, made “a large contribution in the change of tactics of urban fighting as well as the general strategy of jihad in Dagestan.” Bagilov was killed on 29 September 2010. “Neskol’ko slov o brate Khattabe (Magomed Bagilov),” *VDagestan.info*, 31 July 2011,

<http://vdagestan.info/2011/07/31/%d0%bd%d0%b5%d1%81%d0%ba%d0%be%d0%bb%d1%8c%d0%ba%d0%be-%d1%81%d0%bb%d0%be%d0%b2-%d0%be-%d0%b1%d1%80%d0%b0%d1%82%d0%b5-%d1%85%d0%b0%d1%82%d1%82%d0%b0%d0%b1%d0%b5-%d0%bc%d0%b0%d0%b3%d0%be%d0%bc%d0%b5-2/>.

¹⁹ Einar Wigen, Islamic Jihad Union: al-Qaida’s Key to the Turkic World? *Norwegian Defence Research Establishment (FFI)*, February 23, 2009.

CE.²⁰ In May 2007, the IJU's then amir Najmuddin Jalolov (aka Ebu Yahya Muhammad Fatih), killed in a CIA drone strike in Mir Ali, northern Waziristan on September 14, 2009, confirmed in an interview that the IJU had been in contact and had "also been working on our common targets together with Caucasian mujahedeens."²¹ In March 2011, as reported in IIPER No. 38, the IJU's media department 'Badr At-Tawhid' sent a seven-minute video message to the CE mujahedin from the IJU's amirs in the 'land of Horosan', Afghanistan. Three IJU amirs in the video – Abu Abdallah first, followed by Salahudin, and finally Ubaydullah – praised the CE mujahedin praising for joining the global jihad and noted: "In our jamaat, there are many brothers who were trained or fought on the lands of the Caucasus Emirate."²² Over the last eight years the IJU has carried out operations in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Central Asia, and Western Europe. Why not Russia?

Time's Simon Shuster, in a article that represented the ubiquitous prejudiced assessment ridiculing the possibility of a CE plot to assassinate Putin, claimed that the CE has no record of using operatives from and based in Europe.²³ This is not true. Osmaev's originating from London before traveling to Odessa is not atypical of CE operations of late in that it has begun to rely on Europe as a rear base for raising funds, recruiting fighters, and even partnering in international plots. On November 23rd, eleven suspects were arrested in Belgium, the Netherlands, Germany, Spain, Morocco, and Saudi Arabia on suspicion of planning terrorist attacks in Belgium and on NATO targets, recruiting "jihadist candidates" and financing the Caucasus Emirate. Three Chechens were part of this group organized by the 'Shariah4Belgium' group that also included several Moroccans.²⁴ In April 2011 a cell of Dagestanis, along with Bulgarians and Moldovans, tied to the CE's Dagestan network, the Dagestani Vilaiyat, was uncovered in the Czeck Republic. The Dagestani cell was also recruiting and raising funds for the CE and was allegedly planning attacks in an unidentified third country - that is, not in the Czeck Republic or Russia. The Czech police reported that some of the group's members visited training camps in Afghanistan and Pakistan and were once based in Berlin, Germany, suggesting ties to Al Qa`ida and perhaps to the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU).²⁵ The alleged CE Putin assassination plot fits the IJU and IMU practice of recruiting Europeans, in particular Germans, to carry out international terrorist attacks in Europe and the CE's new activity in Europe. Therefore, it is perfectly possible that the IJU using its new-found Kazkahstanis would team up with the CE in an attempt to kill on the globali jihadi revolutionary alliance's most hated enemies.

²⁰ Guido Steinberg, *Die Islamische Jihad-Union: Zur Internationalisierung des usbekischen Jihadismus*, *Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik (Deutsches Institut fuer Internationale Politik und Sicherheit)*, March 2008.

²¹ NEFA Foundation web site, www.nefafoundation.org; NEFA release date, 23 September 2009, original date 31 May 2007 and Saoud Mekhennet and Michael Moss, "Europeans Are Being Trained in Pakistani Terrorism Camps, Officials Fear," *New York Times*, 10 September 2007, p. A8.

²² "IJU: Message from the Mujahideen of the Khorasan to the Caucasus Emirate," *Kavkaz Jihad Blogspot*, 14 March 2011, <http://kavkaz-jihad.blogspot.com/2011/03/message-of-mujahideen-from-khorasan-to.html>; "Video Badr at-Tawheed "Mensaje de los mujahidines del Jorasán al Emirato del Cáucaso," *Jihad-e-Informacion*, March 2011, <http://jihad-e-informacion.blogspot.com/2011/03/video-badr-at-tawheed-mensaje-de-los.html>; and Gordon M. Hahn, "Islamic Jihad Union: Message From the Mujahedin of the Khorasan to the CE," IIPER, No. 38, 15 April 2011.

²³ Simon Shuster, "Putin Assassination Plot: Credible Threat or Pre-Election Ploy?," *Time*, 27 February 2012, www.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,2107717,00.html.

²⁴ See Gordon M. Hahn, *Getting the Caucasus Emirate Right*, Center for Strategic and International Studies Russia and Eurasia Program Report, September 2011, http://csis.org/files/publication/110930_Hahn_GettingCaucasusEmirateRt_Web.pdf. For more detail see Gordon M. Hahn, "The CE and the Belgium Terrorist Plot," No. 30, 29 November 2010 and Gordon M. Hahn, "CE-Related Belgium Plot," IIPER, No. 31, 17 December 2010.

²⁵ See Gordon M. Hahn, *Getting the Caucasus Emirate Right*, Center for Strategic and International Studies Russia and Eurasia Program Report, September 2011, http://csis.org/files/publication/110930_Hahn_GettingCaucasusEmirateRt_Web.pdf. For more detail see Gordon M. Hahn, "Dagestan Vilaiyat Cell Uncovered in the Czeck Republic," IIPER, No. 40, 15 May 2011.

The CE has more than a strong motive to kill Putin. CE propaganda’s vitriol is singularly focused on Putin as compared with other ‘infidels.’ According to Russia’s Regnum news agency there have been at least three previously reported plots to assassinate uncovered in the past. One involved Chechen separatists, another Al Qa`ida, and another of unidentified origins, allegedly.²⁶ Moreover, killing Putin would be a major boon to the CE politically, its image and status within global jihadi revolutionary alliance, and in terms of its fund-raising and recruiting efforts. Finally, there has been no statement from Umarov refuting the claim he masterminded the alleged plot.

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## **CE-TIED JIHADI JAMAAT ALLEGEDLY UNCOVERED IN WESTERN SIBERIA**

A jihadist jamaat possibly tied to the CE was uncovered in Novosibirsk located in southwestern Siberia. The Novosibirsk Jamaat allegedly included 11 members, who were detained on March 3<sup>rd</sup> in a joint FSB-MVD operation. Russia’s National Anti-Terrorism Committee (NAK) reported that were involved in theft and extortion, sent the funds to leaders of the CE mujahedin in Dagestan and Kabardino-Balkariya, and were planning a series of terrorist attacks on law enforcement personnel.<sup>27</sup>

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CE GALGAICHE VILAIYAT QADI ABU DUDZHAN KILLED

The command of the CE’s Ingushetiya Republic-based network, the Galgaiche Vilaiyat (GV), announced that its Shariah Court qadi Abu Dudzhan was killed along with two other mujahedin on 27 January 2012 in Ingushetiya’s village Ekazhevo.²⁸ The announcement of Abu Dudzhan’s demise follows that of the GV’s amir ‘Adam’ Dzhamaleil (Jamaleil) Mutaliev, who was also killed on January 27th and also in Ekazhevo, as reported in IIPER No. 51. Thus, it appears GV amir and qadi were likely killed in the same operation. This should further complicate matters for the already devastated GV network. As IIPER has reported on extensively, the GV has been in steady decline since the death in March 2010 of the CE’s chief operative in period of 2008-2010, the Ingushetiya-based mujahed Sheikh Sayid Abu Saad Buryatskii, and the GV’s founding amir and CE military amir ‘Magas’ Ali Taziyev in June 2010. Abu Dudzhan had maintained a higher profile than Mutaliev, producing several long video statements (see IIPER No. 49).

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## **NEW VIOLENT JIHADI INCIDENT IN TATARSTAN**

On January 12<sup>th</sup> a potential jihadi terrorist was killed in Nurlat Raion, some 20 miles from Kazan. The incident occurred after a citizen of Uzbekistan, 37-year old Rustam Yusupov, accidentally detonated a bomb he was constructing on December 10<sup>th</sup> in Memdel’ in Vysokygorsk Raion, setting off a fire in a house where two

<sup>26</sup> “Pokusheniem na Putina pytalis’ destabilizirovat’ situatsiyu nakanune vyborov: deputat Gosdumy RF,” *Regnum.ru*, 27 February 2012, 12:37, [www.regnum.ru/news/1503154.html](http://www.regnum.ru/news/1503154.html).

<sup>27</sup> “V Novosibirske zadershany uchastniki ekstremistskoi gruppy,” *Regnum.ru*, 3 March 2012, 16:55, [www.regnum.ru/news/1505599.html](http://www.regnum.ru/news/1505599.html) “V Novosibirske zaderzhana banda ekstremistov i iz”yat bol’shoi arsenal oruzhiya,” *Pervyi Kanal*, 3 March 2012, 18:03, <http://www.1tv.ru/news/crime/200479>.

<sup>28</sup> “Zayavlenie komandovaniyamudzhakhidov Vilaiyata Galgaiche,” *Hunafa.com*, 5 March 2012, 9:09, <http://hunafa.com/2012/03/zayavlenie-komandovaniya-mudzhakhidov-vilayata-galgajche-7/>.

elderly Uzbeks lived. When police arrived, they found a technology for explosive devices and remote detonator, which tipped them off as to the possible terrorism-related nature of the incident. When the devices were handled, another detonation occurred severing the hand of a police sapper. Police questioning revealed that the elderly Uzbek couple's son had arrived on a visit along with his wife and two children on January 7<sup>th</sup>. The family abandoned the house after the incident. The police tracked down Yusupov two days later, when he allegedly met them by stabbing one officer several times. Yusupov was shot and killed, and the policeman was hospitalized with wounds to the throat. Yusupov's wife Leniza was arrested and turns out to be a native of Nizhnekamsk, an growing Salafi hotbed.<sup>29</sup>

The family moved from Uzbekistan to Memdel' in 2009 and, although no one in the family worked, purchased one of the largest houses in the village; it formerly belonged to the local kolkhoz chairman. Rustam and his father regularly attended mosque for Friday prayers and traveled to Kazan but had few friends, said the local imam. According to Tatarstan police, Vysokygorsk Raion is the locus of 'Sheikh Umar' Airat Shakirov's Salafist network and the Rustam and Leniza were members of Shakirov's jamaat and were wanted in Uzbekistan for Islamist extremist activity.<sup>30</sup>

As IIPER readers may recall, although several alleged jihadi cells had been uncovered in Tatarstan prior to 2010, the first case in which violence was employed occurred in November 2010 when security forces killed three armed Muslims. Various reports emerged as to their contacts, but the most dominant version held that they were members of the largely peaceful Hizb ut-Tahrir Islami (HTI or the Islamic Liberation Party) that is under a ban in Russia.<sup>31</sup> In winter of 2010-2011 a self-proclaimed jihadi group apparently emerged seeking incorporation into the CE. The self-declared Idel-Ural Vilaiyat (IUV) appealed to CE amir Doku 'Abu Usman' Umarov for assistance in setting up training camps, training, supplies, and carrying out operations. The groups claimed to be based in the Bashkortostan's southern Ural Mountains and declared their alleged sovereignty over some 20 regions of Russia in the Volg and Urals mega-regions, including Tatarstan as well as Bashkortostan.<sup>32</sup> Nevertheless, there was no jihadi-related violence in Tatarstan in 2011.

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## ANNOUNCEMENT

**The CSIS Russia and Eurasia Program published a special report in August by Dr. Gordon M. Hahn, "Getting the Caucasus Emirate Right" which IIPER readers may find of interest. It can be downloaded at [http://csis.org/files/publication/110930\\_Hahn\\_GettingCaucasusEmirateRt\\_Web.pdf](http://csis.org/files/publication/110930_Hahn_GettingCaucasusEmirateRt_Web.pdf).**

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<sup>29</sup> Anton Shishkin and Aleksei Sorokin, "Terrorizm respublikanskogo masshtaba," *Kazan Week*, 13 January 2012, 09:45, <http://kazanweek.ru/article/189/> and "Terrorist po schastlivoi sluchainosti," *Gazeta.ru*, 13 January 2012, 18:59, [www.gazeta.ru/social/2012/01/13/3962001.shtml](http://www.gazeta.ru/social/2012/01/13/3962001.shtml).

<sup>30</sup> Anton Shishkin and Aleksei Sorokin, "Terrorizm respublikanskogo masshtaba," *Kazan Week*, 13 January 2012, 09:45, <http://kazanweek.ru/article/189/>.

<sup>31</sup> Gordon M. Hahn, "Three Mujahedin Reportedly Killed in Tatarstan," *IIPER*, No. 31, 17 December 2010.

<sup>32</sup> Gordon M. Hahn, "Jihadi Stirrings in the 'Idel-Ural Vilaiyat'?", *IIPER*, No. 37, 30 March 2011.

## **ABOUT IIPER**

**Islam, Islamism and Politics in Eurasia Report (IIPER) is a project of the Russia and Eurasia Program at the Center for Strategic and International Studies. It focuses on all politically-relevant issues involving or bearing on Islam, Islamism, and Jihadism in Russia and Eurasia writ large. All issues of IIPER will soon be permanently archived at <http://csis.org/program/russia-and-eurasia-program>. All back issues temporarily remain archived at: [www.miis.edu/academics/faculty/ghahn/report](http://www.miis.edu/academics/faculty/ghahn/report).**

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**IIPER welcomes submissions on any aspect of Islamic, Islamist, or Jihadist politics in Eurasia as well as financial contributions to support the project. For related inquiries or to request to be included on IIPER's mailing list, please contact:**

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