SAFERWORLD

North Caucasus: views from within

People's perspectives on peace and security

March 2012

North Caucasus: views from within

People's perspectives on peace and security

Acknowledgements

The People's Peacemaking Perspectives project

The People's Peacemaking Perspectives project is a joint initiative implemented by Conciliation Resources and Saferworld and financed under the European Commission's Instrument for Stability. The project provides European Union institutions with analysis and recommendations based on the opinions and experiences of local people in a range of countries and regions affected by fragility and violent conflict.

Contents

North Caucasus

This map is intended for illustrative purposes only. Saferworld takes no position on whether this representation is legally or politically valid.

Glossary of terms

DUM	Spiritual Board of Muslims, (or muftiyat)
EU	European Union
FMS	Federal Migration Service
FSB	Federal Security Service
IDP	Internally displaced person
KBR	Republic of Kabardino-Balkaria
Krai	Large region, territory
Mufti	Higher Islamic scholar and head of DUM
NCFD	North Caucasus Federal District
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
Obkom	Communist Party Oblast Committee
OMON	Police Special Troops
PPP	People's Peacemaking Perspectives
Quaziyat	Sharia court
Teip	Patronymic association among Vainakh group
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

Executive summary

THE NORTH CAUCASUS REGION extends eastwards from the Black Sea to the Caspian Sea, adjoining the north slope of the Greater Caucasus Mountains in their over 1200-kilometre arc between the two seas. It marks the south western boundary of the Russian Federation and includes seven federal subjects. The North Caucasus is one of Europe's most ethnically and linguistically diverse regions and is home to a veritable multitude of nationalities. It is a volatile region that has seen two wars – in Chechnya – both errupting in the 1990s, and is also confronted by ongoing challenges of terrorism and social disparity. A key feature of the current situation in the North Caucasus is the striking contrast between apparent stability on the surface, from a socio-political viewpoint, and the sharp underlying struggle between actors vying with one another for power, economic advantage, and forms of leverage. It is a context that makes for an uneasy environment for local populations.

This study addresses the mix of challenges and opportunities in the region, and specifically how these are viewed from local perspectives. It looks at the involvement of a variety of stakeholders in dealing with challenges in the region: local populations, republic leaderships, federal authorities and, where appropriate, considers what the international community might be able to offer. With regard to the approach of the federal authorities, four key concerns are evident, centring on security, the need to respond to growing Islamism across the North Caucasus, development, and how to manage multi-ethnicity within the Russian Federation. Two extra-regional events, one recent – the recognition of South Ossetia and Abkhazia by Moscow in 2008 – and one upcoming – the Sochi Winter Olympic Games in 2014 – arguably frame the security situation in the North Caucasus and certainly keep political attention sharply focused.

The current research project is based on a series of group discussions with ordinary people in the North Caucasus and input from researchers in some of the republics, and also involves the efforts of international and Russian experts on the region. Perspectives emerging during the discussion groups have been reinforced by separate interviews with local officials and experts in the North Caucasus.

The study is broadly in three sections: regional analysis and background; themes from the discussion groups; and some tailored recommendations. The list of recommendations set out at the end of the report is primarily addressed to federal and republic authorities, but also contains some addressed to the European Union (EU)/ international community.

The research team identified three priorities, focusing on the need to: 1) promote a climate that strengthens resilience against ideological extremism; 2) engage with the problems of young people; and 3) improve governance, including in the security and justice sectors. On youth in particular, the report recommends that the authorities

design programmes which are engaging and intellectually appealing to young people, using educational establishments and civil society partners.

Specifically to the EU and international community the report highlights the following recommendations:

■ Support not only human rights work which deals with the consequences of radicalism and with prosecutions, but also sponsor a preventative and developmental agenda which can help to address the root causes.

■ Share experience and know-how with Russia on conflict-prevention measures and on community-based approaches to security and justice provision.

■ Support development of local civil society by:

☐ supporting North Caucasian civil society actors in networking and co-operating with non-governmental organisations (NGOs) from outside the region; and building local NGO capacity

☐ continuing to provide assistance towards free legal aid centres for the population in Chechnya.

1

Introduction

THE PRESENT STUDY forms part of the 'People's Peacemaking Perspectives' (PPP) programme, undertaken jointly by Saferworld and Conciliation Resources, two UK-based international NGOs, from October 2010 to March 2012. It consists of 18 studies of countries or regions of the world affected by conflict or instability, and is sponsored by the EU's Instrument for Stability. It is based on a participatory approach, involving communities outside policy circles in reflection on the issues affecting them; also local experts and decision makers.

The research project *The North Caucasus: views from within* focuses on issues of social difference, such as ethnicity, religion, generation and migration and the challenges arising from these. It considers local perspectives on these challenges; how people seek to address them; and what they consider needs to be done to resolve them. It involved the collaboration of international and Russian experts, including researchers from the North Caucasus, and institutional partnership between the Institute of Oriental Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences and Saferworld. The work focused on five republics in the North Caucasus: Chechnya, Ingushetia, North Ossetia, Dagestan, and Kabardino-Balkaria.[1]

Qualitative methods of social research were chosen for the study in order to stay true to the participatory approach.[2] The methodology sought to gather voices and perspectives from society which were summarised and analysed by the case study authors. The aim was to facilitate dialogue between grassroots society and those in power who seldom hear views from society. Altogether 30 focus groups and 50 key informant interviews were held, in which about 250 respondents from five republics participated. Focus groups and interviews were conducted throughout Autumn and Winter 2011. For further information on methodology, please see Annex one.

Republic	Focus groups	Interviews
Kabardino-Balkaria	7 (KBR), 2 (Moscow)	8
North Ossetia	6	13
Chechnya	6	11
Ingushetia	7	10
Dagestan	3	8

1 In addition to this report, case studies on community perspectives in these five republics are available on the Saferworld website. Please see the acknowledgements section for hyperlinks. Throughout this report, references are made to these case studies.

2 For an explanation of qualitative methods see in Ritchie J, and Lewis J (eds.), *Qualitative Research Practice: a Guide for Social Science Students and Researchers*, (London, Sage, 2003).

2

The North Caucasus in modern Russia: twenty years of political history

A complex landscape

THE NORTH CAUCASUS FEDERAL DISTRICT (NCFD) consists of seven federal subjects: Chechnya, Dagestan, Ingushetia, Kabardino-Balkaria, Karachaevo-Cherkessia North Ossetia-Alania and Stavropol Krai. The first six enjoy the status of autonomous republics and are populated by Caucasian ethnic groups, and Stavropol Krai has a predominantly ethnic Russian population. Adygeya is surrounded by Krasnodar Krai and is administratively separated from the North Caucasus, as it belongs to a different federal subject of Southern Russia.

The North Caucasus is home to a relatively small proportion of Russia's overall population, and there is great disparity in size between the different republics. The region is populated by representatives of Caucasian, Turkic, Persian and Slavic ethnic groups, with the Chechens constituting the largest group. Peoples of the North Caucasus who constitute minorities in the Federation form majorities in their autonomous republics. Three types of minority groups can be identified in the North Caucasus: Russians and other Slavs, South Caucasians, and North Caucasians who live in other republics than their own.

Population of the surveyed North Caucasian republics, 2010 census

Chechnya	1,268,989
Dagestan	2,910,249
Ingushetia	412,529
Kabardino-Balkaria	859,939
North Ossetia	712,980

The republics are heavily subsidised from the federal budget. Despite these subsidies and tax breaks, economies remain weak. Formal employment is lower than in the rest of the Federation, although many people are occupied in the informal economy or with casual labour, and have relatives in labour migration elsewhere in the country who send money home. The leadership of Dagestan sought to justify the continuous need for federal subsidies by claiming that the precarious security situation prevents the economy from picking up. Moscow is becoming less sympathetic to this argument.

In the words of Prime Minister Vladimir Putin, "maybe, it (the situation in Dagestan) is so complicated because the conditions for the development of small and medium enterprises are not being created."[3]

Thus, a vicious circle unfolds: security problems diminish socio-economic development, while diminished socio-economic development increases security problems. Unlike his predecessors, the President of Dagestan, Magomedsalam Magomedov, admitted in his first address to the People's Assembly, "in terms of labour productivity, we lag behind the Russian average 2.3 times. We work worse and live worse. Only federal subsidies prevent us from feeling the full impact of this."[4] At the same time, the region is the homeland of some of the richest people in the Russian Federation, such as billionaire oligarch and Federation Council member Suleiman Kerimov – a Lezgin from Dagestan – and brothers Mikhail and Sait-Salam Gutseriyevs from Ingushetia. Mikhail Gutseriyev is co-owner of Russneft and the brothers own the most lucrative commercial real estate in Moscow.[5]

Twenty years of insecurity

The North Caucasus has been the most volatile region of the Russian Federation since the Soviet breakup. Instability unfolded in waves, as periods of relative tranquillity were followed by new bouts of hostilities, never allowing the federal centre to relax. The region remains the terrain of Moscow's most acute security concerns, both in terms of internal instability and the region's potential to export violence into the rest of the Federation.

In the last decade security conditions have improved, albeit from a very low base. The peaks of insecurity, when the majority of terrorist acts took place, happened in 2000–2005 and again in 2010–2011. The region experienced major disasters, such as the tragedy of a school siege in Beslan in September 2004 where over 350 were killed; the explosion of two aeroplanes in mid-air in August 2004, killing all 90 people on board; and an armed raid on police, administration and public buildings in Nalchik in 2005.

The assassinations of rebel leaders Khattab, in 2002, and Shamil Basayev, in 2006, apparently had an impact on the security situation, with both periods witnessing a slowdown in jihadi activities. Only seven civilians were killed in 2007 in two separate incidents, with two bomb explosions on two coaches. However, a new leader – Said Abu Saad Buryatsky (real name Alexander Tikhomirov, born in Buryatia) – appeared in 2008 and revived the notion of the 'Caucasus Emirate'. 2008 brought more civilian deaths: in November a female suicide bomber blew herself up in Vladikavkaz on a public bus, killing 12 passengers, and two people died in an explosion at the beach in the Sochi region. In 2009 instability picked up again: 25 civilians died in a major explosion in Nazran in Ingushetia.

The most worrying thing for Moscow remains its inability to prevent attacks in the capital and in Russia's heartland. North Caucasus Islamist militants struck twice in the Moscow Metro underground system, in 2004 and 2010, killing 41 and 45 respectively, and in 2009 a bomb derailed the Nevsky Express train between Moscow and St. Petersburg, killing 26. Another explosive device planted on a railway went off in St. Petersburg in February 2010, this time with no civilian casualties. A devastating suicide attack at Moscow Domodedovo Airport on 24 January 2011 killed 37 people and injured over 120.

In the North Caucasus itself, low-key warfare persists, becoming so routine that it barely attracts outside attention.[6] In 2009 the Federal Security Service (FSB) claimed

3   Dzutsev V, 'Russian Leadership Forced to Personally Monitor the Situation in the North Caucasus', *The Jamestown Foundation* North Caucasus Analysis, vol 11, 6 July 2010, accessed 24 September 2010.

4   Magomedsalam Magomedov, 'Послание Президента Республики Дагестан Народному Собранию Республики Дагестан,' 29 June 2010, http://www.riadagestan.ru/interview/2010/06/29/296/, accessed 24 September 2010.

5   Nikolay Mikhalev, 'Gutseriyev came close to Kremlin,' *RBK Daily*, no. 238, 23 December 2011.

6   For coverage of *jihadism*, see Gordon Hahn's 'Islam, Islamism and Politics in Eurasia,' project of the *Monterey Terrorism and Research and Education Program* (MonTREP) at the Monterey Institute for International Studies (MIIS), Monterey, California http://www.miis.edu/academics/faculty/ghahn/report

that security forces had prevented 81 terrorist attacks in the region and arrested 782 'members of illegal armed groups'.[7] Whatever the security services' efforts might be, the situation continued unabated in 2010. Neighbouring Stavropol Krai also suffered. On 27 May a blast near a theatre in Stavropol killed six civilians, and in August an explosion outside a café in Pyatigorsk injured 20.

During 2011 security deteriorated in Dagestan. In January a car exploded outside a café in Dagestan's capital Makhachkala and on 22 August at least 15 people were hurt when three bomb explosions hit a supermarket.[8] Eight people were killed in a car bombing in Dagestan's Levashinsky District on 28 September.[9] Distinguished Muslim clerics came under heavy attack. On 7 June, Maksud Sadikov, a member of the Council of Muftis and Rector of the Institute of Theology and International Relations, was murdered; Sheikh Sirazhudin Khuriksky (Israfilov) was gunned down on 28 October at his home in Tabassaran District.

A combined air- and ground troops raid in Ingushetia on 28 March 2011 killed 17 militants. In the first three months of 2011 federal forces killed 87 and detained 182 militants including five suspects in the Domodedovo Airport explosion. They also prevented 31 terrorist acts and disposed of 89 improvised explosive devices.[10] Nevertheless, such efforts to gain control through intensive security operations failed to break the stubborn insurgency. Alexei Malashenko described the current situation as a 'civil war': "no one can deny [it] now, although six months ago there was some debate. But it is a kind of a civil war where they fight among themselves and against the federal forces."[11]

Relatively stable Kabardino-Balkaria experienced an increase in violence, compelling its parliament to appeal to Moscow in February 2011 for help to combat the insurgency. The idea of turning the North Caucasus into a holiday destination proved a utopian project, as a shoulder-launched surface-to-air missile downed a helicopter-load of tourists, and as three skiers were gunned down by militants who attacked their minibus.

However, Oleg Orlov, director of Memorial, argues that Ingushetia may be overcoming a spiral of bloodshed thanks to a policy of dialogue with the public, efforts to return fighters to a peaceful life and a series of successful security operations.[12] The Ingush president, Yunus-Bek Yevkurov, claimed to have persuaded 50 fighters to return to civilian life in 2010. A policy of conciliation was introduced in Dagestan by the president, Magomedsalam Magomedov.

The situation in Chechnya, meanwhile, showed some signs of improvement, allowing civilian life, reconstruction and development to move forward. In April 2009 Moscow announced an end to its decade-long anti-terrorism campaign against militants in Chechnya, but since then has had to step up operations in Dagestan. Security in Chechnya was restored by entrusting Ramzan Kadyrov with presidential powers and removing most restraints and checks on his authority. Ramzan Kadyrov came to power surrounded by his comrades-in-arms, with whom he and his father fought against the federal forces during the first Chechen war and succeeded in accumulating significant power compared to all his predecessors. Society, in the grip of war fatigue after enduring two separate campaigns, welcomed the restoration of civilian institutions and, it would seem, is prepared to go along with the existing authority.[13]

....

7 http://en.rian.ru/russia/20091208/157152848.html, accessed 21 August 2011.

8 'At least 15 hurt in bombing in Dagestan capital Makhachkala,' 22 August 2011, http://en.rian.ru/russia/20110822/166033859.html, accessed 24 September 2011.

9 'Car bomb kills eight in Russia's Dagestan,' 28 September 2011, http://www.reuters.com/article/2011/09/28/us-russia-dagestan-bomb-idUSL5E7KS73320110928, accessed 26 December 2011.

10 12 April 2011, http://rian.ru/defense_safety/20110412/363589116.html

11 Alexei Malashenko cited at Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL) 'Terrorist Wave Raises Doubts About Moscow's North Caucasus Strategy,' 16 February 2011 http://www.rferl.org/content/doubts_about_moscow_north_caucasus_strategy/2311376.html, accessed 18 March 2011.

12 Oleg Orlov cited at RFE/RL 'Terrorist Wave Raises Doubts About Moscow's North Caucasus Strategy,' 16 February 2011, http://www.rferl.org/content/doubts_about_moscow_north_caucasus_strategy/2311376.html, accessed 18 March 2011.

13 On stabilisation in Chechnya see Anna Matveeva, 'Chechnya: Dynamics of War and Peace', *Problems of Post-Communism*, vol 54, no. 3, May/June 2007, pp 3–15.

At present there is no coherent discourse or political movement towards secular independence in the North Caucasus, implying weak links between security problems and nationalist sentiment. Rather, ideological elements prevail in the attacks. Radicalisation – which had happened as a result of the wars in Chechnya – weakened the connection to the original cause, but created linkages between groups developed during the fighting. The current phenomenon is of a less ethnically-based, but all-Caucasian movement, with stronger co-ordination between its parts and a sense of belonging to a global Islamist movement. Most Chechen fighters no longer fight for Chechen independence, but for a bigger cause which does not project clear territorial boundaries.

In 2011 the overall number of those killed or wounded in armed clashes and bombings (1,378) was about 20 percent less than in 2010 (1,710). However, the number of those killed in 2011 (750) stayed roughly at the same level as the year before (754). The decrease in frequency of physical security incidents does not necessarily indicate a lowering of tensions in the region; nor does it reflect the real picture of 2011. Overall, the situation in the region is still perceived to be tense and little has changed in that respect.[14]

Interethnic issues

The ethnic diversity of the North Caucasus is impressive, preserved throughout history by its geography, as groups lived in valleys separated by impassable mountains, preventing much interaction. The establishment of Autonomous Republics during the Soviet era fostered the link between ethnicity and territory. Dagestan, the 'Land of Mountains,' presents the most interesting case, where no dominant majority exists and 32 groups, large and small, live beside each other.

When *perestroika* and *glasnost* gave vent to ethnically-inspired grievances in the late 1980s, long-suppressed issues of contention between different Caucasian nationalities came out. Remarkably little has been resolved since the time of the Soviet breakup, and the same agendas reappear. They centre on historical rivalries to do with land, relation to territory, and erosion of identities, as well as on modern politics, such as access to government positions, distribution of federal subsidies and business opportunities. Unlike in the rest of the Federation, ethnicity emerged as a powerful political category, which defines an individual's social status, an acceptable level of claims, and access to administrative and economic resources.

There are various lines of competition between groups in Dagestan. One is between lowlanders, such as Kumyk and Nogai, and highlanders, such as Avars, Laks, Lezgins and Dargins, who were resettled from the mountains onto the lands historically inhabited by these lowland groups. Resettlement was necessitated by Soviet development projects and by the difficulties of sustaining population growth in the mountain areas. The influx of highlanders led to conflicting land claims when land in Russia became privatised. There is a simmering dispute between Chechens and Laks over Novolaksky District, from where the Chechens were deported in 1944 to Central Asia and Laks were moved into their place.[15] Coupled with religious revival and associated violence – Dagestan was historically one of the most devout places in the USSR, where the Islamic Renaissance Party was founded in the 1980s,[16] – the area developed a reputation for volatility.

The dispute between North Ossetia and Ingushetia over Prigorodny District witnessed a modestly positive dynamic, as some displaced were able to return under the state repatriation programme. Armed conflict between the two republics in 1992 led to the displacement of the Ingush from North Ossetia. Mutual animosity was aggravated by the Beslan school attack in September 2004 and severed the already minimal

14 See Kavkazskiy Uzel, 12 January 2012.
15 Matveeva A, *The North Caucasus: Russia's Fragile Borderland*, (The Royal Institute of International Affairs, London, 1999), pp 30–32.
16 For historical overview see Zelkina A, *In Quest for God and Freedom: Sufi Responses to the Russian Advance in the North Caucasus*, (NYU Press, 2000).

ties between the two neighbours. However, changes in leadership in both republics, together with reinvigorated federal support, has allowed people to start to overcome the stalemate.

Societies carefully monitor whether the federal authorities allocate an unfair advantage to another group or part of society. For instance, it was generally perceived in Ingushetia that the adoption in 2010 of federal law no. 131 on Local Self-Government Bodies 'deprived the Ingush people of the right to historical justice,' by *de facto* defining Prigorodny District as belonging to North Ossetia.[17]

The idea of separating of dual-nationality republics, conceived during the period of the Soviet breakup, is a lingering sentiment. Only the Ingush succeeded in achieving this, having broken away from Checheno-Ingushetia in 1992. Karachaevo-Cherkessia and Kabardino-Balkaria have stayed intact, but the issue is raised every now and then. Still, Svetlana Akkieva notes that after referendums on the issue of territorial division took place in both republics:

"the tenseness of the situation gradually lessened which allowed for the furthering of the idea of the impossibility of territorial division of the republics. Their official leaderships began to search for compromise methods of building multi-ethnic states, taking into account the representation of peoples in government bodies."[18]

The commonality between these diverse claims is that many Caucasian communities regard issues from a perspective of group, rather than individual, rights. Such a perspective links territory with identity, which matters when it comes to land competition or definition of administrative jurisdiction. For example, the Law on Local Self-Government no. 131 ignited passions in Kabardino-Balkaria because, just as in the case of Ingushetia, it formalised the *status quo*. In July 2010 Balkar public movements initiated a series of hunger strikes to transfer pasture lands in the vicinity of Balkar highland settlements to their administrative jurisdiction. So far, these lands have been in the shared use of the whole population of the republic, in which the Kabardins predominate.[19]

Moscow has to play the role of arbiter in intra-regional disputes. The policy so far has been to prefer that groups come to terms with each other themselves, rather than impose a solution from above, as was the case in Soviet times. North Caucasian groups, in their turn, dedicate time and resources to create lobbies in Moscow to find ways into the heart of the Russian political establishment so as to extract favourable outcomes.

Politics and governance

Under Yeltsin, Moscow's initial approach to the North Caucasus was framed by the concern that a breakaway tendency there could trigger a domino effect, exposing Russia to the same fate as the USSR. Putin's leadership sought to address the region's problems through a combination of security and development policies. At present, Moscow's efforts in the field of governance are challenged by issues of political participation and elite formation.

Political participation is a controversial topic, as the North Caucasus is a unique region of the Federation, where a degree of political competition and contestation is evident. The question is whether we can speak of participation by ordinary people, or if it is only feasible to achieve the participation of local elites. Given the social fabric of the North Caucasus, it is not unusual for a constituency to rally behind their candidate in

17 Tangiyev M, 'Миротворческие инициативы нового президента Ингушетии'. Network of Ethnological Monitoring EAWARN, 14 May 2009, http://eawarn.ru/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=246&Itemid=40, accessed 17 September 2010.

18 Akkieva A, 'The Caucasus: One or Many? A view from the region' *Nationalities Papers*, vol 36, no. 2, May 2008, pp 253–273, p 268.

19 'Хлопонин обсудил с жителями Кабардино-Балкарии земельную проблему,' 23 July 2010, http://www.kavkaz-uzel.ru/articles/171990/, accessed 18 March 2011.

formal or informal competition on the basis of a common group affiliation rather than the merits of individual contenders. As a result, earlier attempts at elections seldom led to truly democratic outcomes, but emphasised divisions between groups instead. Thus, patronage acts as an obstacle to participation: elites determine horizontally-organised bargains between vertically-organised networks.

Moscow has struggled to develop an indigenous governing cadre, capable of administrating competently and fairly, a factor that continues to affect its personnel policy in the region. Sending Russian outsiders has an advantage of their being immune to local patronage networks; but this can also make them less politically acceptable. Moreover, governing through Moscow appointees carries with it certain disagreeable colonial overtones and parallels with Russia's imperial past.

Usually, periods of anticipated leadership change and/or continuation of the incumbent in office are associated with increased instability, when power rivalries are at their height. For instance, stability in Kabardino-Balkaria deteriorated in 2010, when the term of office of the president, Arsen Kanokov, expired on 28 September. Kanokov, a Kabardin, has been the republic's president since 2005, when Vladimir Kokov, who ruled it for 15 years, resigned for health reasons.[20]

The Putin – and subsequently Putin/Medvedev – period saw a more interventionist approach signalled by the removal of Ruslan Aushev, the first president of Ingushetia in 2001. Two types of centrally-appointed leaders have emerged in the post-Yeltsin period: representatives of the dominant group with a background in security structures and a long service record elsewhere in the Federation; and economic modernisers. Characteristic examples of the first group include Ingushetia's former president, Murat Zyazikov, an ex-FSB officer, as well as the current head of Ingushetia, Yunus-Bek Yevkurov.

The Kremlin hoped that appointing modernisers would bring economic rejuvenation and better business practices, while individuals with considerable personal fortunes would be less prone to corruption. Examples include Arsen Kanokov of Kabardino-Balkaria, who had developed his business in Moscow and accumulated independent wealth before becoming President; and Boris Yebzeyev, a lawyer by background, who was appointed President of Karachaevo-Cherkessiain 2008. Despite economic success – in 2010 industrial production rose by 14 percent in the republic – the latter proved unable to retain power and was replaced by 35-year-old Rashid Temrezov after a hasty resignation in February 2011.

However, a third pattern appears to be in the making. In Chechnya and Dagestan a rise of ruling dynasties appears to be becoming an established practice, contributing to what Nikolai Petrov calls 'political archaisation' of the region. Ramzan Kadyrov in Chechnya succeeded his father, becoming president in March 2007, and is the only politician who came from outside the Soviet/Russian elite breeding system. In February 2011 President Dmitri Medvedev asked Kadyrov to stay for a second term.

Dagestan offers another case of dynastic succession. Magomedali Magomedov, a Dargin, was a political survivor who ruled the republic for nearly 20 years (1987–2006). The Kremlin replaced him with an Avar, Mukhu Aliyev, the republic's parliamentary speaker and the last Communist Party *Obkom* First Secretary, but the choice proved unsatisfactory,[21] and Aliyev served only one term. The 2010 presidential nomination was associated with election-style overt competition between elite groups, which composed appeals for or against five rival candidates and held rallies. The Kumyks even staged a sizeable demonstration in Makhachkala, protesting against what they saw as denigration of their standing during Aliev's presidency. They also demonstrated after Magomedsalam Magomedov, the son of the old republic's leader, was chosen to

20 For profile on Kanokov see in *Kavkazskii Uzel*, 5 October 2005, http://www.kavkaz-uzel.ru/articles/84939/, accessed 18 March 2011.
21 See 'Dagestan's Embattled President Wins Reprieve,' *RFE/RL Caucasus Report*, 12 February 2009, http://www.rferl.org/content/Daghestans_Embattled_President_Wins_Reprieve/1492204.html, accessed 18 March 2011.

replace Aliyev and succeed his father,[22] since they feared a dismissal of their co-ethnic Shamil Zaynalov as prime minister by the Dargin Magomedov. However, Magomedov on the whole demonstrated his commitment to preservation of ethnic balance in his appointments.[23]

The security/ development nexus: the Caucasus in Russia

The federal authorities are concerned with four main issues in the region: security, the need to respond to growing Islamism, the challenges of development, and how to manage multi-ethnicity within the Federation. Two extra-regional events – the recognition of South Ossetia and Abkhazia by Russia in 2008 and the Sochi Winter Olympic Games in 2014 – frame the security situation in the North Caucasus, raising the stakes for Moscow.

Moscow's approach to the region is constrained by feelings of apprehension towards the North Caucasus, associated with memories of the turmoil and failures of the 1990s. It is unwilling to intervene decisively in internal political developments and is reluctant to act against vested interests, thinking this to be too risky. The federal authorities seek to play the role of arbiter between groups, but leave most internal politics in the hands of the republics' presidents. In this way, there is no real drive to expand broad political participation, which is likely to become manipulated by the elites to their advantage. In such circumstances it is difficult for Moscow to pursue a consistent set of policies based on coherent principles. As a result, the heads of republics more often than not have an upper hand in their arguments with the federal government. The dominance of crisis management considerations in Moscow creates a reactive approach to the region.

The current period has witnessed a change from a 'stability first' to a developmental maxim, precipitated by the belief that raising economic and social standards will bring about a more harmonious society. In the 1990s the state coffers were largely empty and the Kremlin's ability to invest into developmental projects was limited. In the 1990s the state coffers were largely empty and the Kremlin had limited capacity to invest in developmental projects. Over the last decade, increased energy revenue has allowed the federal authorities to finance construction of roads, public buildings – including state-financed mosques, airports, bus terminals and hospitals – and rehabilitation of resorts to attract tourists.

From the outset, Moscow refused to make ethnicity and language into a cornerstone of the new state ideology, understanding the dangers of playing the ethnic card in a state with large minorities present. This meant that distinct identities of the North Caucasian groups continued to be reinforced, leading to intra-republic and intra-regional tensions. The politics of identity remain complicated, combining elements of Russian citizenry with Caucasian affiliation.

Attitudes among the wider Russian public towards Caucasians derive from the increasing numbers of Caucasians settling in large Russian cities. Unlike Muslim minorities in the West, North Caucasians are far more culturally integrated into mainstream Russian society in terms of lifestyle, fashion, popular entertainment, and societal mix. Yet distinct patterns of behaviour distinct to the Caucasus are also becoming more noticeable in the public arena. The Russian public views people from the Caucasus with apprehension, and the 'us and them' paradigm projects itself into majority-minority relations outside the region. In December 2010 large-scale protests took place in Moscow against what was perceived as unfair application of the law by police. The action was initiated by a group of *Spartak* football fans who rebelled against the release of detainees, originally from Kabardino-Balkaria, suspected of murdering an

22 Dzutsev V, 'Medvedev Picks Candidate With Long-Standing Political Ties as Dagestan's President', *Eurasia Daily Monitor* vol 7, issue 28, 10 February 2010, accessed 7 March 2011.

23 'Dagestan's New Cabinet (More Or Less) Reflects Republic's Ethnic Composition,' 7 March 2010, *RFE/RL Caucasus Report*, http://www.rferl.org/content/Daghestans_New_Cabinet_More_Or_Less_Reflects_Republics_Ethnic_Composition/1976780.html, accessed 18 March 2011.

ethnic Russian football supporter. Anti-Caucasian slogans were heard. The protesters were joined by other Moscow residents, altogether numbering between 10–15,000 people. They demanded equal responsibility for everybody and protested against pressure on police investigation from ethnic diasporas (communities) to reduce punishments for their members. Some protesters clashed with the OMON special police troops and over 30 people were injured.

For the Russian State a return to the Soviet paradigm, when ethnically or religiously-driven demands were suppressed, is neither possible nor desirable. However, society has not matured enough to be tolerant of diversity and to be able to overcome ethnic barriers or group loyalties. The landscape of the region combines formal political tolerance with social intolerance. The emergence of Islamism only overshadows this dilemma, as it imposes an immediate security problem. How to integrate the North Caucasus is likely to present a challenge for Moscow for years and maybe decades to come.

The federal government would not allow separation to happen, pronouncements of politicians of different persuasions that the Russian state would be better off without the burden of a troublesome North Caucasus notwithstanding. In the case of with-drawal Moscow sees a potential for the emergence of a "new Afghanistan" on Russia's borders. The Soviet withdrawal in 1989 from Afghanistan created a power vacuum which destructive forces took advantage of while remaining outside international scrutiny, until they started to threaten the external world. Following this logic, left to its own devices, the North Caucasus could go down the same route. Thus, Moscow would have to find a strategy of integrating it more cohesively into the rest of the Federation.

Note on terminology

The emergence of the underground armed opposition with a radical religious agenda is a phenomenon which does not yet have an appropriate language of public discourse. The beliefs of these people are too loosely defined and not known to the general public, so it is difficult to know if they are really Salafis, Wahhabis or something else. Russian media often uses loaded terms such as 'Islamic militants' or 'Islamic terrorists' which the local society shies away from. 'Wahhabi' is the derogatory term used locally. The report authors prefer the term 'Islamists,' i.e. those who combine religious agenda with a quest for political power; but is not the term used in the region or in Russian discourse generally.

People in the region are not sure how to define the Islamists in a neutral way without being judgmental. Thus, a euphemism of 'those who headed into the forest,' 'forest people,' 'those in the woods' is used instead. The expression often has a direct meaning because the groups normally stay in forested terrain, but is also used generically and metaphorically.

'All-Russia identity' is another term difficult to convey. In Russian this is *rossiyskaya identichnost* which translates into English as 'Russian identity' which, however, can also mean *russkaya identichnost* emphasising ethnicity rather than belonging to Russia's civic space. Thus, the English terms 'Russian civil identity,' or 'all-Russia identity' are used in this text to describe the broader rather than specifically ethnic notion of identity.

3

Challenges to peace and security: highlights of the findings

THE ANALYSIS FOCUSES ON THREE PEACE AND CONFLICT RESEARCH QUESTIONS:

- What attracts young people to the radical Islamist groups? How do the groups manage to operate, recruit and expand their remit?
- What role do governance issues and relations between the state and the people play in fuelling tensions in the region?
- What is lacking in the federal policies and practices intended to foster stability and security? Do the measures target the right issues? Are they sufficiently supported and implemented? Have security responses been adequate to meet challenges and how can they be improved?

Causes of radicalisation and security responses

Reasons behind the spread of radicalism

Radical religious movements spread insecurity and have a destabilising effect on North Caucasian societies. 'Internal armed opposition' and security measures to combat it constitute a vicious circle that drives conflict in the North Caucasus, preventing lasting peace from taking root, despite the efforts of the state and society towards security and development.

The absence of a secular alternative to the existing political order in the Muslim republics of the North Caucasus is notable. In contrast to mainstream Russia – where opportunities for participation and protest exist, political opposition is possible, and various youth groups proliferate – Caucasian polities offer few options. In December 2011, protests against unfair elections in Moscow and other Russian cities showed intergenerational connectivity; whereas in the Caucasus, the mood among younger people can seem inaccessible and beyond the understanding of their parents' generation. Public protest is virtually impossible because people think that engaging in that kind of activity will put them in grave danger of being rounded up as *Wahhabi* suspects and shot at by security forces.

Radical religious movements attract primarily young people. In their attitudes and what they feel, young people in the Caucasus are not unique. It is natural for youth to

be fascinated by bigger causes than careerism and consumerism, especially in times when society is changing; and it is natural to protest against what is seen as unjust or imperfect political and social order. Rebellion which entails a degree of risk is seen as prestigious among young people who have to impress their peer group.

Given relatively high birth rates among Caucasian groups, the younger population is proportionally greater than in the rest of Russia, while education and social care systems have deteriorated since the end of the Soviet era. Propaganda promoting internationalist values – typical of Soviet times – subsided at school and in the work-place, making young people less tolerant towards other groups than their Sovietised parents and grandparents. The decline in agriculture and the absence of special measures to keep populations where they lived has led to an increase in the migration of young people from the countryside into the cities, which in its turn creates internal pressures.

North Caucasian societies are experiencing a crisis of traditional authority, in which respect for elders was paramount. Recent developments, and the collapse of the Soviet system in general, have led to the upheaval of the customary social order, producing new problems, but also opening up new opportunities. Young men listen more to leaders who are closer to their own age, who understand modern times better; they have glamorous and heroic role models. For them, the social experience and life skills of the older generation often have little value in present conditions. A tradition of deference is no longer seen as a sufficient basis for respect towards elders. However, the older generation is not prepared to accept this and hopes for a revival of customs and traditions. This is unlikely to happen; what is more likely is an emergence of something new, but under an old familiar guise.

The experience of the last decade shows that youth problems, mitigated in the previous era by a Soviet upbringing, army service and social organisation at the workplace, have emerged as a potentially destabilising syndrome. The growing young contingent, on the one hand influenced by the forces of globalisation and on the other hand locked in their own closed milieu, creates strain in Caucasian societies.

The causes of rebellious sentiment are not hard to identify. Discontent stems from injustice, corruption, dishonesty in official structures, the inability to get a job on merit, but also the lack of ideas and initiative on how this can be changed, and how young people can be part of that change. One obstacle to better governance is the net-work of patronage arrangements based on blood ties; but because everybody is tied up in family obligations, few dare to go against them in real life. Extended family offers support and protection, but also demands a lot from an individual, especially when they reach a position of power.

The social environment is also characterised by a lack of alternatives. The growing religious factor produces various social restrictions and creates psychological pressure on individuals. Whereas in mainstream Russia there exists a certain diversity, with different ways of obtaining social gratification, Caucasian Muslim republics strive towards uniformity where everybody has to comply with certain behavioural norms.

Deviation from the observance of strict rules is less and less tolerated. In Ingushetia, for instance, it is impossible to be an Ingush and be a non-Muslim, or be indifferent to religion, at least in public. An Ingush woman who converted to Christianity was shot dead. Similar incidents took place in Dagestan. Drinking and selling alcohol in Chechnya and Ingushetia is made impossible by social pressure; and Dagestan is heading in the same direction. Recreation activities for male youth concentrate around sports clubs, mosques, the internet, and visiting relatives. Leisure opportunities for young women and girls mostly revolve around time with the family. In such conditions young people have plenty of pent-up energy, which does not find a natural release.

In Chechnya and Ingushetia these features are more pronounced because of the isolation of these societies. They are reinforced by socio-psychological factors, e.g. the

maximalism typical of youth, lack of tolerance to other opinions and way of life, a tendency to see the world as black and white, and not to engage with the complexities of life. The out-migration of non-Caucasian groups, primarily Russians, from the North Caucasus has made the environment less diverse and less tolerant to differences. The mental attitudes are reinforced by the combative sports that predominate in the Caucasus, which breed discipline, determination and the will to win, but do not encourage diversity and reflection.

Islamist movements

As religion regulates social relations, social protest takes the form of religious ideology. The reason is not Islam per se, but the situation where religion becomes the only form of interpretation of the external world. Young people in the Caucasus say that they understand the reasons why some among them are attracted to Islamist groups, but they also stress that they do not approve of their violent methods. They express that joining the underground is 'prestigious'; that video recordings of Said Buryatsky prophecies are exciting and popular; and that internet discussions on Islamist sites are engaging, while *muftiyat* propaganda is dull.

Few opportunities for promotion and the quest for an exciting life are seen as causes of radicalisation. An example was given of several young men who trained in wrestling but joined the armed opposition when they realised that they would not become champions and saw no other opportunities for self-realisation. Other reasons named were group solidarity, camaraderie, romantic fascination with resistance and a chance to bear arms.

Islamist movements have developed a subculture with their own symbols and language which on the one hand connects with global Islamic heritage, and on the other uses modern popular culture and ways of expression. They include songs, chants, articulate preachers, an ability to discuss global and local events, and have heroic martyrs – who lived elevated lives – promoted as role models. The groups provide freedom from blood family ties and a chance to join a new family of choice.

Young people also attribute the appeal of armed groups to the absence of organised leisure facilities. In Ingushetia there is almost nothing which stays open in the evening, apart from a theatre, because most other facilities are considered non-Islamic. In Chechnya the situation is better, with facilities which do not violate Islamic norms, such as a water park with separate facilities for men and women, shopping malls and pop concerts.

Research showed that there is no direct relationship between scarcity of jobs and Islamist radicalism. It was noted by the case studies that many young men drawn into Islamist groups come from privileged families, previously had jobs or went to good universities, and they did not have to struggle for survival.[24] On the contrary, it is those who have fought hard to reach a decent standard of living who do not understand how one can throw away everything that constitutes a normal life and join the underground.

To sum up, Islamism offers a ready response to those young people who feel a moral collapse of society, who are frustrated with poor performance of governing institutions, and who look for political participation and for opportunities to connect to like-minded groups worldwide and perform heroic deeds. It was noted that there are young men among students who are ready to volunteer now to fight for the Islamist cause in the Middle East. The Komsomol of the 1920s and 30s is perhaps a close parallel, when the Communist ideology produced staunch, uncompromising adherents who did not value their own or other people's lives, pitted generations against each other and went to fight on foreign fields and fronts under the global *KomIntern* banner.

---

[24] In Ingushetia they include a prosecutor's aide, a bailiff, sons of a leading doctor, a supermarket chain owner, a relative of a minister, and students of prestigious universities in Moscow. Similar examples were given in other republics.

The outcome for the rest is a frightened, divided society torn between sympathy and resentment, and not seeing a way forward. In the words of young respondents,

"we are losing our young generation, some of us head for the forest, the other half dies fighting those who went to the forest. Thus, we lose our people, we don't know how to stop it, and this worries us a lot."[25]

Young people sympathise with both sides – security forces and underground armed groups – when somebody is killed: "it is tragic, they are all our people."

Kinship ties, strong in other aspects of Caucasian life, do not work the same way when the ideological cause is at stake. Islamist groups are capable of attacking police in the full knowledge that their relatives serve at posts or checkpoints and would be killed. There are instances of siblings from the same family being drawn into a group, or a man joining to seek revenge for a brother slain by security forces. However, they are rare. On the contrary, cases are known where fathers turned their sons over to security forces, and two fathers in Ingushetia in two separate incidents killed their sons because they 'became Wahhabis.' One father was later killed by his son's comrades-in-arms in revenge. There is another pattern where the family is oblivious to their child getting involved and, when he or she is detained or killed in a raid, often refuses to believe that they participated in the movement.

Likewise, older community members at times do not notice when young people become involved. Local administrators in a village where a major counter-terrorist operation had taken place described the killed and detained militants as ordinary young men, sociable, not reclusive, doing sports, shopping, and attending the administration for various papers. "One family was just so nice."[26] Many refuse to believe that they have been involved with the armed struggle, even in the cases where there is evidence that they were.

Respondents of the older generation do not comprehend the reasons why the young are drawn into such groups. They tend to typify these reasons mainly through socio-economic hardship, but do not see their community as capable of influencing young people who become radicalised. They believe that those who join radical groups should have been stopped, but do not have an idea of who should have stopped them or how. Younger people, on the contrary, readily come up with ideas for solutions, such as to develop a younger, more articulate Muslim clergy, whose sermons and communications would be emotionally engaging and exciting. The gap between the more religious younger generation and Sovietised fathers and grandfathers is striking.

The republic heads of Dagestan, Chechnya and Ingushetia launched initiatives to enable those willing to surrender, to join civilian life. However, "when they get into groups, there is no way out," was a common opinion of those who had a personal experience of dealing with Islamists. "They are destined to die, and they know this." Some cited concrete examples that if people who had been drawn into groups refuse to 'go into the forest' or start to have doubts, they get pressured to join, fearing that their families would be slaughtered in revenge.

Officials and those involved in conciliation commissions also expressed private doubts that any significant numbers can be persuaded to give up arms. However, they conceded that some people get involved for accidental and personal reasons, e.g. drug addiction, debts and bad family relations, rather than following the ideological cause, and such people may be able to reintegrate if their families stand up for them. However, they and their families would be unable to stay in the republic.

The families of slain or detained Islamists are ostracised by other community members. Their family gatherings, such as weddings and funerals, are not attended and neighbours avoid dealing with them. On some occasions families of Islamists wish to draw

25 Focus group with university students, Nazran, Ingushetia.
26 Rural focus group, Ekajevo village, Ingushetia.

a line themselves: in Nalchik the neighbours tried to convey their condolences to a mother who lost sons in the October 2005 uprising, but the woman stopped them by saying: "don't be sad, they went straight to paradise."

Responses by the state

State responses are mostly based on the allocation of subsidies from the federal budget and activities of the security services. Chechnya has its own police and security forces accountable to the Head of the Republic, and in other republics security agencies are branches of federal ministries such as the Ministry of Interior and the FSB. The top appointments are staffed by Russians nominated by the centre, who serve fixed-term contracts, and there are Russian servicemen brought from outside into the FSB and OMON police special forces.

The security sector looms large in the region and constitutes a major employer for young men. These are dangerous jobs because most attacks are directed against local police and security forces, in which predominantly local men are killed. It is fairly rare for men brought in by the federal authorities to be killed. Nevertheless, employment in the security services is popular. Recruitment in Ingushetia and Dagestan became more complicated because of the requirement for recruits to have completed their army service. Recently conscription from these republics into the army has been very limited, and the pool of local young men who are eligible to join the police force is shrinking.[27] The situation is different in Chechnya where conscripts are not drafted into the federal army, but serve and are recruited into police locally.

The police estimate the numbers in armed opposition through recordings of missing persons. Local policemen are at the front line of a community watch network. A policeman responsible for the area reports if a young person has disappeared, and then the family is questioned. Their typical response is that "our son has gone abroad." If no address and no contact number are given, the police assume that the missing person has joined an underground group.

More difficult to identify are those who live a normal community life. For this reason the whole population, especially young men, come under suspicion. There are many reasons why a person may attract the attention of the security services: if they dress in an Islamic way, grow a beard, frequent a mosque, or are of a stroppy, rebellious character. They could be reported by somebody who took a dislike to them, or may be arrested on mistaken identity, or to make up numbers of investigated suspects. Asking how fathers can protect their sons from an arbitrary detention, respondents said: "sort out a job for him with the police."[28]

Respondents in all republics identified methods used by security agencies as often unlawful and cruel, including shooting and killing of suspects instead of detaining and putting them through a due legal process. They also cited cases of torture, arbitrary detention, arrests of relatives of Islamist suspects and incidences when innocent people were blamed for unresolved cases. Transparency in detentions and prosecutions of cases of violent radicalism are found seriously wanting, leaving local society suspicious of their fairness and making it hard to solicit community co-operation.

The state response is seen as ineffective or counter-productive and sometimes a threat in itself. This is because the actions of security agencies are not transparent and are overly focused on 'hard security' objectives that do not sufficiently take into account local security concerns. Despite talk of common interests in the security sphere, the absence of civilian control over the security sector and lack of cooperation between security actors and communities means such talk is chimerical.

27 Focus groups with students at the Polytechnic College, Nazran, Ingushetia.
28 Focus group with NGO representatives, Karabulak, Ingushetia.

The answers to the Islamist challenge do lie not exclusively in the security or religious spheres, but also in a combination of accessibility of political alternatives, understanding of social psychology and the development of attractive images and accessible language. Together these ingredients make up a viable ideological strategy that is currently missing. Young people should be treated on their own terms and in ways which are interesting and engaging for them. Hearts and minds are equally, if not more, important than material issues.

Common regional trends and emerging issues

Ethnic divides continue to matter and ethnicity presents a clear identity marker. However, the possibility of violent conflict along interethnic lines has vastly diminished compared to during the breakup of the USSR. The tensest interethnic situations arise out of intra-regional migration of Caucasian groups and of Meskhetian Turks. The diminished 'Russian buffer' in the republics as a result of Russian out-migration leads to increased tensions among Caucasian groups. Territorial disputes between indigenous ethnic groups persist over economic and symbolic resources. Ethnicity defines the level of acceptable claims and access to jobs and other opportunities in multiethnic republics. Sub-ethnic divisions and kinship affiliations, such as extended family, clans and *teips* play a role, especially in mono-ethnic republics.[29]

It was found across the republics that the level of trust towards the authorities is low, and communities doubt the effectiveness of state powers to promote policies and enforce order. Part of the explanation for this is that corruption and patronage based on blood ties prevail in management and lead to a non-meritocracy-based personnel policy. Poor prospects for career development and success in life prompt the emigration of the most educated and active community members leading to a decline in human capital. In Chechnya, Ingushetia and Dagestan this is to an extent compensated by high birth rates; but in other republics rural respondents noted that the population is ageing.

Massive financial transfers, such as funding for educational facilities, the public sector and unemployment benefits, have led to social and economic improvements, but have failed to bring security and stability. While the scale of unemployment is significant and disconcerting on paper, in public discourse it is not referred to as a reason for poverty. Rather, it fuels a sense of injustice. Informal or self-employment is widespread in the region, allowing sections of society to play by a different set of rules – including avoidance of paying tax. Authorities in the republics propagate the unemployment discourse, because it enables them to avoid responsibility for allowing the grey economy to flourish, and corruption and nepotism to fester. New job creation schemes are not the only answer; instead, there is need for legalisation of informal employment arrangements, thereby reducing corrupt arrangements.

Interview and discussion group material suggests that regional identity is based on a strong sense of dependency and a belief that an external force should solve the republics' problems. There is almost no public reflection on challenges faced and very simplistic 'us and them' contrasts are uppermost in the public mind. Existing mechanisms for self-regulation in political, social and economic life will inevitably have to change into something new. Their content will depend on today's discussions and proposed conceptual approaches, which should produce a new system of public values. A sense of joint responsibility between all key actors must emerge to counter the negative dynamics.

---

29 *Teips* in Chechnya and Ingushetia are associations of people connected through parental blood ties. Historically, each *teip* had its area of habitat and common lands. In Chechnya *teips* are united into nine *tukhums* (territorial unions) and categorised into lowland and highland. Larger *teips* are dispersed throughout the republic and can number thousands of people, but are typically associated with the geographic area of their origin. Relations within a *teip* are maintained through joint celebrations, such as weddings and funerals.

Society expresses a strong need for dialogue. In some cases, such as in Dagestan and Ingushetia, such dialogue does take place within the republics; however, people are frustrated that little changes, even when they have the opportunity to freely express their views to those in power. Authorities therefore need to convey to the population that their views are heard. At the same time, the culture of dialogue is underdeveloped, due to a lack of respect for different opinions and low tolerance of diversity and dissent, leading to parallel monologues and poor engagement with each other's arguments.

Caucasian versus Russian civil identity prompted a lively debate. Respondents were adamant that they are the same citizens as everybody else and are not separatists. They noted that a 'North Caucasian' identity is being formed as a reaction and in opposition to the rise of anti-Caucasian attitudes in Russian-majority regions, and also that they associate more with other Caucasians than they did before. However, there is little reflection in the region on the reasons for the emergence of anti-Caucasian sentiment outside the republics.

Because Chechnya suffered so much in the two wars there is a sense of entitlement in the republic; that it is owed something. People in Ingushetia, affected by two Chechen wars, the influx of internally displaced persons (IDPs) and by the conflict in Prigorodny District, partly share this sentiment. Problems arise when people who think this way migrate outside the republic and find that such ideas are unwelcome in the Russian mainstream and are met with resentment, which is then termed xenophobia.

Ethnic Russian resentment of the behaviour of some members' of Caucasian communities, perceived as being above the law, feeds 'Russian nationalism. Caucasians are accustomed to their higher status in their own republics and to the lower status of local Russians. It is natural for them to continue to behave in the same way when they migrate, but such attitudes encounter resistance outside the republics.

Risks and opportunities

Despite positive developments, significant drivers of instability and conflict remain and have the potential to make the situation worse in the medium to longer term. Currently, Dagestan appears the most unstable, although there are risk factors in Kabardino-Balkaria and North Ossetia. Still, the scale of insecurity should not be exaggerated, as in most cases people are capable of going about their daily business. However, long periods of tranquillity are periodically disrupted by violent incidents. As a result, people do not feel entirely secure.

Successes in economic and social development in **Kabardino-Balkaria**, as well as federal support for businesses have created conditions for further growth and improved wellbeing for the general population. The republic's authorities are making some attempt to foster dialogue with society and resolve the land issue. Active young people come forward, and society on the whole is oriented towards an increased self-reliance rather than government handouts.

There is a risk that increasingly repressive methods used by security structures could encourage more young people to enter radical groups. Popular resentment centres on the notion that the state authorities do not provide effective security and justice for the population. Interethnic relations present another potential risk factor, since a failure to resolve conflicting land claims is transforming the land problem from an economic issue into a symbol of deprivation and discrimination. The previously dormant 'Circassian question' has resurfaced, increasing the alienation of the Kabardins from both other ethnic groups and the federal authorities, and creating tension between a Circassian and an all-Russian identity.

Chechnya is less prone to dynamic shifts, having stabilised around a certain pattern which is unlikely to change. The situation is most directly dependant on the relation-

ship between leaderships in Moscow and in Chechnya. There are relatively positive factors, such as increased investment and financing by the federal government for economic development, and there is also social order and low levels of ordinary crime. People are active, trying to improve their lives by their own efforts and to generate income. After the war, private life became more important and consumerism became possible, thus increasing the stake in peace. Peacemaking initiatives led by the Head of the Republic aimed at ending blood feuds and encouraging people's diplomacy have fostered conciliation within society. The image of the republic, from one perspective, has improved and relations with other subjects of the Federation and with Muslim countries have strengthened.

Still, armed opposition to the current regime is active and recruitment continues. Security incidents are likely to continue, although most of the population do not support the opposition cause. Rather, popular discontent centres on unemployment, lack of support for business development, lack of respect for human rights, difficulty in access to benefits, unpaid salaries and other basic social issues. In this highly-controlled environment, characterised by a lack of freedom of expression and where the ruling group dominates in all spheres, society is unable to counterbalance the arbitrariness of the authorities, allowing violations of human rights to continue. Even the Spiritual Board of Muslims (DUM)[30] is a *de facto* state institution, meaning that organised religion is unable to play a balancing role.

In **North Ossetia** there have been some successful federal programmes in conflict resolution, for example the Ingush return to Prigorodny District. Improvements in the social and economic situation and increased social mobilisation, if continued, would further enhance stability. North Ossetia is the only republic in the survey which does not currently have an armed opposition to the ruling establishment. External' threats are more important – for example those posed by radical groups based in Ingushetia, the impact of power struggles in South Ossetia and the actions of law enforcement agencies against Islamists which have the potential to provoke a wave of violence against the rest of society. In the view of the North Ossetia case study author the republic is entering a process that others have already passed through: the formation of an armed movement with a radical agenda.[31]

Deterioration of relations between the Ossetians and Ingush or between the host population and the Kumyk newcomers in Mozdok District are among the most likely issues to trigger conflict. Either of these issues can lead to interethnic incidents, such as fights or attacks on neighbourhoods. Intensification of internal struggles in South Ossetia can spill over into North Ossetia, which can result in border closures and an increase in tensions. Intra-elite struggles in North Ossetia may be intensified if elites call upon groups of young loyalists to come to their support. Security structures' repression of Muslim communities suspected of terrorism unleashes a vicious circle, causing more people to turn to Islamist radicalism, which in turn leads to further repression.

In **Dagestan** there are factors at play that foster conciliation and stabilisation. Spaces for dialogue exist, such as the Congress of Nationalities convened recently, and the media remains relatively free. There is an appreciation of the constructive role that religion can play in society. Civil society is developing and there are some well-established NGOs, such as Dagestan's Mothers.

However, respect for the Sufi-adherent DUM has been undermined, whereas the 'Salafi' movement and forces of radicalisation have grown stronger. Muslim scholars

---

30 The DUM exists in each republic of the North Caucasus, is headed by a mufti and is often referred to as *muftiyat*. The DUM serves as an interface between the state and the Islamic communities. The North Caucasus DUM was formed in 1944 in Buinaksk, Dagestan. It dealt with registration of religious communities, appointments and dismissals of imams, affairs of mosques and with issuance of *fetwas* (statements). In 1989 the North Caucasus DUM was disbanded and separate boards were established. The rest of Russia's Muslim communities are supervised by the DUM of the European part of Russia. The Council of Mufties of Russia and Muslim Co-ordination Centre of the North Caucasus, the latter headed by Ismail Berdiyev, are two umbrella structures for co-ordination and joint action.

31 Dulaev, I, North Ossetia case study.

and the DUM call for the use of force against 'Salafis,' which only widens the gap between the two Muslim constituencies. The Islamic way of life that is taking hold within majority society, local land conflicts, a crisis of multiculturalism and wide-spread social problems create a volatile environment.

Ingushetia is the smallest and perhaps most isolated of the republics. Few cross the border with North Ossetia without a clear reason and while inter-communal relations with Chechnya, its other neighbour, are good, the Ingush establishment feels the need to distance itself from the former dual-nationality unit and reinforce a separate identity for the republic. Affected by isolation, low urbanisation and virtual mono-ethnicity, the republic is increasingly adopting an Islamic way of life where the secular constituency does not dare to raise its voice. It is drifting further away from Russian cultural and social space. It is unclear whether the emergence of an Islamic quasi-state within the Federation is underway, and where it could lead.

At the same time, security in the last two years has improved and deadly attacks are rarer. Muslim clergy engages with the population with some success, even if modest. Resettlement of the displaced to Prigorodny District is underway; some displaced opted for compensation to buy new housing in Ingushetia, and the leaderships of North Ossetia and Ingushetia co-operate in normalisation of relations. However, tensions between communities and local authorities on both sides remain acute, police co-operation is deficient and there are reportedly more willing to return than are officially entitled to. However, the danger that violence can flare up again is low for now.

Assessment of federal programming

In addition to security responses, a key thrust of Moscow's approach has been to fund and develop programmes in the civilian sphere aimed at conflict prevention and peacebuilding, as outlined in the 'Strategy of Social and Economic Development of the North Caucasus Federal District until 2025' (see annex II for further information). The NCFD created a new institutional infrastructure to support implementation. The Strategy, which is vast in scope, sets out a number of relevant objectives, and its suggested responses to challenges are encouraging from a peace-building perspective. However, the current research project finds that it:

- targets too many issues and priorities, which are loosely defined, and does not determine tangible outputs to be achieved,
- lacks sufficient backing from qualified personnel and specialised expertise from the centre,
- lacks provisions for monitoring and evaluation its impact and effectiveness, and for making adjustments in light of changing context and lessons learned.

Moreover, Moscow-based officials and experts rarely visit and spend time in the region and, beyond security, do not sufficiently engage in the affairs of the republics. Rules and practices which are normal for the rest of the Federation are not always applied in the republics, posing the question of whether the area is still Russia, other than on paper. Moscow frequently changes direction, does not provide enough backup for personnel if they face difficulties, and does not demonstrate a steady, common approach across the region, tailoring interventions to circumstances as they occur. Public information and awareness-raising measures are clichéd and only rather formally implemented, with little spirit and gusto, and their impact is not monitored. The federal information campaign is not visible enough; for instance, its voice has not been sufficiently heard to challenge populist anti-Caucasian rhetoric emanating from Russia's big cities.

4

Voices that need to be heard: analytical narrative of people's perspectives

Causes of social tensions

THE PRIMARY CONCERNS IDENTIFIED BY PEOPLE living in the republics are the lack of formal employment, corruption and nepotism, frustration with governing institutions, unresolved land disputes,[32] subversive activities of underground religious groups and methods used by security agencies to combat them, and recent migration tendencies. These concerns are for the most part common to all surveyed republics, but they operate differently in different contexts. Even in post-conflict Chechnya, which had followed a different political and security trajectory from other republics, self-perceptions are close to those of its neighbours.

Respondents were invited to reflect upon divisions in society and the extent to which they contribute to social tensions. This is how, for instance, respondents in Chechnya defined categories which distinguish people from each other:

"rich and poor, middle-income, those who support or oppose the authorities, religious and non-religious"[33]

Respondents in other republics also added ethnicity as a key divide.

Socio-economic factors

The overall economic situation and living standards have improved across the region. Nevertheless, discontent persists, with unemployment, a shortage of social housing and difficulties in accessing state benefits identified as key factors contributing to social tension. The perception of high unemployment as an acute social problem is widespread. Although self-employment is common and many people are involved in income-generation activities of a kind, a salaried full-time employment which gives a person a sense of status and opportunities for socialisation remains a dream for many citizens.

---

32 For background information on territorial claims across the North Caucasus, please see Annex three.
33 Focus group on 'Role of young people in social self-organisation of Chechnya: lifestyle and reference points', Chechnya.

In Chechnya:

"If plants and factories were built, people would have got stable salaries and feel protected."[34]

The latest figures of registered unemployment (December 2011) show the NCFD average as 14.3 percent against Russia's average of 6.1 percent. The worst situation is in Ingushetia with 48.9 percent and in Chechnya with 27.2 percent officially unemployed.[35] Guest workers from Uzbekistan, Vietnam and Turkey are engaged mostly in the construction industry in the republics.

The housing problem is acute, especially in Chechnya where many families whose houses were destroyed during the wars continue to live in substandard accommodation or with relatives.

According to one Chechen interviewee:

"Other Russian citizens did not suffer as we did during the military campaigns. They have not lost so many people. They are obliged to return lost housing to our population."[36]

People compare their situation to the rest of the Federation in everyday challenges and interactions, for instance, when they travel to Pyatigorsk and learn how little people have to pay for communal services, or when they encounter the 'normal' ways of doing business elsewhere:

"I lived in Rostov region for a long time. There a local person can get a (business) loan easier than here. When we have the same situation in our republic on behalf of the bank and the local authorities, then it would be easier for us as well."[37]

In Ingushetia respondents remarked that the scale of compensation for families who lost relatives in terrorist acts in Moscow was ten times higher than in their republic.

In Chechnya it was noted that social development and rehabilitation is not getting enough attention. This is how it affects the life of an ordinary person:

"I work in a state farm which has not got a single tractor, or combine harvester; nor a single cow, or sheep, or chicken. It does not even have an office. The farm director sits in his home and says that this is his office. There are 12,000 people in our village. Unemployment is total."[38]

The role of ethnicity

Ethnicity and sub-ethnic affiliations remain powerful identity markers, influencing social relations and access to power and resources. As noted by a respondent in North Ossetia: "nobody asks about nationality, but if an interlocutor mentions it, so do I."

The findings of this project suggest that interethnic relations in the multi-ethnic republics of North Ossetia, Kabardino-Balkaria and Dagestan are not a problem *per se*; on the contrary, a culture of interaction between different ethnic groups in everyday life has been largely preserved.[39] In Kabardino-Balkaria, where three main ethnic communities of Kabardins, Russians and Balkars live, 40 percent of families are of mixed ethnicity.

Various instances of interethnic tensions in the republics were also cited, such as land disputes or tensions over immigration. Relations between ethnic groups appear harmonious as long as they stick to their assigned niches. When groups start to come

34 Focus group with business people, Grozny, Chechnya.

35 Figures articulated by Prime Minister Vladimir Putin during his visit to Gudermes, Chechnya, 20 December 2011, reported in Latukhina K, 'Kavkazskii Marshrut,' *Rosskiiskaya Gazeta*, 21 December 2011, no. 287, p 2.

36 Focus group 'Formation of civic institutions: prospects for establishment of partnership and dialogue with the authorities,' Chechnya.

37 Focus group with farmers, Chechnya.

38 Focus group on 'Social Conditions for Development of Small and Medium Enterprise,' Grozny, Chechnya.

39 See case studies from Kabardino-Balkaria, Dagestan and North Ossetia, in which over 70 respondents took part through key informants interviews and focus group discussions for further information. This argument rests upon conclusions reached by the authors, based on their field work for Saferworld.

out of these patterns and challenge their established roles, tensions unfold. Both popular and experts' discourses register particular incidents, but so far have not been able to conceptualise them. This implies that interethnic relations are still closed for public reflection.

In North Ossetia, with the exception of attitudes to the Ingush, interethnic relations are not considered to be problematic. Younger people were said to pay less attention to ethnicity. Attitudes towards Georgians, despite the conflict in South Ossetia and the presence of many Ossetians displaced from Georgia in the republic, are friendly:

"We always lived together well and peacefully both with Russians and Georgians. We have nothing to argue about."[40]

Each republic has organisations which claim to articulate ethnic interests. However, in Kabardino-Balkaria people were said to have little trust in public movements which represent interests of their ethnic group. On the contrary, the public watches them with apprehension, fearing that their activities may cause an escalation of ethnic feelings and lead to tensions. The same attitude is found in North Ossetia, where 27 national-cultural centres representing various ethnic groups and an Ossetian national organisation, *Styr Nykhas*, enjoy only limited support.

The multi-ethnicity of Dagestan was reported as a factor of both tension and stability because no majority exists that can dominate. Avars are the largest group at 28 percent. In 2010 the list of presidential candidates included four Avars and one Dargin.

"It would be better for public security if a non-Avar were to become president in the next ten years. This would be positive."[41]

Land claims reflect the power of ethnic feelings, as groups argue for special rights in areas of mixed habitat, where the historical population finds itself, in their view, in a disadvantageous position. Some insist on legal and constitutional means for protection of the interests of ethnic groups which found themselves as minorities in their own homelands, such as Kumyks in Dagestan who feel that the highlanders encroach onto their historical territories. Some Kumyk political activists maintain that a legal provision should be included in the Land Code, declaring an 'ethnic community' a subject of law.[42] 'We were here first' arguments certainly undermine intergroup relations; but it is unlikely that they resolve the issue one way or another.

In virtually mono-ethnic Chechnya, ethnicity contributes to social organisation. The author of the Chechnya case study notes that Chechen values and cultural traditions maintain intergenerational connectivity. Sub-ethnic divisions are also important. *Teips*, the lowest units, total between 130 and 150 in the republic according to various counts. They are united into nine unions forming a traditional 'federation'. A *teip* hierarchy of more or less noble *teips* exists, but is presently affected by fascination with material wealth: money can be more important than noble roots.

The republics of Chechnya and Ingushetia are heading towards a mono-ethnic composition. Chechen and Ingush live in each other's republics, but both belong to the Vainakh group and similarities between the two are considerable. The presence of other minorities is very small. Respondents reflected that this is not an ideal situation. An older respondent in Ingushetia expressed that she had wanted to live in a mono-ethnic republic, but when this was achieved, was somehow disappointed with the result. Young people were more explicit: "this mono-ethnicity is somewhat dull – it is as if we are all cucumbers in a jar of pickles, while there should be other vegetables, like tomatoes or other things."[43]

40 Community focus group, North Ossetia.
41 Yarlykapov A, Dagestan case study, expert interview, footnote no. 6 of the *Ibid*.
42 Murzayev A in 'Comments and Recommendations' submitted to Saferworld by electronic communication, November 2011.
43 Focus group with university students, Nazran, Ingushetia.

Ethnicity is a factor in the distribution of key appointments that are in the public eye. In Kabardino-Balkaria, for instance, there are assigned 'Kabardin,' 'Russian' and 'Balkar' positions. The practice was inherited from the Soviet era when it had been intended to maintain a balance in power representation. When appointments are made outside the established positions, they are seen as violations of group rights. Such conventions are firmly entrenched in the public mind and serve as an obstacle to the emergence of meritocracy.

In Dagestan there are also unwritten conventions on the distribution of key jobs between the main groups. The ethnicity of the members of the top elite does not serve as an obstacle for them to make cross-ethnic deals within their inner circle; however, as soon as they are threatened with losing their positions, they try to mobilise their ethnic kin for their defence. The current trend is that the rank-and-file do not always follow such calls to protect the elite interests.[44]

Employment patterns are largely mono-ethnic, making it difficult for outsiders to access jobs outside of their own group or network. If the manager or boss is from one ethnic group, they tend to employ someone from their own kin. People from other groups do not apply for a job, as they do not feel that they have a chance.

Expressions of nationalist feelings by the Russians from outside the republics and especially the pronouncements of Vladimir Zhirinovsky, the Liberal Democrats' Party leader and a Duma MP, cause resentment. They are perceived as opinions that matter, and as pilots which signal a federal policy change. Respondents marked the overt expressions of chauvinism as a recent trend.

"I am worried that I observe the growth of nationalism. Artificially it started to pit us against each other. On Sunday I went to a football match. A group of fans from Rostov was shouting: 'Up with Russians, go Russians!' At the same time there were several black players and one Kabardin player in the Rostov team. I saw this for the first time."[45]

Security and ethnic identity are closely linked. Ethnicity, while often lying dormant in the society, can play a mobilising role in the repudiation of 'other.' For example, in 2008 North Ossetian volunteers quickly mobilised at the outbreak of war in South Ossetia.

"We unite only against somebody, not in support of somebody or something. Remember 2008. We were prepared to help the southerners, and now are at each other's throats."[46]

Prigorodny District

One area where ethnicity definitely matters is in the Ossetian-Ingush conflict over Prigorodny District. In October 2004 responsibility for return and settlement of IDPs displaced during the Ossetian-Ingush conflict was transferred to the interregional department of the Federal Migration Service (FMS). According to FMS data, since 1994 over 28,000 Ingush who had fled the conflict have returned, 5,000 received financial aid for resettlement in other parts of the country and about 4,000 are regarded as having the right to return and their cases considered. These figures are accepted by the Ossetian side, but are rejected by the Ingush.

In October 2010 a federal law was adopted that offered funds to the displaced Ingush to buy new houses if they did not wish to wait for the return. Respondents from the Ingush Ministry for Nationalities noted that about half of the displaced still left in the republic opted to take compensation and start new homes in Ingushetia, while the other half did not as those people aspire to go back eventually.

Proposals to change the administrative jurisdiction of Prigorodny District, seen by the Ingush as essential for ensuring territorial rehabilitation and restoration of historical justice, have not been considered. Moscow's refusal to do so has been perceived by the Ingush as an example of bias towards the Ossetian side. More practical concerns centre on the checkpoints along the administrative border with North Ossetia, reinforced after Beslan and two violent incidents in 2008 and 2010 when Ingush suicide bombers were used in attacks in Vladikavkaz. The other issues are the lack of ethnic Ingush in the police in the areas of mixed habitat, refusals to admit

---

44 Murzayev A, Presentation at Pyatigorsk seminar, October 2011.
45 Community focus group, Kabardino-Balkaria.
46 Community focus group, North Ossetia.

Ingush children into certain schools because of pressure from Ossetian parents, popular attitudes when the Ingush 'feel like an enemy' in the republic, and youth fights.[47]

Apart from respondents from the Ministry of Nationalities, no other group identifed Prigorodny District as a priority problem on their own initiative. When questioned, however, respondents expressed negative attitudes towards Ossetians, the feeling that their community had suffered more (the fact is that more Ingush died in the conflict than Ossetians) and noted that many continue to perceive their neighbours as enemies. There is no official version of events taught at schools and universities; in its place victimhood narratives are circulated within communities.

Tensions between the Ossetians and the Ingush continue to feed on ethnic resentments, forming enemy images on both sides. Impersonal designations are used by the Ossetians in reference to the Ingush: 'they,' 'neighbours from the East'. According to a North Ossetian peace activist, adults pass the victim narrative on to their children who did not witness the conflict themselves. The discourse on the Ingush side is based on the history of deportation in 1944 and displacement of 1992. These are reflected in a display at the museum in Nazran and in publications issued in the republic. There used to be many publications outlining the similar Ossetian narrative as well, but they were banned five to six years ago.[48]

The North Ossetian authorities claim that the conflict in Prigorodny is mostly resolved and that violence has decreased. However, a perception of insecurity lingers on: "each time the situation improves, a violent incident occurs." Resolution of the conflict may rely on the view that the Ossetians are prepared to live side-by-side with the Ingush, but not to be fully integrated as was the case during the Soviet period. Although there are Ingush living in North Ossetia, they are not represented in power. This can primarily be explained by the 1992 conflict and the subsequent loss of standing of the Ingush. Although the conflict started as a territorial dispute, "the land of Prigorodny District is not valuable as a resource for livelihood. It is a symbol: for the Ingush – of historical homeland; for the Ossetian – of a barrier."[49]

The role of religion and religious radicalism

Religion plays an increasingly important role, having both a positive and negative impact on society. There was a strong view that excessive repression of religious movements could generate further radicalisation and leading to deterioration in the situation. Still, attitudes on how to deal with religious revival are mixed. Many believe that more religious freedom would be beneficial. At the same time, some express apprehension.

In Chechnya society has grown more religious in reaction to war trauma and because religion helps adapt to changed conditions. Religion has also emerged as a tool with which the leadership can manage social relations. The republic's authorities provide support for organised religion and have developed an institutional and physical infrastructure for this purpose.

In North Ossetia the interconfessional split is a new trend. Negative attitudes towards 'Muslims' are gaining momentum among the rest, while there are cases of ethnic Russians and South Ossetians converting to Islam. The Beslan tragedy is no longer blamed on the Ingush as it used to be, but on abstract 'Muslims,' despite the attackers being of mixed ethnicity, with one being an Ossetian.

In Dagestan Muslims can be grouped into two categories: traditional Sufi brotherhoods which are said to be split along ethnic lines; and Salafis, or 'new Muslims'. Salafi activity is more tolerated in Dagestan than in the other republics, where they operate underground as outlaws. There is also a secular constituency in Dagestan which feels challenged by growing Islamic forces. It believes that Salafis present a danger: while they may seem moderate today, in the future they could turn into something from the Middle Ages. Still, Salafis were noted to be stricter in their beliefs and to live according to their principles. They have shown stoicism and firmness in their beliefs. Sufi clergy, by contrast, are seen as too prone to worldly temptations.[50]

47 One such fight took place at Chermen roundabout on the day the mission was there, but we did not see the fight (21 December 2011).

48 Dulyaev I, North Ossetia case study.

49 *Ibid*.

50 Murzayev A, remarks at Pyatigorsk seminar, October 2011.

In Dagestan and Ingushetia interview respondents noted that young people often do not trust official Muslim clergy because they do not live according to the values they preach. They drive flashy cars and live in large mansions. There are no bright, appealing leaders among the traditionalists. By contrast, those who preach Salafism adhere to a modest lifestyle. Many respondents attributed the spread of new teachings to religious education received abroad, such as in the Middle East, or in Dagestan (respondents in other republics). "We did not have so many learned sons before, in Soviet times."[51] (Ingushetia).

Young people in Muslim republics are more religious than the older generation. Mosque attendance is growing. In some cases parents were not happy that their daughters started covering themselves in Muslim cloaks, but were powerless to do anything about it and attribute this to rebellion by the younger generation.[52]

Young people on radical religious groups, in their own words

The following is a story of a young man who was drawn into a group and called by at home before leaving for good:

"When we tried to persuade him to stay, he said that there was no way back. He had always gone together with our boys, but on this day he did not take them along. Men in vests with weapons came for him. He knew that he would be killed. He did not want to go there. But he knew that if he did not go, his family would suffer. He told us that 'those who recruit there are not in any way different from us. They are ordinary people, study, work, but in reality they have a different life'."[53]

A woman said,

"It is like hypnosis. Sometimes I find myself among people from that circle, I mean Wahhabis, although I am not one of them… A few times, I felt confused and lost and sometimes even thought that maybe they were right. Then I was possessed with such fear that I pulled myself together to leave and decided never to be near them ever again. For instance, they say that things every Muslim should do are not necessary. What is prescribed by religion, they distort. For example, that something is not compulsory, that tomorrow you would not be judged for this. That stance deludes people. And then you get lost and do not know what to say to them. It is better never to talk to them and keep away"[54]

Another man thought that simply 'having an idea to live for' can be a decisive pull factor for young people who join militant Islamist groups.

"That other idea is more powerful in some ways than what we have now. Let's leave religion alone, it is pure. Here another thing is important – the underlying idea. It is not just religion makes a person head into the forest. Other (factors) are social deviation, having nothing to do, or political views. Probably, religion is still the foundation, but still the idea unites all these. A person goes to the woods because of the idea. And, one has to say, if there is no other idea which would counter that prevailing thought, in their mind and in their spirit, they would pursue that idea. Each person lives for some idea, whether they live peacefully or go to war. And if that idea prevails in the person, they will go to their limits."[55]

Other people whose lives had been hard do not understand the Islamists who come from well-to-do families and have chosen to reject it all. In the words of a displaced person from North Ossetia,

"We fled with nothing, ended up in the mountains. There was no heating. I had to find wood, heat the house and care for my younger sisters. I was twelve. After that we lived in

51 Rural focus group, Ekajevo village, Ingushetia.
52 Expert interview, Nazran, Ingushetia, December 2011.
53 Youth focus group, Nazran, Ingushetia.
54 Anonymous focus group respondent, North Caucasus.
55 Interview with former IDP from Prigorodny district, Nazran, Ingushetia.

wagons and with different relatives. Life was always hard. We have a house now which I built; it is modest, but it is OK for the family, and I have a job. I will never understand those who reject everything which makes up a normal life."[56]

An informed observer in Ingushetia noted that Islamism is fed by the social protest of young people who are not poor or deprived themselves, but who see no prospect for self-fulfilment. Key messages propagated by the Islamists include: "the authorities have monopolised everything and sell jobs for big money", "officials are getting rich, the powers are corrupt", "security structures *de facto* rule and run everything, they are brutal, destroy, kill, abduct." This propaganda is persuasive and works for some people.

At a seminar analysing the initial research findings, held in Pyatigorsk in October 2011, participants drawn from the local intelligentsia offered the following reasons as to why young people join armed groups: "young people were not brought up with clear standards" and "cannot tell right from wrong." This discourse is echoed in the case studies from each of the republics. There is a reaction to modern vices, fostered by the openness of society, which contrast sharply with socially-conservative Soviet norms. In Kabardino-Balkaria alcoholism, drug consumption and prostitution were identified as social evils to rebel against, encouraging people to join Islamist groups as a reaction against a perceived breakdown in moral values.

People criticise society where

"the stereotype exists that it is better to be an alcoholic than to be pure, pray five times a day and grow a beard. Sharia is good, it does not have loopholes."[57]

In Chechnya

"Some people 'head for the forest' because of discontent with the existing situation; some, because they adhere to their views, and there are some who join because of money."[58]

In Kabardino-Balkaria distrust towards the DUM was identified as a reason, since it was believed that the leadership had passed lists of Muslim suspects to the FSB in the aftermath of the October 2005 violence.

In Kabardino-Balkaria

"DUM is in a sad and sorry state, because they remained silent; when things used to happen, they would say they did not. There is no terrorism in Islam, this is how it all starts. When there were conflicts with security structures, they would remain silent. This is why respect for them is undermined. How were the lists of Wahhabis made up? If a man shaves off his moustache, grows a beard and wears cropped trousers, he is a Wahhabi."[59]

There is a strong perception that the actions of security structures, such as detentions and shootings, provoke young people into joining those movements. In Dagestan corruption among the older generation was named as one of the reasons, indicating a declining of values in society. An episode was cited when a young man who had been watching his father accepting bribes started to search for a spiritual alternative, and was drawn into an Islamist group. He presented his parents with an ultimatum: either an Islamic wedding with no alcohol, or he would get married in the field.[60]

In North Ossetia no coherent dividing line between traditional and 'new' Muslims exists, as in other republics. There are Muslim radicals who are ethnic Russians. In Kabardino-Balkaria and North Ossetia religious radicalism is attributed to external influences and connections, such as the two wars in Chechnya, the presence of IDPs in Kabardino-Balkaria, the emergence of the North Caucasus Imamate as a result of radicalisation during the Chechen wars, and Islamic education abroad which

56 Polytechnic College focus group, Nazran, Ingushetia.
57 Focus group with students, Kabardino-Balkaria.
58 Focus group with rural young people, Chechnya.
59 Focus group with young people, Nalchik, Kabardino-Balkaria.
60 Murzayev A in remarks at Pyatigorsk seminar, October 2011.

imported the ideology to the republics. It was stressed that many of those who joined radical religious groups in Kabardino-Balkaria and Dagestan come from well-to-do, educated, privileged families. The geographical spread is uneven; for instance, many known members in Kabardino-Balkaria come from Baksan District, where security deteriorated in 2010–2011.

Relations between state institutions and society

The public place high demands on the state to provide material and non-material public goods. Material goods are housing and employment opportunities, and non-material goods are public services, including security and justice. Expectations of state action are considerable, and so is the disappointment when such expectations are not satisfied.

Corruption and nepotism

Pervasive corruption, nepotism and a system of patronage were identified as serious problems by respondents. Meritocracy plays a secondary role in access to senior jobs in administration and public service, while other factors are more prominent.

Governance based on patronage was found to be a common feature across the republics. In Dagestan, political elites form along clan lines. They constitute a close-knit network of family members and representatives of one's homeland, and enjoy exclusive access to administrative resources. Clan rule marginalises outsiders. Powerful clans preside over the distribution of positions such as places on councils at each level and in the People's Assembly.[61] District administrations are like local fiefs, with their heads presiding over a network of loyalists from among clan members.

It was noted that the authority of the republic's government is sometimes undermined by the interference of Moscow-based oligarchs of Dagestani origin in the distribution of assets and personnel appointments. Oligarchs find ways to access power holders in Moscow and overrule decisions of the republic's authorities, or lobby for decisions that suit them before Makhachkala even becomes engaged with an issue.

In Chechnya *teips* play a role reminiscent of that of a clan: if one representative manages to obtain a good position, he or she is likely to bring other *teip* members into the structure they head.

"A director, when he hires staff, surrounds himself with relatives, even if they are incompetent in this line of work. Even simple workmen are drawn from their own network."[62]

In Ingushetia focus group respondents noted that blood ties are more important for accessing jobs than friendship or shared experience: it is more acceptable to refuse a position to a friend, neighbour or a class mate, but much harder in the case of a relative, as the whole *teip* would be displeased. A student noted during a focus group: "I do not want to become a judge or an investigator, because pressure from relatives would be more than I would be able to bear."

Minorities typically lose out in this 'system.' In North Ossetia respondents consider that ethnic Ossetians occupy the majority of economically attractive appointments. Another separate but related situation in which the opportunities for minority groups are reduced is the merger between ethnic and business interests. In Dagestan oil is controlled by the Avars, and gas by the Kumyks, while representatives of the same ethnicity as the boss get preferential treatment within an enterprise.[63]

Some changes are believed to be happening among the younger generation. When younger people get into senior positions themselves, they are said to prefer to employ representatives from their own group, if the relative merits of the candidates are equal.

61 Dagestan's parliament.
62 Focus group on 'Social situation in post-conflict situation,' Chechnya.
63 Yarlykapov A, Dagestan case study.

Otherwise, they would typically appoint one hard-working individual irrespective of ethnic belonging, who would do most of the work, and three to four relatives and friends who would not be expected to do much.[64] However, the respondents noted that there is no real struggle against corruption because the whole society is in it; everybody comes under pressure from the family, clan or *teip*.

Lack of opportunities

Already operating in the unenviable conditions of generally weak economies, business people express anger at additional problems, such as pressure from the authorities (e.g. demands for bribes); the inaccessibility of loans without hard-to-get documentation; difficulties in obtaining licenses and permits; and the necessity to sometimes work in the 'grey economy', for example without contracts, insurance and labour rights.

Opportunities are restricted because bureaucracy and business closely intertwine.

In Kabardino-Balkaria one official says,

"Here a business without a civil servant's seat or backing is an empty shell. If you are not a state official you have no levers of executive power, therefore your business would suffer; they will try to make you incur losses and take the business away from you."[65]

The 'rich and poor' divide is deepening, even within the same *teip*/clan/extended family.[66] The public wonders how the rich got to where they are, and does not feel that the merits of hard work and education are the answer. Pervasive corruption leads to people's dignity being violated by frequent demands for payments, and results in humiliation and alienation from official structures.

Again, in Kabardino-Balkaria

"How can I run the risk of taking an envelope, putting money in it and (handing it) to those people who not only do not have education, they cannot even write properly?…"[67]

In North Ossetia

"Everything is for sale; those who have money will escape everything unpunished."[68]

However, in Dagestan young people acknowledged that they would act the same when they come of age.

"When we manage to get jobs in the government structures, we will take bribes all the same. It is impossible to reject money."[69]

"As a remedy, people suggest conducting several show trials of corrupt officials and showing them on TV, so that the others will be deterred."[70]

The public blames the authorities for governance deficit, while the absence of competitiveness and meritocracy reflects not only the faults of individuals in power, but also the social fabric and pressures which come from society.

Corruption pervades education systems across the region and respondents in all republics repeated the same arguments about the poor quality of higher education. Some studied elsewhere in Russia and compared their republics unfavourably.

Kabardino-Balkaria

"I would prefer my children to study outside the republics, because they say that it is impossible to get a job with the degrees obtained in our republic."[71]

64 Zarema Kuskkhova in remarks at Pyatigorsk seminar, October 2011.

65 Focus group with representatives of business community, Nalchik, Kabardino-Balkaria.

66 Interview with Marem Yalkharoyeva, Nazran, Ingushetia, December 2011.

67 Focus group with representatives of business community, Nalchik, Kabardino-Balkaria.

68 Community focus group, North Ossetia.

69 Focus group with students, Makhachkala, Dagestan.

70 Focus group with business people, Grozny, Chechnya.

71 Focus group in Baksan District, Kabardino-Balkaria.

Violations of the rule of law and justice by officials

Another fault line between communities and institutions is a sense that the authorities violate the law themselves. The arbitrariness of those in power creates a permissive environment for illegality. Respondents noted that "ordinary people observe the law" and "some people ride in flashy cars, while others look to head for the forest."[72]

In Chechnya

"I stopped in my car at Putin Prospect (in Grozny), and I had music playing. A convoy of cars with some senior official, maybe a minister, was passing on the right. I was dragged out of my car, and they asked me why I didn't let him have right of way. They took my car away, and I spent two days getting it back. Such goings-on often happen on our roads."[73]

In Kabardino-Balkaria a woman's son was detained on the road by police as a Wahhabi suspect, but they could not find any evidence. Then they

"found some pretext finally. I gave them 2,000 roubles to let him go."[74]

Often, police actions act as a conflict driver. It was noted that law enforcement agencies, who are meant to maintain order, are seen as the most frequent violators of the law.

In Kabardino-Balkaria

"There are law enforcement organs and the criminal world, that's all. Lately there is no difference between the organs and the criminals."[75]

"If one asks, 'Why do you want to serve in the police?', half would respond, 'Because of money and power'."[76]

In North Ossetia

"Criminals and police are one and the same. If previously bandits collected tolls, now the police are doing it."[77]

In Chechnya

"Officers from the Drug Control Agency beat up a guy and made him sign a paper stating that he sells drugs. Now they are demanding 150,000 to close the case. The young guys who are the real culprits were left alone because they paid."[78]

In Ingushetia, according to one respondent, the FSB detained a young man, but did not charge him with anything, then transferred him to the police where he was accused of two unresolved cases of routine crime, beaten until he pleaded guilty and confessed to one crime. The trial subsequently collapsed because the young man's innocence was proven, but he spent two months in custody and was in poor health after the beatings. He lost interest in his studies, left for central Russia, could not find peace of mind there either, and returned to the republic, feeling lost and broken.

The justice system remains deficient. Because state courts are not always trusted, mosques and mullahs on occasion play a role of a civil court and can provide arbitration in Dagestan and Chechnya. In Dagestan, respondents noted the increased authority of spiritual leaders and religious institutions as an alternative to corrupt and arbitrary state institutions.

In Chechnya

"People appeal to a mosque, to a mullah, to a teip *elder, because if one goes to court, one*

72 Focus group with young people (rural), Chechnya.

73 Focus group on 'Individual entrepreneurship: opportunities and limitations,' Grozny, Chechnya.

74 Focus group in Baksan District, Kabardino-Balkaria.

75 Focus group with young people, Kabardino-Balkaria.

76 Focus group with students, Nalchik, Kabardino-Balkaria.

77 Community focus group, North Ossetia.

78 Focus group with business people, Grozny.

has to hire a lawyer, pay money. Our authorities do not use law themselves. And we, knowing in advance that we are doomed, do not talk much about a lawful decision.[79]

The feeling of being let down by the institutions

High levels of mistrust and at times frustration with government institutions were registered, alongside a great sense of disillusionment and disappointment. People feel abandoned, and believe that institutions do not sufficiently care about their needs. State structures are widely seen as a closed world offering little possibility for engagement with ordinary citizens.

In Chechnya

"The authorities do not trust the people, and we do not trust the authorities. They exist by themselves and we exist by ourselves."[80]

The same was said in North Ossetia. In Kabardino-Balkaria and Chechnya local societies place more demands on the authorities and expect that their wellbeing can and should be improved by state action.

"Transition to market conditions implied that the state would be helping us."[81]

People feel neglected by the authorities, as civilian government representatives seldom visit and engage. Communities' main interaction with the authorities is with those in uniform. In the words of community respondents' from Elbrus District (Kabardino-Balkaria), who endured a counter-terrorist operation taking place in their area:

"During these six months nobody has expressed an interest in how we live here. This is the most upsetting thing. The authorities are at war with their own people. It is a shame. Why are we worse than other districts? We wish that the President had visited just once."

People often appeal to the municipal authorities for solutions to their problems, but they have little power. In the words of a rural municipality administrator in Ingushetia: "People think that I am a chief treasurer, a paymaster, a prosecutor general, a building company and an army commander-in-chief, all at once." The obstacles for small and medium entrepreneurs mostly lie at the level of district authority.

In Chechnya, military styles of command have been transferred to civilian administration and the republic is governed through command methods. The regime, which emerged out of war, does not envisage the existence of competitors or opponents. Decisions are made in a closed elite circle and religious institutions also play a subordinate political role. The republic has 29 branches of all-Russia parties, but their influence over political process is weak.

While in other republics expressions of dissent are possible, in Chechnya they are strongly discouraged, making people largely voiceless. Sometimes traditional Islamic clergy can voice opposing views to those of the authorities. Still, society is gradually becoming more demanding and there is a constituency which is concerned not only with daily bread, but with a wider civic engagement.

"We cannot influence the authorities in a way that society might be satisfied, cannot influence the decisions which the powers make, because they select people from their own elite group, from the parliament, from ministers."[82]

In focus groups some noted that they do not feel entirely secure. There were instances when criticism of the republic's authorities ended in repression, and when businessmen and ordinary people tried to stand up for their rights, e.g. launched appeals to the European Court of Human Rights.

79 Focus group on 'Social situation in post-conflict situation,' Chechnya.
80 Focus group with intelligentsia, Chechnya.
81 Focus group with business people (rural), Grozny, Chechnya.
82 Focus group on 'Formation of civic institutions: prospects for establishment of partnership and dialogue with the authorities,' Chechnya.

In Ingushetia and Dagestan there is more openness, a relatively freer media and politicians are more accessible for communication and dialogue. However, peoples' needs remain unanswered, as the ability to tell authorities about problems rarely precipitates action in response.

In North Ossetia, resentment of institutions is widespread, and expectations of government action are low. People do not believe in the ability of the state to improve their wellbeing. They suspect that those in power are likely to leave at the first sign of trouble.

Old political taboos are being broken and resentment of authorities operating at different levels is on the rise – a new trend identified in the research. Even United Russia and Vladimir Putin, formerly very popular, did not escape criticism. People in the North Caucasus shared the same feelings as other Russian citizens with regard to the December 2011 elections, and their moods have already been registered by the research in September 2011. Previously the federal authorities occupied a revered place, and people appealed to them as an arbiter in local disputes, but this appears to be changing. A similar mood swing is unfolding in Kabardino-Balkaria:

"In Russia there is no democracy, absolutely. Nobody should be above the law, neither the President, nor the Government. But in our country the law is completely in the hands of those in power."[83]

The same is expressed in Chechnya:

"We are not that content with the political order of our life, i.e. the lack of any chance to influence those in power. People elect those who are already chosen. Everything happens here because those at the top, for instance, Medvedev and Putin, decide everything between themselves. We do not have competitiveness, as in the West."[84]

In Chechnya, respondents felt that the population cherishes stability and shares the positive energy brought by the reconstruction of the republic. The current Head of the Republic has conveyed the hope that it is possible to start life anew and has brought in a feel-good factor. He has sponsored public displays which, along with symbolism in politics are very important, even if they do not work for everybody. So far, the momentum of large-scale reconstruction is carrying society with it, and, as long as the process is underway, it acts as a driver for positive mobilisation. However, more tension might unfold when the post-war reconstruction is over.

In parts of Dagestan and Ingushetia a discourse has also emerged suggesting that certain aspects of the development of Chechnya are attractive and might serve as a positive model. In Dagestan they centre on Ramzan Kadyrov's ability to combine Islamic and secular ways of life, when adherence to religion does not mean a ban on public entertainment and leisure pursuits. This sentiment is echoed in Ingushetia. In Dagestan some believe that Kadyrov's methods of fighting violent extremism are more effective than the ones used by the republic's authorities and should be adopted instead.[85]

In Ingushetia respondents underscored many positive social and economic developments in Chechnya. Young people enjoy their visits to Grozny. The security authorities positively assess ideological work undertaken in Chechnya and the infrastructure developed for this purpose: the Committee on Youth Affairs numbering 110 staff, the Ministry for Nationalities (140 staff) and the Centre for Spiritual and Moral Education and Development (35 staff), which proactively engage with religious youth.

At the same time, the view was expressed that Kadyrov's methods of fighting extremism are too cruel and people in Ingushetia prefer a more humane approach as practised by Yevkurov's leadership. Rather, Kadyrov is seen as an effective operator who succeeds

---

83 Community focus group, Kabardino-Balkaria.
84 Focus group on 'Role of young people in social self-organisation of Chechnya: lifestyle and reference points.'
85 Murzayev A, presentation at Pyatigorsk seminar, October 2011.

in obtaining from Moscow what he wants to develop his republic along his own lines. In this he is compared favourably to 'the three officers who ruled us for nineteen years' and who did not know how to go about social and economic development. "Let Moscow send us a good manager next time," was the conclusion voiced by some respondents in a focus group. "But it will all be the same; they'll send the next fool in uniform."

Responses and coping strategies

State responses in the security field

In the last decade the situation in and around Chechnya was the primary security concern, but the security focus has moved to other republics, to which Islamist movements have spread. People across the region recognise the need to combat violent extremism, but a majority disagrees with the way this is pursued by security authorities, or finds it ineffective. Communities have little trust in the methods of fighting terrorism.

It was stressed that the measures taken are not transparent – e.g. killing suspects on the spot instead of arresting and putting them through a due legal process and transparent trial – and appear at times to be targeting random people who are not really terrorists. It was noted that some people were shot dead for seemingly minor offences, such as setting fire to a shop which sold alcohol. This spreads insecurity within the population, which all comes under suspicion. Families and communities, from where radicalised people originate, fear both the power structures and Islamists in the forests. "We don't know who we should fear more – the armed groups or the law enforcement organs."

In order to understand security in Chechnya, one has to bear in mind that the republic went through some of the most devastating wars in modern history. According to different estimates, between 100,000 and 300,000 lives were lost.[86] It was only in 2008 that people started to relax in their homes, as shootings in populated areas continued until 2007.

Nowadays the security situation in Chechnya is considered to have seen a marked improvement, although perceptions on that also vary. It is the most militarised Caucasian regime, with combat-ready troops and a guard, all ferociously loyal to the Head of the Republic. Collective punishments were introduced, where relatives of proven or suspected terrorists suffer severe repercussions. Despite the many social and ethical problems associated with it, the medieval custom of blood vengeance is a factor of containment; to an extent, arbitrary behaviour by security structures is held in check out of concern that it might invite blood vengeance. "Whether law or not law, in Chechnya one cannot escape punishment." It was pointed out that the scale of young people joining armed groups reduced considerably after responsibility for maintaining security in the republic was transferred to the Chechens. However, some people still join Islamist armed groups: "war is still going on, people leave for 'there'".[87] The perception of everyday security is not entirely satisfactory.

"In our republic a young man does not feel free and secure. An invisible war is going on, people are divided."[88]

"In the village I feel more secure than in Grozny."[89]

The echo of war is still felt. De-mining of fields and woods remains a problem.

"(We) appealed to the Khankala military regiment about it. Nowadays people still get wounded. At Petropavlovka three people lost their feet."[90]

86 There is no official comprehensive list of the dead, they only exist in separate localities, – Minkail Enjiev, co-chair of Union of NGOs of the Chechen Republic, Head of Human Rights Centre, remarks at Pyatigorsk seminar, October 2011.
87 Focus group with intelligentsia, Grozny, Chechnya.
88 Focus group on 'Role of young people in social self-organisation of Chechnya: lifestyle and reference points.'
89 Focus group with business people, Grozny, Chechnya.
90 Focus group with Farmers, Chechnya.

Proliferation of small arms in the region is widespread, despite periodic disarmament efforts. Shootings happen in public places, for instance, when a bride is being kidnapped (a woman was killed by a stray bullet in Ingushetia) or celebratory fire at weddings. Ingushetia's Ministry for Internal Affairs issued a decree on responsibility for pointless firings and sharia courts (quaziyat) are supposed to levy punishments, but the situation has been largely unchanged.

Law enforcement authorities are seen as lacking appropriate knowledge. Complicated issues – which require expertise in the ideological field and an approach which analyses the needs and values of the opponents – are often dealt with by rank-and-file police investigators who are only used to dealing with ordinary crime.

People tend to hold security authorities to account for an inability to rein in the armed groups, but largely do not see themselves or their communities as responsible for producing radicals from within their milieu.

In Kabardino-Balkaria

"Those who are doing it are placed on some watch-list, so why can't they (the security authorities) bring order? Why are they waiting until other children will be drawn into it? This is the most burning problem we are facing now."[91]

The respondents in Kabardino-Balkaria and in Ingushetia wondered why the state security structures had been lax in the previous period and had not halted Islamist penetration into their societies in the late 1990s.

"(They) would not have headed for the forest if at the right time somebody had come and said, 'Guys, you are on the wrong path.'"[92]

At present, security structures are said to be treating only the consequences of the malaise, often by brutal means, whereas the seeds were planted a decade ago, and neglected by the security authorities. One answer is that in the 1990s the FSB lost most of its previous qualified cadre to private business. Paid little, the jobs were dangerous and enjoyed low prestige. As a result, they did not attract high-calibre staff. Moreover, the Islamist challenge was overlooked, as seemingly larger issues such as the independence of Chechnya were looming, and started to receive serious attention only after it took firm hold across the region.

Life in the mountains particularly suffers from a lack of physical security.

In Chechnya

"It is dangerous for young people to set up their own farms in the mountains, there is no security, some areas are not de-mined, one can be mistaken for God knows whom and illegal actions may follow."[93]

Counter-terrorism operations, ongoing in the Elbrus District of Kabardino-Balkaria, make local residents accustomed to living with a sense of insecurity.

"The scariest thing is that we get accustomed to living under the barrels of machineguns. This becomes a habit. It worries us."[94]

North Ossetia's identity is closely linked to security provision and Ossetia's contribution in securing Russia as a whole. The conviction that 'Ossetia is Russia's outpost in the Caucasus' serves as a distinct identity marker. However, it has acquired a competitor in the shape of Ramzan Kadyrov, who also offers himself and his establishment as a regional security guarantor.

---

91   Focus group in Baksan District, Kabardino-Balkaria.
92   Focus group in Elbrus District, Kabardino-Balkaria.
93   Focus group with rural young people, Chechnya.
94   Focus group with community in Elbrus District, Kabardino-Balkaria, September 2011.

National responses in the development and peacebuilding fields

The 'Strategy of Social and Economic Development of the North Caucasus Federal District until 2025' was adopted in October 2010. Its assessment of the drivers for conflict identifies external forces, such as activities of international terrorist networks and penetration of ideas of radicalism, and internal drivers, such as governance, economic and social problems, as the causes for instability and tensions in the region. It outlines a broad set of measures towards strengthening all-Russia citizenry identity, and addressing ethno-political and religious extremism. Institutional infrastructure was developed for the purpose by the Office of the Presidential Envoy to the North Caucasus Federal District, including a Public Council, the Council of Elders and the Ulema Council. However, the main emphasis of the strategy is on fostering socio-economic development based upon the premise that raising living standards would produce peace.

To give credence to a modernising development course, Aleksandr Khloponin, a former banker and Norilsk Nickel board chairman, was appointed as a presidential envoy to the Federal District.[95] His appointment signalled that the Kremlin prioritised economic rejuvenation over security in its dealings with the region. In October 2010 Khloponin unveiled a 15-year strategy to create 400,000 new jobs and an annual economic growth of 7.7 percent. 44 business projects received state support, aimed at the creation of 17,000 new jobs.

Vladimir Putin again promised to develop the economy of the republics, create new jobs and provide more tax breaks during his December 2011 visit to Chechnya when he explained why the populist slogan 'Enough of Feeding the Caucasus' (*Khvatit kormit' Kavkaz*), sometimes used in Russian political debate, is wrong. In this case, Putin defensively maintained,

"Young people from the North Caucasus would come to the other regions of the Russian Federation, especially into big cities, in even higher numbers. What to do then? Drive them out? What would they do? They will join bandit formations. There are other proposals, quite crazy, in my view. Separate the North Caucasus from Russia altogether. As soon as that was tried others would come up who would want to do the same in relation to other national-territorial entities of the Russian Federation. And that would mean the end of Russia. Overall a great tragedy."[96]

No dedicated function exists in the centre which would provide ideological expertise and specialised support in religious, ethnic and youth affairs issues, or advice on public awareness strategy. DUMs are viewed by people as more of a problem than a solution, the Federal Ministry for Nationalities was disbanded, and the Ministry for Regional Development deals with social and economic matters. The NCFD neither offers support in the ideological field nor brings together the republics' ministers of nation-alities. The prosecutor's office oversees financial accountability of the programmes undertaken, while the centre is interested in receiving regular reports on activities undertaken, but substantive evaluations are lacking.

Similar institutional infrastructure for public consultation, such as a Council of Teips in Ingushetia, was established in all the republics. However, respondents from among the intelligentsia noted that there was no need for such 'medieval' structures with bogus representation and questionable legitimacy. It is better to allow the same mechanisms which function elsewhere in Russia, e.g. NGOs, political parties, trade unions, social associations and initiative groups to operate freely.

The following republic-targeted programmes were undertaken in Kabardino-Balkaria:

■ 'Prevention of corruption in the Republic of Kabardino-Balkaria, 2008–2010'. Most respondents agreed that the measures were not very effective. The next similar programme was adopted for 2011–2013.

95 Medvedev appoints ex-top manager in charge of volatile Caucasus,' 19 January 2010, http://en.rian.ru/russia/20100119/157614943.html, accessed 14 March 2011.
96 Cited in Latukhina K, 'Kavkazskii Marshrut,' *Rossiiskaya Gazeta*, no. 287, 21 December 2011.

■ 'Programme on 'Preparation of qualified cadre for the Kabardino-Balkaria economy, 2007–2011'. Hundreds of young people obtained education under the programme, but most of them did not manage to find adequate jobs in the republic.

■ 'Programme on 'Youth of Kabardino-Balkaria, 2002–2006' did not receive full financing.

■ 'Programme on 'Co-operation with religious organisations in Kabardino-Balkaria and their state support in 2007–2010' also did not receive sufficient funds and was not fully implemented.

■ 'Programme on 'Prevention of terrorism and extremism in Kabardino-Balkaria, 2011–2015' was adopted in March 2011.

In June 2011 a Public Council under the President of Kabardino-Balkaria was established. The President initiated a 'Concept of Nationalities' Policy, the draft of which is being publicly debated. A Memorandum on combating violence, extremism, inter-ethnic hatred and support for peacebuilding in the Caucasus has been published on the presidential website and was signed by dignitaries from the republic and outside. In June 2011 the Parliament, in an attempt to resolve land disputes, adopted a Law on Designation and Use of Distant Pasture Lands, which stipulated their status as a republic's property.

In Chechnya post-conflict reconstruction began in 2006 within the framework of the federal programme on rehabilitation and development of social and economic infrastructure. The ministries have their own targeted programmes. The republic's budget grew considerably and brought improvements in social sphere. Industrial enterprises are also built alongside objects of social infrastructure.[97]

Respondents from official structures noted that public awareness work in Chechnya is better organised and the infrastructure for it is more developed. The Youth Affairs Committee numbers 110 staff, runs a dedicated channel, 'Youth TV', with a remit to broadcast 24 hours a day, an interactive website, a youth magazine 'Territory SNE' and has developed outreach programmes for different social groups of young people. 52 articles were published in the republic's newspapers, 332 documentaries were shot and 249 programmes broadcast. The Centre for Spiritual and Moral Education and Development numbers 35 staff, most of whom are graduates from Islamic institutes. They analyse materials on Islamist websites and engage in awareness raising and debates on contentious subjects such as the meaning of *jihad* and interpretation of Islamic provisions.

The Ministry for Nationalities' Policy, Religious Affairs and External Relations of Dagestan undertook a number of initiatives, such as a 'Comprehensive Programme on Combating Religious-Political Extremism in Republic of Dagestan' and a republic-targeted programme on 'Development of interethnic relations in the Republic of Dagestan.' The new president, Magomedsalam Magomedov, held the Third Congress of the Peoples of Dagestan on 15 December 2010, which brought together over 3,000 delegates. The Congress represented a wide spectrum of the Dagestani political class and public figures, and representatives of religious opposition acquired a platform to make their voices heard. Such attempts at public dialogue with religious opponents were undertaken in 1998–1999, but were abandoned after several main participants from the secular/traditional Muslim side had been killed.

The President also initiated an intra-confessional dialogue between different Muslim groups, and a dialogue between the state and the Salafis. A Conciliation Commission was established to offer an opportunity to leave the underground armed struggle and join civilian life. However, there are doubts among experts that former members of armed groups indeed came forward. In Ingushetia it is the same situation. Since identities of those who submitted themselves to the conciliation commissions cannot

---

97 Yusupov M, Chechnya case study.

be revealed as they are put on protection schemes and relocated into regions where they would not be traced, their existence cannot be independently verified. In the words of an NGO respondent, "until I see these people with my own eyes, I won't believe this."

Still, despite the uncertainty of the effectiveness of the commissions in getting people out of the forest, their public relations value is positive. There has been some success in reaching out to Salafi adherents who were not suspected of being members of armed groups. A few volunteered to respond to outreach initiatives.

"We are open and came out of the underground. But we are ready to go back at any time, because we are not confident that the new policy is serious and lasting."[98]

However, problems have not been fundamentally resolved. Some believe that it is convenient for the authorities to defame Salafis in order to seek funds from the centre for a struggle against them, and also to blame the republic's problems on the continuous troubles with Salafis. The authorities are regarded as cagey in fostering dialogue with Salafis because they are apprehensive of criticism from society and lack sound theological credentials to win arguments against them.[99] In Dagestan there is a popular belief that federal programmes have been instrumentalised by powerful clans for their own interests and thus enjoy little trust.[100]

In North Ossetia a 'Russia's South' federal programme has been implemented, which involves projects in physical and social infrastructure. There is a Council on Social and Economic Security, as well as the Public Chamber. Respondents remembered federal and international programmes on rehabilitation of Prigorodny District and for recovery after the Beslan tragedy. Post-conflict rehabilitation measures in Prigorodny District receive continuous federal support.

A new federal programme aimed at overcoming the consequences of the Ossetian-Ingush conflict – and designed by the federal authorities to be implemented jointly by North Ossetia and Ingushetia in Prigorodny District from 2012 onwards – targets job creation, among other issues. There is also a peacebuilding programme between North Ossetia and Ingushetia on improvement of interethnic relations and development of civil society, which was adopted in 2011. It envisages an action plan of joint measures between state bodies and public organisations from both sides to enhance good neighbourly relations. Prigorodny District has now been included in the federal development programme of the Ministry of Regional Development.[101]

In other aspects of conflict prevention the programmes active in North Ossetia are:

- "Programme for combating extremism, 2011–2013' is mostly aimed at prevention of radicalism among young people.

- "Programme of generation of employment opportunities, 2009–2012' seeks to create more jobs.

In Ingushetia, apart from the Prigorodny programmes, two more are implemented by the Ministry for Nationalities:

- "Return and arrangements for the (resident) Russian-speaking population, 2010–2015'. Under President Zyazikov a public relations campaign for return was launched, but without success.

- "Spiritual and Moral Education' in co-operation with the Muftiyat, the Pokrov Russian Orthodox Church and Radio Angusht, established with a grant from the programme.

98 Yarlykapov A, Dagestan case study.
99 Murzayev A, presentation at Pyatigorsk seminar, October 2011.
100 Murzayev A, presentation at Pyatigorsk seminar, October 2011.
101 The project on social and economic development of Prigorodny has an allocation of 7168.9 million Rbl from the federal budget. Moreover, additional funds would be allocated from the NCFD budget to reach the total of 8944,4 million Rbl. The allocation was approved by the Ministry of Finance in September 2011.

People's responses

Ethnic Russian out-migration

The ethnic composition of the North Caucasus in the last two decades has been changing. Security and socio-economic conditions in the region caused outmigration. Non-indigenous groups, such as ethnic Russians and other Slavs, Jews, Germans, Tatars etc. were the first to resort to emigration in the 1990s as the republics acquired greater autonomy. Russian communities have shrunk in Chechnya, Ingushetia and Dagestan, and are reducing in Kabardino-Balkaria and North Ossetia. According to the 2010 census data, Russians constitute 3.6 percent of population in Dagestan (104,000), 1.9 percent in Chechnya (24,382) and 0.8 percent in Ingushetia (3,200). Russians still are 20.8 percent in North Ossetia and 22.5 percent in Kabardino-Balkaria, although are declining in both.[102]

A steady tendency towards emigration to Russian-majority regions persists, especially among younger men. Many professions in which Russians have been trained are no longer in demand following a decline in these industries. Russians lose out on personnel appointments, as they are alien to the local patronage networks that determine distribution of lucrative jobs and assets. Russian communities are aware that if they are interested in career advancement, emigration is their best bet. The leftover population forms a lower-status minority, with limited access to elite jobs and opportunities.[103] In the case of Chechnya, Russians are included in status positions through positive discrimination. Making up 1.9 percent of the population, they still have two of the 41 deputies in the republic's parliament.

The cultural environment is changing with the departure of Russians. The federal government is making efforts to maintain multi-ethnic language facilities and has largely preserved Soviet policies in the cultural sphere.

Russian remains the *lingua franca*, but the local norm is becoming eroded. Children speak their own languages at home and in the street, but have to start school in Russian where the republics' languages are taught as subjects. In practice they speak pidgin Russian in lessons, as the teachers talk to them in a mixture of both languages. Some republics, like Dagestan, are creating special government programmes, such as the Russian Language Council.

The decrease of Russians in the region, referred to by the participants in the Pyatigorsk seminar as the 'Russian buffer', is a factor that plays into interethnic polarisation between Caucasian groups. Russian emigration is attributed to multiple factors, but attitudes to the return of Russians as managers and professionals are on the whole welcoming. The main concern is that for Russians to come back, special incentives would have to be created, such as attractive salaries and housing, which may cause envy and resentment among the majority, many of whom do not enjoy a high standard of living.

Still, both the local authorities and communities know that it is unlikely that Russians will return to Chechnya, Dagestan and Ingushetia. They call the idea of return 'artificial' and say that it is better to concentrate on helping the remaining ones to stay. The communities are too small and dispersed, and mostly consist of women, middle-aged people and the elderly. There are hardly any young men left. Professions open for Russians, such as teaching and medicine, pay too little to be attractive. In Ingushetia local authorities and police are taking steps to enable Russians to stay, as was evident during a field visit to stanitsa Ordjinikidzievskaya, but this is insufficient to counterbalance the pressures coming from society.

The environment in Ingushetia is growing less tolerant. A Russian church was shot at three times from a grenade launcher and a machine gun in 2009–2011. Explosives were thrown into the courtyard of a house occupied by a Russian family, a member of which was interviewed for this report. A cemetery visited was mined to make people scared to use it. A mosque and a church which tried to foster interconfessional co-operation for peace were set on fire. Most do not venture out after eight o'clock pm, even to visit friends or relatives. The Ingush maintain that their community suffered more than the local Russians, because killings of Russians hardly happened, while the Ingush lost many administrators and security personnel in attacks by radical groups. However, it will not take much to scare the Russian communities into leaving if they believe that they have no future in the republics.

Emigrants from Kabardino-Balkaria (Russians and other groups) in Moscow mainly give social and economic hardship as the reason behind their decision to leave the republic, while registering ethnic discrimination as a contributing factor in some situations, but not in others. According to them, a glass ceiling exists, but it equally applies to representatives of indigenous groups who do not belong to patronage networks, through which power is distributed. They also note positive features of life in Kabardino-Balkaria as a more socially conservative society where children can have a better upbringing. It was also noted that some Russians are squeezed out of business by Kabardins, because the latter have social capital and administrative resources at their disposal.

102　'Информационные материалы об окончательных итогах Всероссийской переписи населения 2010 года,' State Statistics Committee of the Russian Federation, http://www.gks.ru/wps/wcm/connect/rosstat/rosstatsite/main/population/demography/# accessed 30 December 2011.

103　See Paul Goble, 'Mass Exodus' of Russians from North Caucasus 'Threatens Russian Federation's Existence,' 5 April 2010, http://georgiandaily.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=18051&Itemid=134, accessed 24 September 2010.

Labour migration away from the North Caucasus is a broader trend among mostly young people of all nationalities. These were the reasons why young people want to leave Chechnya:

"Unemployment, violations of rights, lack of security, lack of recreation facilities, lack of conditions for entertainment, housing problems, and some people want to get an education."[104]

"18–25 year olds all are dreaming of leaving. Between 30 and 50 percent. They want to leave because of injustice in the republic, and lack of respect for human rights."[105]

Labour migration serves as a safety net for the older generation and extended families at home; but at the same time it causes a loss of human capital and a feeling that the opportunities for the most educated and energetic people lie outside the republics. Emigration of younger community members creates the situation where an ageing population is left in rural areas of North Ossetia and Kabarbino-Balkaria, which in the future will require more state aid.

In Kabardino-Balkaria

"We have a large outflow of young families. Now they leave children to grandparents and go away to make money, but plan to return, while in future the whole families would leave. Only old people would stay. What would happen to our village?"[106]

In Chechnya

"We are getting older, and young people do not want to work the land. This is one of the problems. They do not want to breed livestock, poultry. But the state is not to blame that our children don't want to do it."[107]

Migration of Caucasians within the region can serve as a conflict driver, as tensions arise from arrival of fresh migrants. North Ossetia is the most potent case, where new-comers from Chechnya and Dagestan are met without much enthusiasm. The same applies to migration of Meskhetian Turks and Chechens into Kabardino-Balkaria. Meskhetian Turks, who constitute perhaps only several thousand, are nevertheless regarded by the host population as competitors. There are tensions between Kumyk newcomers and the local population in Mozdok District in North Ossetia.

Meskhetian Turks form a distinct group that has survived for over sixty years in conditions of displacement as a diaspora nation. Their communal structures are the most closed and inaccessible to outsiders, and they have often have problems with other groups whom they have lived among. Together with Kumyks, who migrated from Dagestan into other Caucasian republics, represent the least integrated communities. Formal methods of inclusion are less accessible for them than for other groups.

Young people

The North Caucasus has high birth rates and the younger generation constitutes a size-able segment of the populations in those republics. Young people are driven by several contradictory trends, which pull in different directions. On the one hand, they aspire to Western lifestyles and consumerism; but on the other hand note that it is proper to live by the religious and cultural values of one's own ethnic group. Many are seeking work or study away from the Caucasus, aspiring to leave. Others are attracted to religion in the search of new values. In the existing ideological void there is a lack of alternative ideas which they would find meaningful and attractive to prevent them from following radical religious leaders and joining armed groups. All in all, as a respondent from

104 Focus group on 'Role of young people in social self-organisation of Chechnya: lifestyle and reference points.'
105 Focus group with business people, Grozny, Chechnya.
106 Focus group with rural respondents, Novoivanovka, Kabardino-Balkaria.
107 Focus group with Farmers, Chechnya.

Kabardino-Balkaria noted, "we do not know which way we are heading after the breakup of the USSR, but there should be a direction…"[108]

Young people lead more restricted lives than the older generation used to, and have plenty of energy which does not have a way out. This is one trait Islamist movements capitalise on.

In Ingushetia

"Today, I think, every young person is full of energy, and in (mainstream) Russia there are different ways of letting it out, because there are various groups and interests, but in our republic, unfortunately, there are few. There is sport where competition is ferocious, I have been there and I know."[109]

The older generation respondents expressed that a crisis of values among young people is caused by confusion of what brings success in life:

In Kabardino-Balkaria

"Unfortunately, this is a major problem. Young people used to think that they will study and make money in an honest way. We have shown them an example that they do not have to study, what is needed is to steal, give bribes, adapt in one way or another."[110]

The older generation feels that it has less influence over the behaviour of the younger one, but admits that they might have neglected their parental responsibilities and that families have been more concerned with consumerism and less with encouraging moral standards in their children.

In Kabardino-Balkaria

"They (young people) do not listen to parents anymore. I think that young people below thirty will become totally wild, because they do not know the old ways, and have not seen the new ones. I reckon that tension will grow."[111]

The situation is different in Chechnya. Because the Head of the Republic is young himself, the younger generation has a better chance of being promoted into power and can achieve good positions in politics and business. Kadyrov has a personal following among young people, especially young men.

"The role models for young people are the Head of the Republic, and God. However, there are people who are not content with our Head. These are people who worked with Maskhadov."[112]

Some respondents noted that not all problems that exist in society can be attributed to the authorities, but young people tend to see them as responsible for everything. In this, they lack political awareness and social maturity, which makes it difficult to take a serious look at where the problems originate.

In North Ossetia youth role models are often drawn from young peoples' own peer groups, i.e. those who are considered to have achieved success in life. Often this success is measured in terms of how much money they have, rather than being based on skills or personality.[113] Youth heroes in Ingushetia are Ruslan Aushev, the first President of Ingushetia – credited with establishment of the republic – and famous Ingush boxing and wrestling champions.[114]

---

108 Focus group in Baksan District, Kabardino-Balkaria.
109 Focus group with university students, Nazran, Ingushetia.
110 Focus group in Elbrus District, Kabardino-Balkaria.
111 Community focus group respondent, Kabardino-Balkaria
112 Focus group with business people, Grozny.
113 Dulyaev I, North Ossetia case study.
114 Focus groups at the university and Polytechnic College, Nazran, Ingushetia.

Civil society activism

In general, civil society across the region remains weak, although is more developed in Chechnya. There are also courageous human rights defenders in Ingushetia.

"There is more freedom here than in other republics – but my colleagues paid for this with their lives. If they kill me, a new one will come in my place. We are treated the way we allow ourselves to be treated."[115]

Communities' ability to actively address their problems, defend their interests or articulate their needs through NGOs is low, and many prefer to get things done through relatives instead. Often the civil society sector becomes inward-looking and functions in isolation from the mainstream.

Over 80 public organisations are registered in Kabardino-Balkaria, one third of them youth organisations and one quarter various national-cultural centres. However, few of all registered organisations are active. The main obstacles to their effectiveness include a lack of co-ordination, lack of qualified cadre and low demand from the population.[116] A Youth Centre was established in Baksan District with support from UNICEF and is operating successfully.

Central Russian NGOs tried to become engaged in Kabardino-Balkaria, but could not find local people to work with them because of the pressure from the authorities. Still,

"There are positive changes, but they happen slower than we wish. The role of NGOs is strengthening, and active young people are appearing. However, citizens do not pro-actively seek their services, even if they know that help is available. As a head of an NGO I see that even when we inform the population about the activity of our organisation, this does not guarantee a large influx of clients. Our citizens do not hurry to receive aid in consultative centres and public organisations, even knowing that an organisation ready to help exists."[117]

In North Ossetia 557 NGOs were registered at the Ministry of Justice as of 1 July 2011. This figure, however, includes trade unions and sports clubs. When the Public Chamber invited them to a round table, only a dozen responded.[118]

In Ingushetia activist groups emerged first because of the conflict in Prigorodny, and later because of the influx of IDPs from Chechnya. Currently, an NGO Co-ordination Council is active, as is an Ingush branch of the Russian Red Cross and Red Crescent Society. One of the main areas for Ingush NGOs is working on missing persons and on people in police custody. Independent journalism exists and it is possible to cover police investigations and report on missing persons. However, a seasoned journalist remarked that the audience for critical journalism is tiny: "people do not read newspapers – I work into void."[119]

Transformative change for civil society in Chechnya happened in 2009, when Natalia Estemirova of Memorial was murdered in July, and Zarema Sadulaeva and Alik Djabrailov, activists with 'Save the Generation,' were also abducted in Grozny and murdered. Others were harassed.[120] At present, between 30 to 50 NGOs are active, 5–6 of them human rights groups. An unwritten pact was reached with the authorities that they were allowed to do their work quietly, but not to advertise it. Nevertheless, one NGO respondent noted that

"We advanced further in terms of the attitude of the authorities towards public organisations than in the rest of the Russian Federation. Presidential Decree no. 451 gives

115 Magomed Mutsolgov, director of Mashr, Karabulak, Ingushetia, December 2011.

116 Khamdokhova J, Kabardino-Balkaria case study.

117 Focus group with journalists and NGO activists, conducted by Zolotareva I, Nalchik, Ingushetia.

118 Dulyaev I, North Ossetia case study.

119 Interview with Marem Yalkharoyeva, Nazran, December 2011.

120 'Little progress on second anniversary of prominent Chechen activist's killing,' *Amnesty International*, 14 July 2011, http://www.amnesty.org/en/for-media/press-releases/little-progress-second-anniversary-prominent-chechen-activist%E2%80%99s-killing-201, accessed 26 December 2011.

us the right to access powers at all levels and solve problems. We meet the Head of the Republic once or twice a year. We have normal relations with the authorities."[121]

However, another pointed out that society traditionally had more robust civic activism than it is currently allowed:

"Chechen society always had a civic position. Elders used to make important decisions at village assemblies. We used to have civil society, but the authorities took it away from us."[122]

The case studies demonstrate that international programmes in conflict mitigation and recovery have left little imprint on the population's memory. Respondents in North Ossetia compared national and international programmes in favour of the latter. For example, state aid to the Ingush led to an increase in social differentiation, because the Ossetians did not get such major aid. International programmes better targeted their beneficiaries' needs.[123]

121 Focus group 'Formation of civic institutions: prospects for establishment of partnership and dialogue with the authorities,' Chechnya.
122 Focus group 'Formation of civic institutions: prospects for establishment of partnership and dialogue with the authorities,' Chechnya.
123 Dulayev I, North Ossetia case study.

5

Recommendations

"People should become more humane, respectful and understand each other; laws should be enforced on the territory of our republic; relations should be equal… there should be mutual understanding between different segments of the population and the authorities … there should be jobs, and people should get their jobs not because of blood ties, but because of qualifications… People of different nationalities should be tolerant of one another".[124]

To the federal authorities

Policy development and implementation

■ Concentrate on a limited number of key priorities to foster stability and comprehensive security.

■ Three priorities emerging from the research focus on the need to

  □ Promote a climate that strengthens resilience against ideological extremism
  □ Engage with the problems of young people
  □ Improve governance, including in the security and justice sectors

■ Devolve leadership on other issues, such as socio-economic development and education, to the republic authorities, assisted and monitored by the federal ministries and government departments as necessary.

■ Ensure the federal authorities are heard and seen not only in the form of the security agencies. It is recommended that the visibility of the federal authorities is increased through regular visits of civilian officials, politicians and experts who should spend time in the republics to assess needs, engage in dialogue and explain policies.

■ Develop capacities for and invest in empirical social research in the North Caucasus in support of policy development. This should assess and take account of community perceptions and use participatory approaches, alongside conventional academic research methods. Invest particularly in building a younger generation of research analysts who live in the republics.

■ Conduct regular monitoring and independent evaluation of federal programmes, assessing their 1) relevance, 2) effectiveness, 3) impact and 4) sustainability, supplementing the present focus on efficiency and financial accountability. Back up policies with the necessary resources and personnel. Develop contingency plans and alternative modes of operation in case programmes run into difficulties and cannot go ahead as planned.

---

124 Views expressed by participants in focus groups conducted in Chechnya.

■ Consider closing down the Russian speakers' return programme, and concentrate on helping Russian-speaking communities in republics where they form sizeable minorities to stay and avoid further out-migration. Base programmes on thorough context analysis and needs as identified by the target groups themselves.

Promoting a climate that strengthens resilience against ideological extremism and violence

■ Winning 'hearts and minds' must receive primary attention.

■ To combat violent radicalism, adopt a preventative approach rather than a reactive and punitive approach, so as to address the *causes* rather than the *consequences* of extremism.

■ Promote a climate of political pluralism, ethnic and religious tolerance and active citizen participation in public affairs.

■ Explore how global Islamist influences interact with local problems and grievances, which local issues are used in order to mobilise and recruit people for extremist movements, and establish how the causes underlying these problems can be addressed.

■ Create a sense that a non-religious alternative to the existing political order is possible by giving political space to opposing views and to freedom of assembly and by allowing peaceful political mobilisation and rallies.

■ Ensure that a common cultural space is maintained in all North Caucasus republics so that secular people can live a secular life without coming under pressure from religious constituencies. Ensure peaceful religious people are given room to practise their faith without risking criminalisation.

■ Create a centrally-managed structure – e.g. a 'federal centre of expertise on conflict resolution' – to provide analysis, advice, practical training and on-the-job support to local, republic and federal authorities, including Ministries of Nationalities, to enable them to prevent and respond effectively to risks of violent conflict in the republics, including but not limited to those associated with religious radicalisation. The centre should be staffed by highly-qualified experts, and be able to draw on a wider pool of specialised, external experts. Training abroad, in countries with specific knowledge in this field, should be considered for these experts.

■ Work with a broad variety of civil society actors to prevent violent radicalism, without placing too much emphasis on the role of DUM in those efforts.

■ Recognise the role of federal TV and radio channels in forming opinions in the region and encourage journalists and media to follow and maintain the highest professional standards of journalism. This should include presenting diverse viewpoints on a problem, research into the background to issues, accuracy and refraining from the use of emotionally-charged language.

■ Clarify and precisely define by law what constitutes hate speech; explain these standards to those involved in the public sphere, such as media, education and activist groups, and hold them accountable if they use hate speech.

■ In relation to the post-conflict situation in Prigorodny District, take the lead in supporting a joint Ossetian-Ingush initiative, involving collaboration between North Ossetian and Ingush scholars, and including federal and possibly international experts, to look into the issues of IDPs and claims of discrimination; and develop jointly effective ways to implement earlier agreements and decisions. Where possible, draw on the narrative coming from that approach for teaching history at schools and universities in both republics.

Engaging with the problems of young people

■ Design programmes which are engaging and intellectually appealing for youth – particularly using educational establishments and civil society partners for this purpose – to introduce activities such as debating clubs, best essay or art competitions, projects to allow young people solve a local issue, volunteering in civil society organisations etc. These should be sustained programmes in which young people should take responsibility for developing and implementing activities, rather than single, one-off events.

■ Pay special attention to sports clubs to ensure they
  □ contribute to young people's positive development
  □ strengthen pedagogical skills of trainers to enable them to act as youth mentors
  □ supplement martial sports (boxing and wrestling) by team sports, such as volleyball and football

■ Design programmes that engage secondary school graduates who do not enrol in further education or the army to keep them socially integrated and to offer them formal employment- and professional development opportunities. Reach out to them at e.g. sports clubs, construction sites and informal taxi drivers' associations and meeting points.

■ Encourage further development of dialogue and welcome new initiatives between representatives of state institutions and youth to discuss their problems.

■ Support dialogue and people-to-people contact across social and ethnic divides.

■ Support youth activities that encourage self-reflection, challenge stereotypes, and promote critical thinking, as well as socially responsible action. Convey that equal rights also mean equal responsibilities.

■ In measures targeted to reach youth, including those aimed at preventing ideological extremism, make use of innovative communication technologies and modes of expression that young people are using, such as social media, the internet, and mobile phone technology.

■ Replace role models that merely embody a culture of physical strength by promoting alternative role models who have made a socially valuable contribution to society, for example journalists who have disclosed corruption, or officials or ordinary people who have demonstrated great civil courage.

Strengthening governance, including in the security and justice sectors

■ Ensure that federal laws are applied in the North Caucasus in the same way as elsewhere in the Federation, so that the same actions entail the same consequences for all citizens of Russia.

■ Strengthen two-way communication and engagement between institutions and the public through enhancing already-existing political participation and public consultation mechanisms which are common in Russia – such as trade unions, professional associations, public chambers and viable local government structures for this purpose – instead of introducing forms specific to the region, which enjoy questionable legitimacy.

■ Strengthen the accountability of public institutions by ensuring that
  □ more positions of political office at municipal, district and republican levels are appointed through direct elections in their constituencies, with a sense of real choice between alternative candidates;
  □ appointments to non-elected positions involve public consultation and take into account its results.

Also, by developing and supporting

☐ initiatives through which citizens can hold politicians and officials to account, e.g. effective public inquiry mechanisms, and complaints procedures such as hotlines and independent ombudspersons

☐ transparent and effective investigations into reports of electoral fraud or wrongdoing of public institutions and mechanisms for ensuring their findings are acted upon

■ Combat corruption by

☐ requiring senior officials to disclose any relatives in senior public and private appointments and any potential conflicts of interest

☐ investigating and prosecuting in transparent trials alleged abuses of power for personal gain

☐ introducing performance appraisals for senior officials, conducted by an independent board. For higher-level officials, the members of this board should be appointed from outside the republic

☐ formalising informal employment, scrutinising business spheres where informal employment flourishes and simplifying procedures for its formalisation, with tax incentives on offer

■ Include governance indicators, such as perception of corruption, existence of independent media, freedom for NGOs, quality of management etc. in the monitoring system operated by the Ministry of Regional Development, which should regularly conduct surveys. Performance ratings should be published, so that all citizens can see how their republic is performing compared to others.

■ Strengthen civilian oversight and the accountability of security and justice provision by

☐ bringing actions of all security providers into line with federal law and human rights standards

☐ investigating all alleged breaches of law, such as abduction and torture, and holding perpetrators accountable in courts

☐ detaining, wherever feasible, and giving a full and transparent trial to alleged violent extremists

☐ allowing human rights activists and journalists to monitor police and other law enforcement officials' work where possible, including detention operations

☐ adopting community-based policing methods, encouraging security structures, particularly police, to regularly meet and co-operate with communities in addressing security concerns. Utilise expertise in this field from other countries, and adapt it to the Russian context

■ In Ingushetia and North Ossetia, explore the possibility of manning police check points on the administrative border between North Ossetia and Ingushetia by mixed Ossetian/Ingush police teams.

■ In North Ossetia, consider recruiting more ethnic Ingush into police in areas of mixed habitat in North Ossetia.

To republic authorities   ■ Expand available forms of political participation, by encouraging freedom of expression and spaces for dialogue.

■ Hold regular debates on key issues of public concern, for instance, under the auspices of the public chambers or republic ministries for nationalities.

■ Allow members of the public to identify the issues for debate, and involve all relevant stakeholders, including marginalised groups and opinion leaders with critical or oppositional views, even if their opinions are uncomfortable to hear.

■ Adopt a competitive system of recruitment for public sector appointments, including a formal scoring system, in which a candidate's experience and qualifications are weighed against established criteria.

- Improve transparency in the workings of the commissions which reconcile conflicting land claims, including regular updates to the public when new land allocations are made by publishing the information widely on a website and in local media.

- In consultation with young people, identify recreation activities that are attractive for them, suitable in the local context and where the state and republic authorities can help to develop facilities.

- Foster development of independent media in all republics.

- In Chechnya,
  - establish citizens' drop-in advisory centres throughout the republic
  - provide a forensic laboratory for identification of the dead

- In Dagestan,
  - introduce municipal grants aimed at enhancing co-operation between NGOs and local authorities

To civil society actors/ the expert community

- Seek proactive and constructive engagement with authorities and security providers to find co-operative ways of resolving problems that threaten peace and security.

- Foster responsible public discussion where that is useful on contentious issues, such as criminal cases which involve interethnic relations and have public resonance.

- Establish civil society expert groups across the region with the ability to react quickly, using mass media, to defuse tensions in the case of controversial events that have the potential to trigger violence.

- Promote a culture of debate and tolerance through intercultural dialogue and people-to-people contact within the North Caucasus, as well as across the Russian Federation between the Russian mainstream population and the Caucasian population.

- In co-operation with the NCFD authorities, publish independent annual reports on issues of social tension and the human rights situation in the region. Leading NGOs and the District's Public Council can act as founders of such periodicals.

To the EU/international community

- Support not only human rights work which deals with the consequences of radicalism and with prosecutions; but also continue to sponsor a preventative and developmental agenda which can help to address some of the root causes. Share experience and know-how with Russia on conflict prevention measures and on community-based approaches to security and justice provision.

- Support development of local civil society by
  - providing assistance to NGOs from the republics of the North Caucasus, in addition to NGOs from elsewhere in Russia who work on the Caucasus
  - supporting North Caucasian civil society actors in networking and co-operating with NGOs from outside the region
  - building the capacity of North Caucasian NGOs where necessary so they are able to fulfil donor requirements in the fields of accountability and programme management

- In co-operation with the federal authorities, prepare and disseminate a publication on the history of federal and international assistance to the North Caucasus in the last twenty years, analysing successes, as well as lessons learned.

- Assist the authorities and civil society with seminars and courses in peace education and development of peacebuilding and tolerance-promotion expertise.

- Continue to provide assistance to free legal aid centres for the population in Chechnya.

ANNEX I: Methodology

Research stages included:

Design

Design of research agenda and research questions which centred around sources of social tensions; challenges facing society, including the roles of ethnicity, religion, the generation gap, migration and the relationship between communities and political institutions; and the republics' and federal responses to these challenges.

Agreement of method for data collection which was identified as key informant interviews and focus groups with set population categories in each republic.

Building the design around research settings including development of institutional arrangements, research partnerships and agreement on the process and outputs.

Resourcing and timetabling qualitative studies which included training of the researchers from the North Caucasus during a seminar in Moscow in August, development of their work plans and supplying them with the necessary credentials and research formats.

Field work: methods of data collection

Target populations for the focus groups were selected using the criteria of age, gender, employment, ethnic origin and regional location, and were identified as two types of young people (students of elite universities and less-educated youth), NGOs and journalists, public sector workers, small and medium businesspeople and rural communities. Respondents for in-depth key informants' interviews were defined as civilian and security officials, distinguished academics and experts, and religious figures.

Structuring data collection: guiding questions for focus groups and in-depth interviews were developed and supplied to the researchers together with guidance on the process of conducting focus groups and interviews. Researchers were asked to record their own impressions on how focus groups went, i.e. whether there was an overall consensus on issues or when disagreements were registered, and what these different positions were about. If no disagreements were registered by the researchers themselves or their focus group records, we assumed that all participants shared this or that opinion. When different arguments on the same issue were expressed, they are included in the individual case studies.

All respondents were guaranteed anonymity, but types of respondents (younger and older generation, urban/rural, gender etc) were recorded. Experts and officials are identified by name in case studies when they were aware that their views may be quoted. Formats for recording interviews and focus groups were developed and supplied. Most of the interviews and focus groups have audio records.

Other research instruments and materials included engaged field observation and perusal of written sources, such as official documents and press articles. The study did not perform any dedicated media monitoring as this would not have been in line with the 'participatory approach' which relies on the primary field data.

Individual researchers refined focus groups questions, tailoring them to individual audiences and in the light of their own research and interviewing styles. All researchers noted with satisfaction the positive dynamic of a group process, which enabled rich discussions to take place. The method enabled an open debate where people were frank in talking about difficult and contentious issues.

Participatory analysis

The first **analysis of the qualitative research data** – descriptive accounts and explanatory accounts – was conducted at the Pyatigorsk seminar in October which brought together all but one of the case study authors, representatives of civil society from each republic, representatives of Saferworld and the consultants who developed the original methodology. The brainstorming exercise included development of 'outlooks' (short-to-medium-term scenarios) for each republic and the region in general, elaborated through collective reflection.

Generalising from the qualitative research was carried out in December 2011–January 2012 after all field research was carried out. The approach to generalisation involved better focusing of the original research questions, cross-referencing the material against findings in different republics and against the original research agenda; and development of recommendations. An important part of the generalisation process was the highlighting of new knowledge/trends revealed by the undertaken research set against what was known through previous research by the author.

ANNEX II: **National and international responses**

Federal policy and infrastructure

The 'Strategy of Social and Economic Development of the North Caucasus Federal District (SKFO) until 2025' adopted in October 2010 identifies the following external factors that destabilise the situation in the NCFD:

- The existence and activities of an international terrorist network, which exploits ethnic and religious factors;
- The desire of radical international organisations to escalate tensions, and also to re-draw the administrative-territorial borders of the federal district;
- Importation of radical forms of Islam into the District.

Internal factors identified are as follows:

- Widespread corruption
- Ethno-political and religious-political extremism
- Unresolved land disputes which cause many interethnic tensions
- Interethnic tensions against the background of weak civil identity
- A spread of extremist ideology caused by high unemployment and social problems
- Ongoing outflow of the Russian population

The following measures are proposed to respond to challenges and prevent conflicts:

- Strengthening of a united all-citizenry identity, improvement in interethnic relations and support for peoples' ethno-cultural development
- Prevention of interethnic and interconfessional conflicts, prevention of ethnic, religious-political extremism
- Creation of a long-term awareness-raising campaign, targeting all-citizenry identity and facilitating creation of positive image of the North Caucasus in Russian and foreign media
- Promotion of the idea that an unstable situation in the North Caucasus is materially disadvantageous for the local population, because extremism and interethnic tensions make the region unattractive for investment
- Monitoring of the socio-political, interethnic and religious-political situation in the district, with recommendations for decision makers

The main steps proposed in prevention of ethno-political and religious extremism are as follows:

- Increased interaction/establishment of spaces for dialogue and consultations involving representatives of federal and republic authorities, local government and civil society organisations
- Development of effective and targeted measures towards strengthening of interethnic and interconfessional co-operation and prevention of extremism along ethnic or religious lines

To stem the exodus of Russians and to facilitate the return of those who left, the following steps are envisaged:

- Support for social and economic development and creation of facilities for supporting Russian culture, such as cultural centres, support for local talents, libraries, local history museums
- Social provisions to enable Russians to return, including provision of housing, compensation of travel expenses and relocation, job creation, facilitation of access to education

In education:

- Review of school and university curriculum to develop a common approach to the teaching of national history and to prevent the formation of negative stereotypes along ethnic lines among school and university students

- Development of interactive modules in teaching of history and culture of the peoples of the North Caucasus, and of courses in tolerance and culture of interethnic interaction. Such courses should form a part of educational curriculum

- Annual children's peacemaking forum 'Children of Caucasus for Peace in the Caucasus'

In promotion of cultures of different Caucasian peoples and turning them into a peg for investment and tourism:

- Development of ethnic (anthropological) tourism, promotion of existing brands, such as Kubachi silver from Dagestan, visits to sacred places, holding of regional, all-Russian and international events aimed at fostering tolerance, mutual understanding between peoples and improving resilience to interethnic conflicts

- Establishment of facilities for development of ethnic cultures, such as cultural and leisure centres, houses of friendship, youth centres etc.

- Holding of an annual fair of social and cultural initiatives to select the best youth projects and support them through a grants programme; provision of opportunities for talented and active young people

- Support for interconfessional and intercultural dialogue[125]

The following institutional infrastructure was developed by the Office of the Presidential Envoy to the North Caucasus Federal District. The Public Council of the Federal District was established, comprised of two bodies: the first is federal in nature, made up of one representative of all-Russian civil organisations, 14 representatives of the District, nominated by the Presidential Envoy, and 14 members who were nominated in the District's subjects to represent their constituencies. The Public Council met for the first time in December 2010 in Pyatigorsk. It adopted a statement on the events that had occurred at Manege Square in Moscow on 11 December 2010.

The Public Council has established a number of working commissions, such as on human rights, on interethnic and interconfessional relations, an anti-corruption commission, commissions on environment, education, preservation of cultural and historical heritage, and on the media. The Council supported the idea of the establishment of a civil forum of human rights organisations active in the North Caucasus. It was envisaged that the forum would prepare an agreement on Public Accord and General Principles of Resolution of Interethnic Conflicts and Clashes.

The second body is the Council of Elders of the District. It is a consultative body that consists of seven members, each representing one subject. It was established in February 2011.[126] Youth policies are given special attention, and a Youth Council was set up on 8 December 2010. It is a standby consultative body tasked with the following:

- Fostering interaction between the authorities of all levels and youth groups in the region in joint implementation of youth policy

- Support for socially-relevant initiatives and programmes targeting children and youth

- Design initiatives in the field of youth policies[127]

An Ulema Council was established to enhance partnership between the state and Islamic clergy. In December 2010 Presidential Envoy Alexander Khloponin met with the representatives of the DUMs of the region to discuss what they could do together

125 http://www.kavkaz-uzel.ru/articles/175166#II_2_2, accessed on 13 November 2011.
126 http://skfo.gov.ru/obshestvo/obshestvennyj-sovet-skfo/, accessed on 13 November 2011.
127 http://skfo.gov.ru/obshestvo/molodezh/sovet-po-molodezhnoj-politike/, accessed on 13 November 2011.

to offer alternatives to an ideology of extremism. The Muftis agreed that Islamic clergy should proactively engage with the youth.[128]

International responses

The EU in the North Caucasus

The EU plays a continuous political and funding role in the North Caucasus, however modest. In August 2011 the Head of the EU Delegation to Russia, Fernando M. Valenzuela, and Director at the EC Directorate-General for Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection, Steffen Stenberg, paid a visit to the region. Since 1999, the Commission provided €237 million in humanitarian aid to the North Caucasus. In terms of broader financial co-operation, the EU established a Programme for the North Caucasus, through which it allocated €20m to support the Russian authorities' own efforts.[129]

EU assistance to the North Caucasus region is delivered through three channels:

- Humanitarian aid and emergency support
- Recovery programmes focusing on health, education and income generation
- Support to civil society organisations promoting human rights and democracy

The EU special programme for the North Caucasus is aimed at contributing to a shift towards long-term development to help the region progress from reliance on federal and humanitarian assistance to self-sufficiency. It consisted of funding to the World Health Organisation for work on health issues in Chechnya and for UNICEF to support education in Chechnya and Ingushetia. These two programmes were successful and are finished. The EU funding to the ongoing programme of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) is aimed at income generation through development of small and medium enterprises (SMEs). It works via Russian banks that provide credit for SMEs and turnaround management with a view to adapting to a market economy.

The European Initiative for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR) funds interventions in the North Caucasus to encourage the mechanisms of public control over prison authorities. There are three major EIDHR-funded initiatives: 'War Echo' is implemented by 'Social Partnership' and deals with veterans of the hostilities in Chechnya, Ingushetia and Dagestan; the second is by Niiso (Justice) from Chechnya on victims of torture in Chechnya and Ingushetia and the third project is by the Nizhny Novgorod Committee Against Torture.

Smaller projects consist of assistance to

- Civic Assistance Committee – support for prison inmates from Chechnya and Ingushetia who serve their sentences outside of their home republics
- Memorial for peacemaking activities in Prigorodny District between the Ingush and Ossetians
- Union of Don Women for a series of training events, campaigning, public discussions on women's rights in Chechnya
- Sintem – an NGO from Chechnya working on rehabilitation
- Public monitoring commissions in Chechnya implemented through Civic Partnership

Funding for the Danish Refugee Council for a programme at temporary accommodation centres in Chechnya and Ingushetia has recently expired.

Other actors

In 1995 the United Nations and its NGO partners started providing humanitarian assistance and protection to the population of the region, which, in time, spread to five

128 http://skfo.gov.ru/obshestvo/religiya, accessed on 13 November 2011.
129 http://www.eeas.europa.eu/delegations/russia/press_corner/all_news/news/2011/20110405_01_en.htm, Delegation of the European Union to the Russian Federation website, press release, 5 April 2011, accessed 3 October 2011.

republics: Chechnya, Ingushetia, North Ossetia, Dagestan and Kabardino-Balkaria. Since 2004, the situation in the North Caucasus has improved, and the UN has gradually shifted from humanitarian activities to assistance in economic recovery and development.

A new United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) initiative financed by the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA) started in November 2004 with the programme on 'Sustainable Reintegration and Recovery in the North Caucasus' to support the transition from emergency relief to recovery and development. Projects carried out in the Republics of North Ossetia, Ingushetia and the Chechnya focused on rural development, economic growth, entrepreneurship development and the capacity-building of government officials.

In November 2008 the Government of Japan allocated over US $3.6 million for UN activities in North Ossetia-Alania. The UNDP, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the International Labour Organization (ILO), and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) implemented the project on 'Sustainable Integration and Recovery in North Ossetia' to strengthen the capacity for social resilience and integration in the North Caucasus.

After the events in Beslan on 1–3 September 2004, the governments of Norway and Greece provided funding to the UNDP to assist recovery from the terrorist attack, and funded construction of a sports boarding school in Beslan.[130]

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) has been a major bilateral donor for the North Caucasus. The programmes targeting conflict prevention and peacebuilding included:

'Youth Initiative for the Promotion of Peace in the North Caucasus' (2007–2010) implemented by IREX in Adygeya, Chechnya, Dagestan, Ingushetia, Kabardino-Balkaria, Karachayevo-Cherkessia, North Ossetia and Stavropol Krai. The project was aimed at reducing the potential for conflict in the North Caucasus by creating opportunities for intercultural relationships between young people aged 14–24, increasing communication and cultural understanding. Project activities aimed to support youth as community leaders, to advance community development goals, and improve their professional and life skills. The project sought to foster the development of employment networks and improve access to information.

As a result of the project implementation about 150 young people from the North Caucasus took part in professional and life skills development training and 49 percent of vocational trainees managed to secure viable employment six months after completion of the courses. Two sports and leadership youth camps were organised for 170 target young people from the North Caucasus, who participated in trainings on tolerance, civic education, leadership, volunteering, and project writing.

Under the Youth Initiated Community Development component 66 conflict mediation/civic education training sessions were carried out for 158 youth and representatives of youth committees; 17 youth NGOs from the North Caucasus were awarded small grants for implementation of social projects; and a Training of Trainers (TOT) was organised for ten target young people.

Four Centres for Accessing Technology (CATs) were opened in Stavropol Krai and in Dagestan, Ingushetia and Kabardino-Balkaria to provide youth with free access to the internet and computer courses.[131]

The 'Civil Society Development in Southern Russia' (2003–2010) programme was implemented by the Southern Regional Resource Centre in all subjects of the NCFD.

130 http://www.undp.ru/index.php?iso=RU&lid=1&cmd=programs3, accessed 14 November 2011.

131 http://russia.usaid.gov/programs/cross_sectoral/north_caucasus/IREX_YIPP/ accessed 20 November 2011.

The project sought to strengthen techniques of citizen engagement and forge effective mechanisms for NGO-government interaction in the area of public policy through the Southern Regional Resource Centre and its regional NGO network. It developed a model for government-civil society negotiations, piloted in Krasnodar and replicated elsewhere in Southern Russia. The project produced a newspaper, "New Reality", informing about NGO-driven initiatives in the region.[132]

'Development of Local Governance' (2008–2011) was implemented by the Institute for Urban Economics (IUE) in many of Russia's regions. In the North Caucasus it worked in Kabardino-Balkaria, North Ossetia and in Stavropol Krai. The goal of the project was to promote more transparent and accountable local governance by addressing the lack of local government credibility; of consensus-building mechanisms; of cohesiveness in local communities; of regulations and bylaws on key issues of housing, of local governance and social reforms; and of human resources in the sector.

Project activities focused on local budget expenditures and municipal service delivery, on increasing own-source revenues of selected municipalities, on developing co-operation between municipalities, and on the integration of local communities into socio-economic development processes. It sought to promote the development of financial institutions that support housing maintenance and other economic activities.[133]

'Legal Assistance to Refugees' (2002–2010) was implemented by *Faith, Hope and Love* in Dagestan, Moscow and Stavropol Krai to assist migrants and socially-vulnerable populations in the North Caucasus to protect their rights by supporting a network of human rights centres. The project conducted training seminars for lawyers and advocates, and established a Consultation Centre for filing complaints to the European Court of Human Rights.[134]

The 'Poverty Reduction Programme in North Ossetia' (2006–2010) was run by the World Vision. It initiated community mobilisation activities in the two neighbouring villages of Kurtat and Dachnoe in the Prigorodny District in order to bring together Ossetian and Ingush residents. The project was aimed at fostering the mutual inter-dependence of Ingush and Ossetian villagers through joint agricultural and economic recovery initiatives. Eight of the work projects have been completed in these villages, including the building of three school playgrounds, the repair of two sections of road, the renovation of a home economics classroom, the replacement of the heating system at the Kurtat school, and landscaping at the Dachnoe Mosque.

In May 2007 a Community Centre in Kurtat that offers cultural, sporting and educational activities for the benefit of Ingush and Ossetians was opened. The Community Centre football team participated in the first intervillage sporting event in Kartsa; theatre and concert performances were given; and seven community training sessions have been conducted. A Youth for Peace club has been active at the Community Centre since February 2008.

A Business Education Centre was established at the Kurtat Community Centre, where Prigorodny residents were trained as trainers under the ILO 'Start and Expand your Business' module. The small grant component provided startup capital to entrepreneurs to help put good business ideas into motion.[135]

132 http://russia.usaid.gov/programs/democratic_dev/civil_society/SRRC/ accessed 20 November 2011.
133 http://russia.usaid.gov/programs/democratic_dev/governance/IUE_Dev_Loc_Gov/ accessed 20 November 2011.
134 http://russia.usaid.gov/programs/cross_sectoral/north_caucasus/FHL/ accessed 20 November 2011.
135 http://russia.usaid.gov/programs/cross_sectoral/north_caucasus/WV_Poverty/

ANNEX III: Territorial claims[136]

Territorial claims, or 'land disputes,' are rooted both in a Soviet history of resettlement, ethno-territorial delineation and deportations of 1944, and in the border changes in the new Russia.

Deportations

Among the deported peoples the case of the Chechen, Ingush and Balkars stand out. When they were sent to Central Asia in 1944, their lands were given to other peoples, to which they were often forcibly resettled. With regard to the Ingush, a part of their lands changed jurisdiction and was allocated administratively to North Ossetia. In Kabardino-Balkaria Balkar lands became populated by the Kabardins and Russians, while in Dagestan the lands of deported Chechens were allocated to highlander groups. The problems started when deported people had been rehabilitated and started to return *en masse* in 1957. Clashes took place between the returnees and those who had been resettled in their former homes, with each side claiming the right to the territory. However, the political system was such that the claims could not be openly voiced.

Perestroika freedom made expression of ethnic grievances possible. The Law on the Rehabilitation of Repressed Peoples, passed in April 1991 by the USSR Supreme Soviet, sought to restore historical justice for those who were deported in the 1940s, but was more a declaration of intent than a clear policy statement. It raised exaggerated hopes among the affected peoples that the territorial disputes would be resolved in their favour, and added to existing ethnic tensions.

The Ossetian-Ingush conflict erupted in October 1992 over the issue of the jurisdiction of the Prigorodny District, an area from which Ingush were deported. The District, historically Ingush territory, was populated by the Cossacks from the 1820s to the 1920s, when the Cossacks were deported and the Ingush returned. During *perestroika* the Ingush justified their claim by the decision of the USSR Supreme Soviet of November 1989 and by the Articles 3 and 6 on territorial rehabilitation of the Law on the Deported Peoples.

The Balkar National Congress, using the same law, claimed the right of the Balkars for the restoration of historical justice in regaining lands lost during the deportation period to the Kabardins. The original idea was to acquire the lands and separate from the dual-nationality entity, the way the Ingush succeeded in separation from Checheno-Ingushetia. The tension reached its peak in 1992 when attempts were made to partition the republic, but fortunately did not lead to violent consequences and were later abandoned.

Akkintsy Chechens in lowland Dagestan were deported in 1944 with other Chechens to Central Asia. Since their return they aspired to resettlement in their historical homelands in Novolak and Khasavyurt and to restore the Aukhov District. These lands are presently occupied by Laks and Avars who had been forcibly resettled into these territories from the mountains. Tensions centred around the disputed villages of Leninaul and Kaliniaul and the question of resettlement of the Laks and Avars should they be persuaded to move.

Movement of highlanders into lowlands, characteristic of Dagestan

The Soviet system, motivated by the need to provide livelihoods for excessive population in the mountains, drew up plans to move highlanders into plains. However, the

---

[136] The section is based on Matveeva A, *The North Caucasus: Russia's Fragile Borderland*, (Chatham House Paper, London: Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1999), and Matveeva A, 'Dagestan,' *Former Soviet South* Briefing no. 13, (London, RIIA, 1997).

experiments of the 1930s were unsuccessful because of malaria widespread in marsh-land. In the 1950s the solution to the malaria problem was found. Avar, Dargin, Lezgin and Lak shepherds started to come with their herds to use pastures in the plains which formed historical habitat of the Turkic lowland groups of Kumyk and Nogai.

They initially arrived on a temporary basis, but then brought families in, requested facilities, housing, school places and medical services. They claimed later that they had worked hard to develop the lands which had been lying idle. The lowlanders – Kumyk and Nogai – saw the influx as an encroachment into 'their' territory, especially when the highlanders started to be allocated jobs in local administrations and in the police. The lowlanders took up the issue of historical habitat during *perestroika*, and the early Yeltsin period during land privatisation, when they had argued, unsuccessfully, that group rights should be recognised in law. The Russian Land Code only recognises individual and state rights. Another idea launched in the early 1990s was that of feder-alisation of Dagestan, in which the lowlanders would set up autonomous units, which was also rejected.

Nevertheless, the land question continues to be discussed by Kumyk and Nogai intelligentsia as a legal and constitutional issue. The Kumyk and Nogai maintain that migration and the concomitant conversion of pasture lands to agricultural use threat-ened their economy and way of life. The groups became a shrinking minority in their homelands. They claim that the ethnic group to which a territory historically belonged should be legally recognised as the owner of its land. The highlanders argue that their original enforced migration was to the lands which were depopulated, and that their ancestors invested considerable effort into their cultivation.

In 1992 Dagestanis voted in a referendum against land privatisation, fearing that the implementation of land division would further fuel tensions. The Constitutional Court issued a decision that ethnic groups have no right to own land or allocate its use. Still, land tenure remains a controversial issue as long as it is viewed through the prism of ethnic group claims rather than that of individual rights.

Changes in republics' borders not directly related to deportations

Border changes occurred several times, including, for instance, when the Ingush autonomous republic was joined with the Chechen autonomous republic in 1934. When deported peoples returned, in 1957–58 several Russian-populated (formerly Cossack) districts of Stavropol Krai were allocated to the autonomous republics to make them self-sufficient in growing their own grain. Thus, North Ossetia gained Mozdok District, Kabardino-Balkaria gained Prokhladnenskii and Maiskii Districts, Checheno-Ingushetia gained Naurskii, Schelkovskoy and Nadterechnyi Districts and Dagestan acquired Tarumovskii and Kyzlyarskii Districts. Presently, rural Russians still live in Mozdok, Prokhladnenskii and Maiskii Districts.

The latest wave of border changes happened recently, when the outstanding border issues had to be formalised, such as delimitation of the Russian/Azerbaijani border in 2011 which affected the Lezgins, and the border between Chechnya and Ingushetia over Sunjenskii District, which affected the Ingush, Chechens and the Russians. The border delineation process left some people more satisfied than others.

One territorial dispute led to a violent conflict in 1992 between North Ossetians and the Ingush. Other territorial disputes did not demonstrate a new dynamic in the last 20 years since the fall of the USSR.

Saferworld works to prevent and reduce violent conflict and promote co-operative approaches to security. We work with governments, international organisations and civil society to encourage and support effective policies and practices through advocacy, research and policy development and through supporting the actions of others.

COVER PHOTO: Young women listening to a lecture at the theological college in Makhachkala, Dagestan. ©SERGEY MAXIMISHIN/PANOS