

INGUSHETIA, THE NEW HOT SPOT IN RUSSIA'S NORTH CAUCASUS



JUNE 19, 2008

**Briefing of the
Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe**

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The OSCE Secretariat is in Vienna, Austria, where weekly meetings of the participating States' permanent representatives are held. In addition, specialized seminars and meetings are convened in various locations. Periodic consultations are held among Senior Officials, Ministers and Heads of State or Government.

Although the OSCE continues to engage in standard setting in the fields of military security, economic and environmental cooperation, and human rights and humanitarian concerns, the Organization is primarily focused on initiatives designed to prevent, manage and resolve conflict within and among the participating States. The Organization deploys numerous missions and field activities located in Southeastern and Eastern Europe, the Caucasus, and Central Asia. The website of the OSCE is: <www.osce.org>.

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The Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe, also known as the Helsinki Commission, is a U.S. Government agency created in 1976 to monitor and encourage compliance by the participating States with their OSCE commitments, with a particular emphasis on human rights.

The Commission consists of nine members from the United States Senate, nine members from the House of Representatives, and one member each from the Departments of State, Defense and Commerce. The positions of Chair and Co-Chair rotate between the Senate and House every two years, when a new Congress convenes. A professional staff assists the Commissioners in their work.

In fulfilling its mandate, the Commission gathers and disseminates relevant information to the U.S. Congress and the public by convening hearings, issuing reports that reflect the views of Members of the Commission and/or its staff, and providing details about the activities of the Helsinki process and developments in OSCE participating States.

The Commission also contributes to the formulation and execution of U.S. policy regarding the OSCE, including through Member and staff participation on U.S. Delegations to OSCE meetings. Members of the Commission have regular contact with parliamentarians, government officials, representatives of non-governmental organizations, and private individuals from participating States. The website of the Commission is: <www.csce.gov>.

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Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe Washington, DC

[The briefing was held at 1 p.m. in room B-318, Rayburn House Office Building, Washington, DC, John Finerty, Staff Advisor, Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe, moderating.]

Panalists present: John Finerty, Staff Advisor, Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe; Eliza Musaeva, Former Director, "Memorial's" Chechnya Office; Gregory Shvedov, Editor-in-Chief, Web Publication, "Caucasian Knot"; and Magomed Mutsolgov, Director, Ingush Human Rights Organization "MASHR".

Mr. FINERTY. Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. Thank you for attending this briefing today on Ingushetia of the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe.

Chairman Hastings has been held up on the floor a little bit. There's a series of votes, and I'm going to begin. And I expect Chairman Hastings to be over very shortly.

We are having this briefing essentially because we feel, despite the fact that there is a tenuous quietening or restoration of order, if you will, in Chechnya, the fact of the matter is that there's a good deal of violence that has emerged in the other areas of the North Caucasus. This is obviously an area that is a part of the OSCE.

The Helsinki Commission, of course, is mandated by law to monitor events taking place, in participating States particularly through the prism of human rights.

What I'm going to do is I'm going to ask my colleagues to put the film on. We're going to have a short film for a moment on the situation in the Caucasus. This was done by memorial and by witness.

And then we'll begin our testimony with Ms. Musaeva. And hopefully the chairman will be here by that time. We will hold off on questions, if you will, until all the speakers have spoken. After that, we'll be more than glad to entertain questions from the audience.

[Film was shown.]

Mr. FINERTY. With that Ms. Musaeva will please begin your presentation.

Ms. MUSAEVA [through interpreter]. Good afternoon. The reason we are talking about Ingushetia today is because we believe that in Russia at this point in time, as much attention as possible should be given to this Republic.

What is Ingushetia now used to be, up until 1991—that is, before the USSR broke apart—part of the autonomous Chechen-Ingush Republic. Following 1991, when Chechnya announced its intention to be independent, the Ingush part of the former autonomous region decided to voluntarily remain part of Russia. And ever since, the local residents have considered themselves citizens of Russia.

When the second Chechen war started in 1991, Ingushetia was the recipient of the bulk of the refugees out of Chechnya, whose number amounted to 200,000 individuals.

And while Chechnya was the venue of mass scale bombings, mop-up operations and clean-up operations, Ingushetia provided a safe haven to the refugees from Chechnya.

And, yes, there were kidnappings happening occasionally in those days in Ingushetia, but most of those kidnapped were Chechen refugees.

The incidence of that was very small, however, and human rights organizations started talking about that eventually. What they referred to as legal arbitrary rule or lack of law originating in Chechnya began to invade into Ingushetia and spread across Ingushetia on an ever-increasing scale. And the incidents of kidnappings began to increase.

By 2004, kidnappings that occurred in Ingushetia had become so prolific, and they felt these were specifically Chechnya related, that by that year 2004, Ingushetia began to be talked about as a republic in its own right, which was a hotbed of kidnappings. And those kidnappings by then largely involved local residents, the Ingush.

Since September of '04—that is when the Beslan tragedy occurred—Ingushetia has, although unofficially, been an area where the Federal Government has been conducting what they referred to as counterterrorism operations. And specifically, the authorities have singled out Ingushetia as a part of the country where, among others, they are particularly fighting international terrorists, quote-unquote.

And at around that time what human rights organizations began to refer to as a factory of violence or conveyor belt, literally speaking of violence, evolved, where individuals would be illegally detained, held at an undisclosed location, subjected to some severe torture, and tortured into signing confessions, whereupon they would be detained at the pre-trial detention center of the city of Vladikavkaz, and their families would be informed they had confessed to being part of gangs, terrorists organizations, and so on and so forth.

And the next step in this factory of violence would be the actual trial, where the individual would be put on trial, and there in the courtroom he or she would not only frequently talk about the torture that had been applied so as to attract confessions, but some of them would actually go as far as show their wounds and physical evidence of their torture.

The presiding judge would routinely ignore both the description of torture and the marks of torture, because there is no independent judiciary in Russia in general, and in Ingushetia in particular.

However, there was and is a weak link in this factory of violence, which, thank God, still exists and operates in Ingushetia, and I'm referring to the trial by jury. The jury aspect of the trial came as a lifesaver for many of those put on trial, because often times the jury acquitted those put on trial, and they continue to do so.

And that in itself provoked different kinds of reaction, controversial reaction, a unique reaction I should say, from the law enforcement agencies. In particular, a gentleman, whose last name is Shepel and who at the time was the Deputy Prosecutor Gen-

eral of the Russian Federation, said that as far as autonomous republics, there should be no trial by jury there, because a jury there cannot be objective.

However, needless to say, those who were acquitted did not necessarily feel safe, and not that every one of them was safe. There were attempts at kidnapping them again, and sometimes those attempts were made literally in the courtroom. And some of those who were acquitted by jury in those trials ended up tragically.

So one result of the fact that there was a lot of public outcry over the kidnappings in Ingushetia, and also the jury factor and the fact that the jury frequently acquitted those put on trial, all caused the law enforcement agencies to change their tactic.

And what they have resorted to since is that they simply kidnap and kill those people, who otherwise would have gone on trial. They've considerably shortened this procedure, so to speak.

And these murders do not occur in the middle of the night. They occur in broad daylight. Not only those who are approached and frequently murdered by the law enforcement don't put up any resistance, but it happens in very public settings. Somebody may be going to work and waiting for a bus at a bus stop, or someone may just have come out of the mosque.

And there are other public settings where these individuals are approached by the law enforcement and brutally massacred by them, which has resulted in a public perception of awe and shock. This is how the public reacts to people being slaughtered in broad daylight.

Ingushetia, of course, is a very small place, and one where news travels extremely fast. And a lot of people are related to one another, and there is certainly nothing that can happen in one place that would not almost immediately become public knowledge.

One of the circumstances that accompanies these kinds of killings is that often times the individual has just—and as I said, he didn't put up any resistance—has just been killed.

They would put in a hand grenade or some sort of weapon in the individual's hands, snap pictures, and on late night news, on evening prime time news on central TV on the major channels, there would be a report that so and so, terrorist so and so, put up a fight in the middle of the city today, as he was approached with a view to seizing him, and he was killed during the fight.

And that is how it is done. And, again, there are witnesses to members of the law enforcement after killing somebody planting so-called evidence in his or her hands.

The family, then—and that is strongly natural—takes up the issue with the law enforcement. They file an application with the prosecutor's office, asking that a criminal case be instituted, because their son has been murdered.

And indeed a criminal investigation is instituted—however, it is a completely different investigation. Usually, Article 317 of the penal code is invoked, whereby the individual who was just killed is accused of having resisted officers of the law enforcement, but since the individual died during the incident, the case is then closed.

And as far as witness testimony, the only witnesses whose evidence is asked for and filed to the case file is that provided by those same officers of the law enforcement who detained and killed the individual.

Where in the past the factory of violence, or the circle of violence, was involved in framing up individuals, now individuals are murdered, and post mortem, so to speak, provisions of the criminal code are invoked so as to put it on a solid legal foundation.

Thank you for listening.

Mr. FINERTY. I neglected to identify our witness. I hope you've managed to get bios on the table in the corridor. If not, I think you will find them on our web page. But I do want to say that Ms. Musaeva headed the Ingush-Chechen branch of the Human Rights Center Memorial from 2000 to 2004.

Our next witness will be Gregory Shvedov, who directs one of the leading media sources from the Kavkaz—the Kavkaz-Uzel, or the Caucasian Knot. And I'll turn the microphone over to him.

Mr. SHVEDOV. Thank you. [Inaudible] supposed to tell a little bit more about the situation in other parts of the Northern Caucasus, so the idea is to share the major breadth, the major trends in the region and what is common to the Ingush.

The first thing I want to touch on would be the lack of federal control. We saw this map on the screen, when we watched the video which was made by memorial, and it was good to recognize that the Northern Caucasus is a small part of the south of Russia.

But it was also good to recognize to what extent this is a part of Russia. Unfortunately, during the last year we do see that it is less and less a region which is under the control of federal authorities.

What do I mean by this? I don't mean that the separatist movement is really developed very much in the regions of the Northern Caucasus. This is not the main point.

The main point is that the level of control, the level of federalism in Russia in general is really very weak. And especially in the Northern Caucasus, we can see that. These regions are part of a bigger Russia.

There a lot of examples how the regional authorities are trying to share the map, share the symbol of unity of the Russian Federation. There are a series of celebrations, which have been going on during the previous year, celebrating the 450th anniversary of unity and friendship between national minorities, national ethnic groups of the Russian Federation.

There is an annual anniversary of the Day of Russia, which takes place everywhere in the country, and especially in the Northern Caucasus. Clearly, these events are used to show the image that this is part of a bigger, united Russia. But in reality, it hasn't much in common with the image of a united Russia with political party.

And real unity is not something which you can see in the region. If you can talk to the people, they can hardly recognize after eating and celebrating the Day of Russia. What is the Day of Russia? What exactly are these concerts about? Why have these celebrations in the region? What are we celebrating?

For many still, it is a nice collar of real colonization of the Northern Caucasus, which has been going on, by the way, not so long time ago.

So the message of loyalty is signed by the local elite. They will say to [inaudible], "Yes, we are loyal." As an example, as average are loyal to the federal authorities. But what reality is going on? What is in the backstage of this message of loyalty?

I would say that the regions are lost in an enormous level of corruption. The taxes are not collected properly in the region. There is lack of an independent judiciary. There

is absence of political and legal freedoms. And there is a growing, increasing number of insurgents in the regions of the Northern Caucasus.

All of these together, especially lack of political and legal freedoms, give less and less chances to the local population to have a voice. It gives less and less chances to the federal authorities to see what's really going on in the region, because of an absence of political opposition, because of an almost absence of independent mass media.

There is no real criticism, no real voices on the ground saying, "What do you think is not going in a proper way?" And, unfortunately, particularly problematic is the fact that the situation is maintained for the use of gross human rights violations in the Northern Caucasus.

This leaves the federal center far away from the regional, real agenda, where the people are really suffering from the local authorities, mainly, but unfortunately, from the federal law enforcement agents as well.

And because the type of operations which are organized by the federal authorities are mainly different programs, different projects, which are never properly implemented in the region, we do really see that in reality the way of managing the republics, the way of controlling the republics, is just that old-fashioned colonial approach, when local elites just do mainly what they want to do in order to make a picture of civilization.

As we know in the example of Chechnya, this civilization is something which does not have to be a real thing. It just has to be something coming out from the screen of the TV. It has to be coming out from the newspapers. It has to be not coming from the articles of independent foreign journalists, who are for years having really hard access to the region.

So the lack of federal control is an important thing to understand. The second—and I'm supposed to talk about factions—the second thing, and the most important, I believe, and we talked how important it is, is the issue of radicalization of the civilian population.

We do need to understand that international terrorism, all of the sentences and all of the reports over bin Laden organizing the terror attacks in the Northern Caucasus is not something which is very much linked to reality.

In reality, the population is radicalized by the problems with human rights, by the problem of social and economic liberties as well. So in reality we do see that active resistance is something which is really, really spreading in the region.

And I believe we need to understand that this is a process which has its own dynamic. It's growing and growing and growing. Unfortunately, radicalization is something which is going on. It has a security side, and it has a political side.

Unfortunately, we do see that Ingushetia—we were already talking about this, and my colleague Magomed will talk about this more—is one of the regions where we see that political, not only security issues are making radicalized population a really a serious threat, not only for the region, but for a broader part of the country.

When we talk about rebels, we need to keep in mind that the numbers are not as high. We're talking about up to 200 people, probably, in Ingushetia, and from official reports, from 500 to 700 rebels are active in the other parts of the Northern Caucasus. There are parts of the Northern Caucasus that are almost no rebels and no rebel movement.

But unfortunately, the most important point around our [inaudible] population is that it's not an issue of the number of active rebels nowadays. It's an issue of the number of supporters among the civilian population.

And one of the examples when we see how these supporters really become active people, really participating, and at once are the days of 13th or 14th October 2005, when almost 15–20 different active people mobilized up to 200 religious motivated, mostly young people in the region of Kabardino-Balkariya, who led in attacking more than a dozen of different governmental structures in the region, which was for years called the most calm, the most terrifically loved part of the Northern Caucasus, Kabardino-Balkariya.

So we do need to see that tension mobilization is the most important factor when we discuss the situation today in the region. It's not an issue nowadays how many people are in the forests and in the mountains. Not so many of them.

A majority of the active rebels and, unfortunately, terrorists, which are back in the region, are living in the houses, in the villages, in the cities, which makes a very hard issue to deal with.

We also need to understand that the rebel movement itself changed, and it's no more an army structure. It's very much recognized as an Irish Republican Army, and they may be changed from army divisions to tactical groups of three to five persons, which operate without serious connection to IRA groups, which operate maybe in the same town, maybe in the same village.

So the connection between different rebels groups is low. That's why we would say that the tactics of law enforcement entities are no more to investigate cases, but to assassinate people. And my colleagues will talk more about this.

It's important to understand that it's a region for separatists, rebels, local mullahs, who themselves announced that they are not anymore fighting for the independence of Chechnya, so there is not any more need to understand the idea of separatism.

It's not any more an idea we can negotiate on, which was a very popular point, but how it is possible to run negotiations in the region. Nowadays it's not an issue to discuss, because religiously motivated people, who are using terrorism as one of the serious and very effective instruments, are not focused on any negotiations.

I probably have not much time to talk about the different tactics in other parts of the Northern Caucasus, but I want to make it clear. The regions of the Northern Caucasus are not one unit. The rebels and the terrorists, which are different groups, different people, are using different techniques.

In North Ossetia they try to target gambling clubs, or they've been very effective targeting 11 troop carriers and even a helicopter. In Karachi-Cherkessia they mostly are targeting official religious leaders and attacking them and killing them.

And in the Kabardino-Balkariya region, which was mentioned above, religious leaders have announced jihad, which is quite a serious difference from the things which are going on in Dagestan, where mainly the police officers are targeted.

So it's really an issue to keep in mind that the regions are different from each other, and the things which are going on there have a lot in common, but a lot is different.

When I'm thinking about common things, and we keep in mind the radicalized population, one of the reasons is that unemployment is very high, especially the economic situation in the region, and a lot of young people are leaving the parts of the Northern Caucasus.

It's very hard for the security forces to understand where they are in reality. Are they really studying capitalism in other regions of Russia, or are they disappeared due to other reasons?

So from all of these examples, we can tell that, unfortunately, the terrorism organizations are very successful in developing their support bases outside of the Northern Caucasus.

There are enormous amounts of young people who are participating when it is needed in the different terrorist activities, and then they disappear, and they can be outside of the region. And one example is the Nalchik event in 2005.

Another topic to shortly cover is the deterioration of the relationship between local society and local government. Unfortunately, we need to understand that the level of corruption, the level where people can't earn a living, makes a real big, serious separation between the local communities and the local authorities.

Young people can hardly get an education. If you get a good education, you probably paid bribes, and it has much less a link to your career opportunities. I would say that up to 70 percent of people don't have expectations of reaching their career goals in the Northern Caucasus.

The level of unemployment is very high. And unfortunately, we do see that a lot of people are nowadays supporting Wahhabi agendas, and the religious resistance groups are really growing.

There are maybe two regions in the Northern Caucasus where local officials are trying to organize dialogue and trying to convince people not to be marginalized by Wahhabi agenda, but in the majority of the region, the local population gets more and more desperate because of the less possibilities to use social risks. To get careers, to run business, to get an education is less and less adoptable for the people on the ground.

Fourth is to touch base on the terror. It is important to understand the behavior of the local authorities, especially efforts to target religious Moslem as a potential terrorist. So being religious, being Moslem, you would be often seen as a potential terrorist.

That means your name would appear on a special Wahhabi list. The local authorities would search for you. The local authorities would use what you call here in the United States interrogation techniques, and we call it torture.

That means that those people are especially targeted, unfortunately, because of a very close link between official Moslem so-called Moslem chamber and the law enforcement agencies, which are communicating with each other. And official Moslem groups are really trying to fulfill their agenda of fighting the Wahhabi movement through the efforts of the local police.

A second is very weak response to the nationwide bureau for refugees. You know that the number of people who have been killed due to the refugees for nationalistic reasons is increasing and increasing outside of the Northern Caucasus, but unfortunately, in the neighboring regions of the world.

And the fear of social and economic political collapse is also one of the reasons which transform actions over most marginalized groups, both peaceful religious citizens and rebels, to terrorism.

Unfortunately, for example, nowadays for more than 7 months the counterterrorist operation is going on in the village upstate in the mountains of Dagestan—Ghimri (ph)—

and the whole population of this village, while we are sitting here, are actually the hostages, which are taken by both local and civil authorities.

They can hardly adopt a living in the circumstances, when the roads are closed and access to their gardens is closed. They can hardly sell goods they could use. And all of these are really radicalizing people a lot. And unfortunately, we do see that the number of terrorists, unfortunately, is growing.

It is important to see that this is a new process. It just started a year and a half ago, because as colleagues mentioned, after the Beslan hostage-taking operation, the Chechen rebels stopped using terrorism.

And infamous terrorist Shamil Basayev, who has not yet acted during one period of time, but for last year, year and a half, we do see after Shamil Basayev was already killed, that a new wave of leaders of terrorist events appeared.

They conducted explosions on buses in the Stavropol regions and in the Ossetia region. Explosions are also happening in Dagestan. Ingushetia's civilians are targeted as well.

So all of these are important to keep in mind, because the strategy which was used against Shamil Basayev, against the Chechen rebels, which used terrorism as one of the instruments, would not work anymore, because these are people who are not hiding one more time in the mountains and forests, but living in the houses in the cities.

The last thing to mention is the quality of education. It's important to keep in mind that nowadays as is a positive thing in the regions of Northern Caucasus, there is recognition that it is a need to limit the social economical situation of the region with the growth of terrorism.

But, unfortunately, we do not see enough jobs created. We do not see the level of education making possibilities to get good professions and get careers. And we do not see that the level of unemployment is dropping.

I probably need to stop here, but telling more about the future with a conclusion that more democracy is very much needed in the Russian Federation in general, but for the Northern Caucasus it was become really critical in recent years.

It becomes really critical because authoritarianism, corruption, lack of freedoms show each day growing terrorism. We do see the close link between human rights violations, between lack of political freedoms.

And the results, then, marginalize people, who would like to be in the real position to like to be peaceful, have no other possibility to use their point of view, to present their ideas, to use the religious path they want to use, to run active military resistance, including terrorism.

Thank you.

Mr. FINERTY. Thank you, Gregory.

Our next witness or panelist will be Magomed Mutsolgov. He is Chairman of MASHR, which means peace. It's a leading human rights organization in the region of Ingushetia. And I will turn the microphone over to Mr. Mutsolgov now.

Mr. MUTSOLGOV [through interpreter]. It is with regret that I am saying that at this point in time my republic is the most problem-ridden part of the Russian Federation. It is the hottest spot in the Russian Federation.

We are currently facing three major challenges. One is the problem of refugees in the Prigorodny district.

Back in 1944, my people were relocated to Kazakhstan, and during that exodus 40 percent of the population died. After Stalin's death in 1953, some of those who had been relocated began to come back to where they had once lived, but part of the area that they used to occupy was never returned to Ingushetia.

Since 1991 the Russian Federation has a law, quote, on rehabilitation of purged nations, unquote. The law not been completely complied with, and the Prigorodny district was never completely returned to Ingushetia and made part of its territory.

On account of this, 70,000 of my fellow countrymen back in 1992 had to leave their homes. And currently there are 14,000 of those refugees residing in the Republic of Ingushetia, and these are individuals who don't have homes to go back to.

The last 3 years in the Prigorodny district, part of the Republic, there have been 21 kidnappings, and every single of the kidnapped individuals had the same ethnicity. And all the kidnappings were committed on the ethnic principle.

One hundred fifty-eight people have disappeared in Ingushetia since 2002. And over 700 have been murdered. This is a serious tragedy for a republic as small as Ingushetia is.

Unfortunately, we have a lot of evidence that indicates that in the vast majority of those incidents, the law enforcement agencies were involved. None of the criminal cases instituted following a kidnapping have been completed. There have been no trials. None of the kidnapped has been found and returned to his family. And none of those guilty of kidnapping have been brought to justice.

The number of kidnappings has decreased considerably over the last 12 to 18 months. However, it has been offset by an increased number in murders. All of this is made possible by the fact that officers of the law enforcement who participate in kidnapping and murders are above the law.

Last November the 9th a 6-year-old boy was murdered in one of the mountainous villages, one of the alpine villages, in the Republic, and the law enforcement officers, who had committed that crime, brazenly responded that he had been fighting them back with an AKM.

My organization was founded by the families of those kidnapped in Ingushetia, and I could go on and on with numerous facts. Part of the footage that we saw earlier, was filmed in my office.

There was a wall with a large number of photographs of those missing. The very first one, the photograph to the left on the wall, was a photo of my kid brother.

For a number of years now, we have been providing legal assistance to the families of those kidnappings. One of the objectives we are trying to accomplish now is to save the young people of our Republic, and by that token to save the future of Ingushetia.

I don't contend that the bulk of this problem needs to be dealt with by the Kremlin. And to a very large extent, the future of these individuals will depend on the actions that may and should be taken by the Kremlin.

However, there has been a precedent before, where on at least one occasion the international community helped us avoid a humanitarian catastrophe. And by that I am referring to the 300,000 refugees from Chechnya that Ingushetia received in its territory and the 70,000 refugees from the Prigorodny district.

And while these numbers are large, they seem all the more significant when you take into account that the entire population of the Republic of Chechnya stands at only 440,000—I'm sorry; I misspoke—the Republic of Ingushetia.

Basically, without assistance from the international community, we would never have been able to accomplish that and to avoid a humanitarian catastrophe.

The reason I am here is to appeal to the international community, to the public of different countries, to try and help us prevent yet another humanitarian catastrophe that could result in the murder of young people in the Republic of Ingushetia. I just want it all to end.

What is happening now can be summed up as a vicious circle, where the law enforcement agencies kill people. They, yes, kill people who put up resistance, but they kill innocent bystanders as well, and they kill those who do not resist arrest.

This results in a lot of feelings of revenge brewing in young people, feelings that cannot be expressed in public rallies, because that is not possible, nor can be expressed and channeled through a system of courts, because we do not have an independent judiciary.

And I could talk at length about numerous crimes that are committed in Northern Caucasus and in the Republic of Ingushetia, but given the time constraints, I think we would now make better use of this time if we open up for questions, both my colleagues and myself, and we'll be happy to take any questions.

Mr. FINERTY. Thank you.

And thank you to all of our witnesses today.

Before I open up the floor, I'd like to ask one question, if I may. And then we will open up to questions.

I would ask that you identify yourself. If you're with an organization, and you wish to identify it, that's fine. If you don't, that's also fine.

But I'd like to begin with a question. Regarding personalities in Ingushetia, the president of Ingushetia right now is a gentleman named Zyazikov. He seems to be not particularly popular.

He was preceded by a gentleman named Ruslan Aushev, who seems to have been popular. And in fact one of the human rights organizations in Moscow even nominated him for the Nobel Peace Prize.

And there is now a movement, I know, to bring him back. I wondered if you could tell me if you think that's a possibility. And do you think that if Mr. Aushev came back, would he be able to restore some law and order or stability, a decency to the Republic? How would you look at this?

Mr. MUTSOLGOV [through interpreter]. Yes, Ruslan Aushev remains highly popular in the Republic. He is supported by 85 percent of the population. Yes, there is a campaign, a signature collecting campaign in Ingushetia, to ask the President of Russia, Medvedev, to appoint Aushev president of Ingushetia.

I have said before that a great deal depends on what Moscow will do, and my feeling is that if they side with Aushev and if they place their bets on Aushev, Aushev will be able to restore law and order within 6 to 12 months.

There are thousands and thousands of [inaudible] in the Republic of Ingushetia who may be better persons than Aushev is, yet there isn't anyone who comes close to him in popularity and in support.

I think he is the only individual capable of rallying people and restoring order. The reason that he left his presidential position was that he was the only president of a republic within the Russian Federation who refused to sign the papers for sending troops to the Chechen Republic during the second Chechen war.

Aushev prevented the military from conducting mop-up operations. When [inaudible] and the others authorized the closure of the border, Aushev instructed that the border be open so that the refugees can save themselves by leaving the hostilities area.

And I still think that he deserves a Peace Prize, because he has on several occasions done things that separate him from others. The most recent one was when the school in Beslan was taken hostage, he was the only individual who walked into the school and emerged from that school with several children.

And he also has gone into the Nord-Ost Theater when that theater was taken hostage. And he also was involved in the situation when the Russian White House was fired at by the Russian tanks under Yeltsin. He just happens to be a person of remarkable courage, and he doesn't hesitate to use it for people's benefit.

It is very unfortunate that there's a politician with this amount of credibility and political capital, who for the last 6 years has had to be in the shadows, and there seemingly was no need for his credibility. To me, it suggests that there were interests and individuals who wanted what is now happening in the Caucasus to be taking place, because with him things would have been different.

Mr. FINERTY. Thank you.

I would just ask our guests, Mr. Shvedov or Ms. Musaeva, would you care to briefly add to that?

Ms. MUSAEVA [through interpreter]. I [inaudible] Aushev the Nobel Prize. He's really popular [inaudible] it's true, but I have my own opinion. I give the situation as a whole Russia [inaudible] and all to have [inaudible] Ingushetia is coming from Moscow. And can anyone, Aushev, resist the oldest system in security forces who doing this, all these who, I don't know. I don't think it's either tough for Aushev, and I would like it. It could be, but I'm trying not to [inaudible] him.

Mr. FINERTY. Thank you.

Mr. SHVEDOV. Regional politics of Russia, like civil centers, mostly interested in weak governors, weak presidents, and being much more [inaudible] tradition to federal programs, and that's why it is actually very hard to expect the federal center to respect that position and point of view of the people living in Ingushetia.

And we need to keep in mind that the Russian presidents and governors of the regions, in the six regions, are not elected by the people anymore. And I would believe that one of the reasons people are not elected anymore by the citizens of our country is that if it would be free election in a place like Ingushetia, people like Aushev would probably have won these elections.

And that is something different from what federal authorities would like to happen.

Mr. FINERTY. Thank you.

Does anyone else have any questions?

Thanks. From here please.

QUESTIONER. My name is Brian [inaudible]. My question is with regard to the involvement by the former KGB for [inaudible] in the area. Is there anything similar to what was in Chechnya [inaudible] in terms of heavy involvement that was sanctioned by the federal authorities?

Mr. SHVEDOV. I don't know if we're talking about the former KGB, but very recently the Federal Security Bureau is definitely involved in the things which are going on in the Northern Caucasus, and they feel [inaudible] is responsible for the acts of terrorism, so their involvement is one of the key instruments of federal politics in Northern Caucasus.

The question is if it is effective. The question is if major human rights violations are going from the side of the Federal Security Bureau.

I would say that the role of the Federal Security Bureau is very serious, but I would not say that they're involved in each and all human rights violations which happen there in the Northern Caucasus, because simply they're not playing that role, for example, for the tortures which are on the mass level going on against the religiously motivated, especially young people, because these people are mainly in charge of the local ministry of interior, for example.

But I would not really say that there is some special plan or strategy by the Federal Security Bureau in order to make a border fire in religion. I would say that there is a very strange way how in Russian Federation terrorism is viewed, developed.

It's not clear where authorities of one structure are finishing and then authorities of other structures start. So their role, I believe, is different from region to region, different from case to case.

Ms. MUSAEVA [through interpreter]. I would like to answer. One example is example in to comment from the Federal Security [inaudible]. In Ingushetia this year at end of January were killed two local people and the first day of March were killed another person. At least in 1 week three persons were killed, and representatives of Federal Security [inaudible] Ingushetia [inaudible] did visitation on economic (inaudible).

[Inaudible] because we need to put an end to the presence of rebels in Ossetia [inaudible].

[Inaudible] counterterrorism operations authorized by the presence of Russian [inaudible] in the middle of being conducted in the Republic of Ossetia—I'm sorry.

What they're doing here is they're killing civilians here—the Ingush [inaudible]. And what we have started to do is to reciprocate. Or rather not we, but President Putin.

That was a quote from a statement by [inaudible], who is the press secretary for the Federal Security Service for the Republic of Ossetia.

Mr. FINERTY. Any other questions, please? Question over here, yes, Valery——

QUESTIONER. Can I comment a little? Or only questions are allowed.

Mr. FINERTY. Could we have questions for just a moment, and then maybe a comment toward the end.

QUESTIONER. Right. OK. I have a question for Gregory Shvedov. Judging by the fact that Russian situation currently has a lot of oil money, why do you think the federal center does not invest more into development of region? Apparently, according to your words and many other analysts' words, a large part of the problems in the region derive from deprivation and poverty.

And the other question is for Mr. Mutsolgov. You said that one of the main problems in Ingushetia was territory that was taken away from the Ingush in 1994. But if you look at the statistics and compare the Ingush abducted or killed in North Ossetia and the Ingush abducted and killed in Ingushetia, you will see that there are more killings and abductions in Ingushetia proper than in North Ossetia. So why do you think it would solve the problem for the Ingush, if supposedly Ingush territory would be returned to them?

Mr. SHVEDOV. Thank you very much for the question. I believe there is an approach to invest more in making the region different. Mostly this approach is used by the nominating to positions of president and governors in the Northern Caucasus of people who would take this point as major ones for their activities.

So for example, the president of Kabardino-Balkariya, Arsen Kanokov, is famous as a businessman. And I believe one of the reasons why he was nominated by the representative of the President of the Russian Federation is because of the way that he would address the economic problems in the region.

I also think that the nomination of the president of Dagestan, Mukhu Aliev, is also very much linked to his position to fight the corruption and his attempt to make more efforts in order to try to address the regional economical situation.

There are a lot of different programs, as you know, very good going on in the Northern Caucasus, and an enormous amount of federal money, which has supposedly invested into the region.

But in reality, unfortunately, all of these efforts are destroyed by an enormous level of corruption, which I would also say is not only about the corruption in the region. Huge bribes go back to the pockets of different Muscovite bureaucrats.

So the idea of just investing money in the region I would say would not be very effective, because there is no framework nowadays on the ground, which would really make use of these funds effectively.

But there is recognition, which is good [inaudible]. There is an effort to deal with the region before it is too late for them to be thinking of social economic agenda. And we will see emerging investment in the region is linked to gains.

So we will see where regional and most federal authorities would take advantage of using this enormous investment to the region in order to develop the small and medium regional business on the reconstruction area first of all in order to develop the whole part of the labor issue in the Northern Caucasus, or they would deal with an Olympic, huge reconstruction project, just as usual it is made in other parts of Russia, without any social responsibility agenda.

Thank you.

Mr. MUTSOLGOV [through interpreter]. I'd like to emphasize that in my presentation I said that there were three important, but distinctly separate, problems that need to be tackled, if the situation in Ingushetia is to improve.

When the Ingush were sent away by Stalin, the Ingush land was divided up between five different groups—the Kabardians, the Dagestani, the Stavropol Territory, the Georgians and the North Ossetians.

And out of these five, only one—North Ossetia—failed to return the part of the Ingush land that had gone to them in 1944 after Stalin's death and after the return of the ethnic Ingush to where they used to live. The other four did return that land.

It was at that time, by failing to return that land, that the leadership of North Ossetia, with the assistance and under the guidance of the Soviet regime, a time bomb, which, of course, went off in 1992, where in 3 days over 500 Ingush were murdered, and 200 disappeared. And 70,000 lost their homes.

For 16 years now, those individuals have been trying to go back to their homes, and 14,000 of them have yet to accomplish that. The 21 kidnappings that I referred to previously—the ethnically motivated kidnappings—were designed specifically to prevent refugees from being able to return to their homes.

And as I said, those kidnappings were committed on a specifically ethnic basis. And the intention behind them was to incite ethnic differences and hostilities between the two Republics.

And this is a situation that can be taken advantage of by dirty politicians, for lack of a better word, and the only thing that needs to be done to redress this situation is to simply comply with the law on the rehabilitation of purged nations that has been adopted by the Russian Federation.

The future of thousands of people is a very important matter. It might actually be more important than the matter of 158 individuals, who were kidnapped in Ingushetia.

The reason I'm saying that is because I don't think that there are many of those 158 kidnapped who are still among the living. I don't think many of those are still with us, which includes my brother. I would like to be able to explain to my brother's wife that she is a widow and to her daughter that she is an orphan.

Until I have the definitive proof to the fact that my brother was indeed murdered, I am not able to do that. However, she is 5 years old now, and I am finding it increasingly difficult to answer her questions.

I realize that in many families out there, where there have been kidnappings, children have since grown up, and similar questions cannot be answered. And at some point in time, there has to be an end to this.

Many of the families of those kidnapped want to know where their brothers and fathers are buried. And that in itself is a very large problem.

I would like to stress again, though, that the matter of the Prigorodny district, the former Ingush territory, is even more important, because it concerns the relationship between the two republics, and that is something that can be exploited and taken advantage of.

Mr. FINERTY. Would anybody else like to raise a question? No further questions? Many times some people tell you they'd like to raise a question, and they wind up making a comment. In this case, someone with some experience in that part of the world has asked if he might make a comment, so I will turn the microphone over to him for a brief comment. Valery?

QUESTIONER. Thank you. I forgot to introduce myself in the beginning. I come from North Ossetia. My name is Valery Dzutsev. I'm at the University of Maryland.

So I think I know quite a few things about this region, because I come from the Prigorodny region, which is sort of disputed land between the Ingush and the Ossetians.

I wanted to very briefly—there could be a lot of comments about very interesting presentation that we have heard today—but I just wanted to make a very specific comment about Aushev.

I think he is really a very popular person in Ingushetia, as far as I know. I would agree with that. But also he really behaved very courageously in Beslan. But I also recall that under Aushev there were far more incidents in North Ossetia—armed incidents, killings of law enforcement, North Ossetian law enforcement people on the border with Ingushetia than there are now.

I don't know whether it is linked to Aushev, or perhaps the ties were different. Perhaps there were other factors that influenced the situation, but I would like to make this observation.

And also when we talk about reconciliation between North Ossetia and Ingushetia, I'm afraid the issue is much more complicated than we have heard today, because one of the Ingush officials, for instance, Issa Kostoev, if I'm not mistaken, who is a representative of the Ingush Government in the Russian State Duma, called the Beslan hostage attack, in which about 300 people died.

He made the comment that if there were no territorial issue between North Ossetia and Ingushetia, there would have been no Beslan attack. So apparently it looks like this whole hostage attack was performed by the Ingush, according to Kostoev, because of the territorial dispute. So it's not the way of solving a territorial dispute.

Mr. FINERTY. Thank you for that commentary.

I'd rather that this not become sort of a debate between individuals here. And one more time I'd ask if there are any other questions. If there are not—

[Off mike.]

Mr. FINERTY. Very briefly, very briefly.

Mr. MUTSOLGOV [through interpreter]. The whole world knows that the only demand that the terrorists who seized the school in Beslan set forth was that the war in Chechnya be discontinued.

However, the fact that literally within a quarter of an hour of the beginning of the terrorist attack, the situation was taken advantage of by politicians, and roads in Ingushetia were closed, and other things were done, is specifically an example of what I have been referring to before, as I was saying that there is a conflict, an ongoing conflict.

There was no result—territorial—that can be taken advantage of, and that is exactly what happened.

Mr. FINERTY. Thank you.

Thank you for attending. And as we've seen, there are a lot of different questions that come out of the Northern Caucasus region. And I hope you will attend our next CSCE event. Thank you. [Applause.]

[Whereupon, at 2:40 p.m., the briefing ended.]

APPENDICES

PREPARED STATEMENT OF HON. ALCEE L. HASTINGS, CHAIRMAN, COMMISSION ON SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE

Good Afternoon, ladies and gentlemen, guests, and colleagues. Welcome to today's briefing on "Ingushetia: the New Hot Spot in the North Caucasus."

Although the Russian government appears to have prevailed militarily over the secessionist forces in Chechnya, sporadic violence still occurs there, and more ominously, this violence has spread to neighboring regions, especially Ingushetia, Chechnya's neighbor to its west. To be sure, former President Putin did take encouraging steps a few years ago when he removed from office some of the most incompetent local leaders in the North Caucasus region.

Nevertheless, there are troubling signs on the horizon. As was the case in Chechnya a few years ago, Ingushetia has become the venue for terrorist and counter-terrorist operations, illegal detentions, kidnappings and disappearances, as well as extra-judicial executions carried out by shadowy forces. Moreover, there are indications that Islamic extremists have been behind some of the attacks on local police and officials. Unlike Chechnya, Ingushetia has never attempted to secede from Russia, and the growing public discontent is aimed largely at Ingushetia's corrupt and repressive political leadership.

Meanwhile, to the east of Chechnya, Dagestan, an economically depressed and notoriously corrupt region, was shaken earlier this year by a spate of high-profile killings that was remarkable in an area already distinguished by violence and ethnic tensions. The situation in other North Caucasus republics is not encouraging.

It is certainly true that the North Caucasus today does not compare to some other parts of the world in terms of violence against the civilian population, and let us hope that it never will. Perhaps Russia's new President, Mr. Medvedev, and his advisors will undertake policies for the North Caucasus that are viable and just for all concerned. Nevertheless, the Helsinki Commission believes that it is time to focus some attention on this region of an OSCE participating state that is fraught with instability and the possibility of renewed conflict. We do this not necessarily to criticize but to hear the insights of people directly concerned with events there and perhaps suggest strategies for avoiding the tragedy of Chechnya.

Our guests today are particularly qualified to discuss the situation in the North Caucasus. Their biographies are available at the door, and as you can see, they have traveled a long way to share their experiences and their knowledge with us today.

We will open with a very brief film on the human tragedy that has taken place in the North Caucasus, and then move to presentations from our panel.

Following these presentations, I hope you will join me in asking a few questions.

Thank you and let us begin with Ms. Musaeva.

GREGORY SHVEDOV, EDITOR-IN-CHIEF, WEB PUBLICATION, “CAUCASIAN KNOT”

Years 2007 and 2008 can be referred to as “Caucasus on Fire.” I apply such an alarming title because Caucasus as a whole—not just the North Caucasus, but also the South Caucasus—really changed within the past year. Clearly, roots of the current situation go back to previous years, previous centuries even, but there are more recent trends worth noting.

Lack of federal Control: The first trend is, that the level of federal control over regional politics has been dramatically reduced. On the ground, it is hard to find evidence that the North Caucasus is really part of the Russian Federation. Instead, the region appears to consist of informal units that are not part of the whole country. I would call this a trend because the level of federal control has decreased gradually over the years, but has changed dramatically during the past year. I do not mean that these parts of the North Caucasus have strong separatist movements. What I do mean is that, judging by the level of management, implementation of the federal laws and programs, dealing with problems and challenges of the region, North Caucasus does not appear to be controlled by the Russian Federation. And there is a tacit understanding of this unfortunate reality by the regional authorities. In order to prevent public dissent, special effort has been made to create an image of federal unity, although due to poor PR this effort has been largely unsuccessful. Examples of attempts to create this false image are celebrations of the 450 years of friendship and unity between Russia and the local nations and the Day of Russia, both of which took place recently in the North Caucasus. However, in reality, there is no real unity between Moscow and Russia’s regions and these events are not even designed to be consumed by the local population, but as a message of loyalty by the local elites to the federal center.

Under the above outlined agreement, the region is plagued by rampant corruption, much of which lines the pockets of Moscow bureaucrats, it suffers poor implementation of tax and federal laws, lack of independent judiciary, absence of political and religious freedoms and increasing number of insurgents. Essentially, through an agreement between the local elites and the federal government, the region is only nominally controlled by the federal center, while in reality it is run by the local political structures, and the local population is left without a voice. Across the North Caucasus, local population, has insignificant leverage with both the local and the federal powers as it has little or no room to choose its future through elections or other democratic means. The authorities pay particular care to suppress any opposition voices or protests. These are the methods of the Chechen “stabilization.” Particularly problematic is the fact that the situation is maintained through the use of gross human rights violations. And with the freedom of the media significantly limited and the information about the real state of things monopolized by the very structures involved in corruption and human rights violations, the civilian population additional loses the little voice they had and becomes alienated making the situation harder to solve.

Radicalization of the Civilian Population and public support for the rebels: The second trend became a really popular topic of conversation in 2007, even among journalists. It has to do with the increasing level of radicalization of local religious groups, which contributes to active resistance, by violent means, throughout the North Caucasus. This process was clearly developing in the previous years, but in 2007 it became a real, tangible problem. Mostly, because armed resistance becomes less and less marginal as

increasing number of supporters are joining such groups. As a result, there has been a reemergence of the use of terror tactics in the region.

In Ingushetia, less than 200 people can be classified as active rebels. They are not connected to groups in other republics. In other republics of the North Caucasus, excluding Chechnya and Dagestan, the number of active rebels is even smaller. Latest official data indicate that there are approximately 500–700 active rebels in all of the North Caucasus. This, of course, is only one of the many estimates of the rebel movement and the exact figures are hard to establish.

However, what we should in fact be paying attention to is not the number of active rebels, but the number of their supporters among the civilian population. These are the people who could take up arms at any moment, as they did in Kabardino-Balkaria, in 2005 during the attacks on Nalchik. In 2005, there was barely a rebel movement to speak of in Kabardino-Balkaria. Some 10–15 people made up the entire resistance. However, in spite of their seemingly small size, within two days they were able to mobilize around 200 young people for the attack. For this reason, it is the potential of mobilization that is the most important factor to consider when we discuss military threats.

Also, the rebel movement is no longer organized as an army structure. Instead it is comprised of small groups, of about 3 to 5 people, who operate on a specific territory, and do not have links to Chechnya or any larger group. Doku Umarov (leader of the self-proclaimed North Caucasus Emirate) called these “tactical groups.”

He named this new structure, in his October 2007 speech, when he announced the transformation of the Chechen independence movement into a struggle for the North Caucasus Emirate. With this move he completely diminished the political role of Ahmed Zakhaev, leader of the Chechen Parliament and that way granted Kremlin a years-long wish.

Rebels’ techniques vary from region to region. In Ossetia, over the last few years, bombs were often used and targets included gambling clubs, 11 troop-carriers, and a helicopter. In Ingushetia on the other hand, rebels for years targeted homes of police officials and prosecutor’s office personnel. Recently however, they began targeting non-Ingush civilians, although we must note that official rebel sources never claimed responsibility for these acts. In Dagestan, rebels focused on police exclusively. In Karachaevo-Cherkessia and neighboring part of the Stavropol region, official religious leaders were attacked and killed. In Kabardino-Balkaria jihad was announced by a very popular Muslim Wahhabi leader. In this republic, much like in the others, assassinations were conducted by small groups and not very many rebels were trained to conduct attacks. The level of organization in Chechnya has always been superior to what was going on in other republics and it was aimed at military convoys and troops. The executed operations sometimes take place within the capital of Grozny. For instance, in 2007 there were signs that an attack, reminiscent of the attack organized in 2004 when rebels took control of a segment of Grozny, was being prepared. In addition, number of attacks organized in Chechnya has been increasing over the past year. All of these different tactics are not changing the fact that most rebels, and especially those behind terrorist attacks, are not hiding in the forests, but are instead living among the people.

Also, as a result of the high levels of migration and unemployment, a lot of young people no longer live with their parents. Instead they stay in dormitories, or rent cheap apartments, while trying to earn money working, often illegally, in markets or construction sites. These young generations, in their search for job opportunities, often move

around and are not registered by the authorities. As a result neither their families nor the police are informed about their whereabouts. Therefore, these groups represent an excellent pool of recruits for the rebels, as many of them are “invisible”. With rampant corruption in the country, these individuals already living on the outskirts of the society can move around unnoticed quite efficiently. This is how a few dozen of them managed to make their way into the school in Beslan. Similarly, among those who attacked Nalchik in 2005, a significant number worked away from home. The same was true for the attackers of Nazran, Ingushetia’s biggest city. From all these examples we can tell that the terrorist organizations are successfully developing their support bases outside of the North Caucasus. The overall number of active members of the rebel groups is hard to pin point. However, the exact number is not what is important now days. What is important is the emerging support of the rebel networks among the general public and youth in particular, as they increasingly perceive the rebels as fighters for the better future of the region.

Disenfranchised and desperate population: Another trend is a noticeable deterioration of the relationship between the local society and the local government. Although this is hard to quantify, it has become a serious problem in 2007. The financial and opportunities gap between those in power and the local population is so wide that the two simply function in distinct and separate realities. It is probably this gap that causes the first two trends outlined above.

It is because of the gap that those that have the opportunity to leave the region and go to “Russia” or the West, do so. Others, very often choose the religious path and many of them contribute to the wider protest movements. Those left over, hope to secure, through family ties, positions in the administration, and that way bridge the gap.

The young people understand that education is not important as there are no links between personal qualities and career opportunities. As a result, up to 70% of people on the ground do not have expectation of reaching any career goals. They are just trying to survive. This trend is particularly challenging, because the new generations will either move out of the region or join the religions resistance groups. With this predicament, nothing positive will happen for the region.

Terror. Fourth: NC is unfortunate region for the home growth terror for the Russian Federation in general. For a long period of time, especially after the school hostage-taking in Beslan, terror was not resorted to widely by rebel formations. Clearly Chechen rebels changed their tactics and have been interested in idea of negotiations. Idea of negotiations failed due to the position of president, the most known leaders of rebels have been killed. And terrorism came back as a main solution for others. Behavior of the local authorities, especially 1 efforts to target religious Muslims as potential terrorist, 2 very weak response to the national wide growth of the racism and 3 serious social&economical, political collapse transformed actions of the most marginalized groups, both peaceful religious civilians and rebels, to the terrorism. It is not spread yet to the whole Northern Caucasus, for example surprisingly enough civilians are not targeted in Chechnya. But in few other parts of the NC it is widely used. Recently, we have witnessed explosions of buses in Ossetia and Stavropol region, explosions in Dagestan and killings of the non-Ingush civilians in Ingushetia. In other words, we see the revival of the strategic tactic of using terror and targeting civilians as opposed to officials. And the most worrying issue is, that the strategy which was used against Basaev, would not work out now. Main actors of the current attacks seems to be religious motivated youth, which sees death as a certain step

in their spiritual path. Most of them is not hiding in the cave and foresters, but lives in the cities—which makes situation even more complex.

EDUCATION AND THE GAP BETWEEN GOVERNMENT AND SOCIETY

Fifth and the last. The quality of education is extremely low. The literacy rate is still high and people are getting some education, but the level of professional expertise is lower than what it was several years ago. Educational degrees have taken on a symbolic rather than functional meaning. The lower quality of education makes it problematic to say that education is a way for a young person to embark on a career path in a specialized area. In general, people try to send their kids to study in other areas of South Federal District and other areas of the Russian Federation (clearly Moscow and Sankt-Petersburg are most popular destinations) because they see that the level of education in the North Caucasus is very bad. Most importantly, for most of the population of the North Caucasus, education is not considered a step towards a career. Although other regions of Russia also face unemployment problems, nowhere has this problem taken the proportions it has in the North Caucasus (more than 70–80% in some territories). When these figures are combined with the level of corruption—which is also high—education and experience alone are not enough to find a job.

For instance, you can easily buy almost any government position. With the previous president of Dagestan, positions as high up as that of a Minister were available for sale. Under the current leadership this type of corruption has been tamed a bit, but not too many things changed on the bottom. People know how much a position costs and how long payback would take—from what moment bribes would bring profits and at what level. Getting a position as a head of the department, local administration or state controlled business has nothing to do with one's skills. In other places as well, bribery is still necessary to get a position. While the methods differ, it remains notable that in the North Caucasus education has nothing to do with getting a job. For instance, a 32 year old specialist who speaks a number of foreign languages, and has experience in humanitarian aid work would have much difficulty finding a job. Even though this person may have strong skills and connections in the region, it doesn't mean anything. Social lifts are not available in the region. This phenomenon serves as a strong indication of the gap between the society and the government.

For details please see The American Committee for Peace in the Caucasus (ACPC) in-depth interview, about the general trends and developments in the North Caucasus, with Mr. Shvedov, editor-in-chief of the Caucasian Knot - web publication focused exclusively on the Caucasus region.

Short English version of Caucasian Knot <http://www.caucasianknot.info/>, full version available only in Russian <http://kavkaz-uzel.ru/>



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