

The Situation in the Northern Caucasus 2009-2010: Human Rights Violations Stemming from the Antiterrorism Campaign Continue

September 2010

As a follow-up to the report “*Russian Society Under Control: Abuses in the fight against extremism and terrorism*”¹ published in July 2009, the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH) and the Human Rights Center Memorial present a briefing note on the situation in the Northern Caucasus.

Description of situation in the region as a whole

The Northern Caucasus continues to be one of the worst regions in Russia with regard to respect for human rights. Although the situations in the various republics and *krais* [territories] of the Northern Caucasus differ appreciably, certain factors that exert an extremely negative influence on the evolution of the human rights situation affect a substantial portion of the area.

These include:

- continuing armed opposition. In the Northern Caucasus, there is an armed underground that employs terrorism in its fight against the Russian Government;
- the policy of state terror which Russian security forces follow, in turn, in their campaign against the terrorist underground, as part of which they defiantly violate the law and blatantly trample human rights;
- the impunity with which government personnel have been allowed to commit large-scale crimes in the course of “counterterrorism operations”²;
- corruption, which is extremely high even in comparison with the rest of Russia;
- arbitrary actions of government personnel;
- a high level of unemployment;
- antagonism between those advocating “traditional” Islam for the Northern Caucasus and the those espousing the fundamentalist “Salafi” Islam, which is relatively new for this region.

¹ The full report can be downloaded in English at <http://fidh.org/Russian-society-under-control-Abuses-in-the-fight>, in French at <http://fidh.org/Une-societe-sous-contrôle-du-détournement-de-la> and in Russian at <http://fidh.org/Rossiiskoe-obschestvo-pod-kontrolem>

² Indeed, the fate of the majority of approximately five thousand people who were made to “disappear” in Chechnya, Ingushetia and Dagestan since 2000 has yet to be established. For many years an entire system of “death squads” and secret prisons has operated here. This system, although to a somewhat lessened extent, continues to operate today. However, only a very few security and police personnel have been found guilty of kidnapping and murder during counterterrorist operations.

The Terrorist Underground

In recent years armed opponents of the Russian Federation have created an armed underground using local inhabitants that has become "entrenched" in a number of Northern Caucasus republics. Unfortunately, the situation that human rights advocates had previously feared has indeed arisen: refusal (on the part of the government) to negotiate in any way with those separatists who are more moderate and amenable to compromise has led to radicalization of the armed resistance movement and to its espousal of Islamic fundamentalism. At the present time insurgents are no longer guided by coherent rational goals, but rather by utopian ideas of establishing an Islamic state in the Northern Caucasus or simply by a desire for revenge.

Victims of terrorist acts include not only members of the security forces and government officials, the main target, but also ordinary innocent citizens. In executing their operations, the insurgents pay no attention to civilian casualties. For example, as a result of the terrorist act in Nazran on August 17, 2009 there was very substantial damage to a large apartment complex next door to the district Internal Affairs office [a police station]. Dozens of residents of this building were injured to varying degrees of severity, including children aged 2 to 12. One woman died of her wounds. On April 26, 2010 an explosion near a Russian Federal Road Safety Service post in the Khasavyurt region of Dagestan injured 13 innocent civilians, including one child. There are a great many examples like these.

But sometimes it is specifically the civilian population that is the intended target of insurgent attacks or threat. An appalling example of this was the explosion in Vladikavkaz (Northern Ossetia) on September 9, 2010. A suicide bomber blew up an automobile at the entrance to the central city market. As a result 18 civilians died and more than 130 were wounded. On March 31, 2010 in Kizlyar (Dagestan) two suicide bombers blew themselves up in a crowded area across from a school killing four and wounding eleven innocent bystanders. On May 1 in Nalchik (Kabardino-Balkaria) 30 spectators were wounded in an explosion at a racetrack, one of whom died. Bombs have gone off in other cities, including the attack on the Moscow subway on March 29, 2010, which killed 40 and wounded 90.

Some segments of the population (fortune tellers, those involved in sales of alcohol, and women "of easy virtue") have been subjected to systematic attacks by insurgents (primarily in Ingushetia and Dagestan) acting on their own interpretations of Islamic laws. The Islamic underground, by means of threats and violence attempt to impose their own interpretations of behavioral norms on society, blowing up shops, cafes, bars, and saunas and planting explosives on beaches. The websites of underground organizations publish death threats against heads of schools and teachers in retribution for "anti-Islam propaganda and activities," for example, bans on wearing headscarves in school, seating of boys and girls at the same desk, etc. Members of the official clergy in Dagestan, Ingushetia and Kabarda-Balkaria have been targets of militant attacks.

Unfortunately, beginning in the summer of 2008, there has been an increase in fatalities among military and police personnel in the Northern Caucasus over previous years.³ The most losses usually occur in the summer months. For this reason comparisons for these months are the most relevant: summer 2006. 83 killed, 210 wounded; summer 2007 – 61 killed, 132 wounded; summer 2008 – 82 killed, 169 wounded; summer 2009 – 142 killed and 280 wounded.

However, in the current year this trend was reversed: in the summer of 2010 – 102 military and police personnel were killed and 152 were wounded.

During 2010 the terrorist underground suffered a number of serious blows: many of their leaders were liquidated or arrested. However, despite this, the ranks of the insurgents are increasing and they have not lost their capacity to act in relatively large groups, to offer sustained resistance to the much more numerous forces of law enforcement and the military, and to attack highly placed security and administrative officials. They are using suicide bombers in these attacks with increasing frequency.

³ These data were derived by totaling reports of casualties among Russian security forces in the mass media. Of course, these data are far from complete. We do not know how many of the wounded subsequently died of their wounds, and these agencies do not report all cases of explosions and shootings to the press.

The Government

Russian security agencies have been resorting to practices of state terror, as in previous years. This terror is on a smaller scale than in the early 2000s, but nevertheless the system of illegal violence that evolved over the past decade continues to be actively in force. This system includes such integral elements as kidnapping people and incarcerating them in illegal secret prisons, torture, extrajudicial executions of some of those kidnapped, and falsification of evidence for trials for those whom the government desires to punish officially.

In addition to these factors, another trend has developed recently (starting in the fall of 2008 in Ingushetia and spring of 2010 in Dagestan) – an attempt to set a new course based on a dialogue between the authorities and the public, strict compliance with the law in conduct of counterterrorism operations, and a campaign against corruption. This policy is being practiced by the new leaders of the republics. However, unfortunately, this policy has come under active attack and is being torpedoed from two sides at once. The underground militias are undermining this new policy by stepping up their terrorist activity and government security agencies are unwilling to comply with the elementary rule of law. The peaceful population is suffering from the actions of both these forces. While those accused of belonging to the underground are virtually always convicted, members of security forces acting in violation of the law virtually always avoid punishment. The trampling of human rights by security agencies is becoming increasingly flagrant and brazen.

At the same time, blatant violations of the law committed over the course of antiterrorism operations promote increased terrorist activity over the long term. Maintenance of peace and stability in the Northern Caucasus is inextricably bound to respect for human rights in this region.

Kidnapping and illegal detention, the operation of secret prisons, torture, involuntary “disappearances,” and extra-judicial executions turn society against the authorities. Those who are thus alienated include not only victims of these illegal acts and their families, but broader segments of the local population, forming a mobilization base for the extremist fundamentalist underground. The practice of falsifying evidence is not only dangerous because innocent people are found guilty, but also because actual terrorists remain at large and continue their operations, while information that is clearly false becomes part of the legal system and is given the weight of law. All this undermines counterterrorism operations and renders them ineffective.

The illegal methods with which the counterterrorism campaign is being conducted in the Northern Caucasus are inevitably gradually spreading to the remainder of Russia. Evidence of this can be seen in the 2009 increase in cases of kidnapping and the involuntary disappearance of residents of the Northern Caucasus while visiting other regions of Russia.⁴ The circumstances of these kidnappings, at least in some cases, clearly indicate illegal participation on the part of government security agencies. The case of the St. Petersburg kidnapping and subsequent total disappearance of Yusup Dobriev, Yunus Dobriev, Magomed Adzhiyev, and Ali Adzhiyev, two residents of Ingushetia and two of their relatives who were permanent residents of areas outside of the Northern Caucasus, is a clear example of this.⁵

The Republic of Dagestan

The conflict in Dagestan clearly has a strong religious aspect. The majority of the population of the Republic espouse Sufism, which is traditional for that region. At the same time, Salafism (fundamentalist Islam), typically termed Wahhabism by the authorities, is firmly established. Throughout much of Dagestan this religious movement has a significant influence on the social life of the local community.

⁴ See HRC Memorial Report “The Mechanisms Underlying Impunity in the Northern Caucasus” (2009, 2010) How do They Operate? (http://www.memo.ru/2010/06/18/1806103.htm#_Toc272763110)

⁵ See the relevant section in the above report.

Islamic fundamentalism provides an ideological foundation for the underground militias. In itself, the fundamentalist movement has not become political in nature and, since its adherents are not attempting to dictate social norms to others, they should not be persecuted by the government. However, over the past decade the authorities have, in effect, equated fundamentalism with terrorism and gangsterism. They have failed to distinguish between legal and religious concepts and the antiterrorism campaign in effect has become a campaign against those who have espoused “Wahhabism” as a religious movement. Dagestan has a law entitled “The Prohibition of Wahhabism and Other Extremist Activities.”

When security personnel have to solve a crime, they turn first to their lists of nontraditional Muslims, who are by definition considered to be under suspicion. It is the members of this group who are the primary victims of illegal actions on the part of law enforcement and intelligence services. The majority of kidnapped men are members of families espousing the Salafi movement in Islam.

As a result, the major motivation for joining the underground is revenge. It would appear that the police officers are also frequently motivated by a desire for revenge. In 2009-2010 human rights activists noted the simultaneous increase in the number of attacks on members of security forces and the increase in the number of documented cases of the most blatant violations of human rights on the part of such personnel: kidnappings, extrajudicial executions, torture, and illegal arrests.

The kidnapping of those suspected of having contact with militants is a tried and true method in the antiterrorism campaign. However, the specific forms that this practice takes vary from year to year. Thus, before June 2007, many of the residents of Dagestan who were kidnapped disappeared without a trace.⁶ In such cases the circumstances of the kidnapping suggested the probable participation of government security forces in the crime. Then in 2008 the *modus operandi* changed: some of those kidnapped “turned up” in a police stations or pre-trial detention centers. By then, the kidnapping victim would have already “confessed” to a terrorist crime.⁷

The number of kidnappings increased in 2009. Several kidnapping victims were later found dead. According to the official version, they had either died in shoot-outs with the police, or had blown themselves up with their own explosives. However, their bodies showed indications of terrible beatings and torture. The August 23, 2009 kidnapping of five young men, whom their kidnappers tortured and clearly intended to kill, resonated throughout the Republic. Two of the victims succeeded in escaping, while the burned bodies of the three others were found later.⁸

Table 1. Number of kidnappings in Dagestan established through HRC Memorial monitoring

Year	No. of people kidnapped	Of these			
		Freed by kidnappers or escaped	Found dead	Disappeared	Discovered in pretrial or local detention facilities
2007	12	5	0	7	0
2008	11	3	3	0	5
2009	22	8	9	4	1
2010	17	6	0	5	6

It should be born in mind that our monitoring is conducted on a limited portion of the Republic and it is thus highly likely that the actual number of such crimes is significantly higher.

⁶ HRC Memorial report "The kidnappings and disappearances of individuals in the Republic of Dagestan in 2004-2007" (<http://www.memo.ru/2007/09/09/0909071.htm>).

⁷ HRC Memorial report "The kidnappings and disappearances of individuals in the Republic of Dagestan in 2008"y (<http://www.memo.ru/2009/02/04/0402094.htm>).

⁸ HRC Memorial report "The situation in the North Caucasus conflict zone. June 2009 – October 2009" (<http://www.memo.ru/2009/11/17/1711092.htm>).

Protest demonstrations against the practice of forced disappearances that took place in Makhachkala and Derbent in the summer and fall of 2009 and in Kizlyar in June 2010 were brutally broken up by the police. Criminal investigations of kidnappings have been systematically sabotaged by investigating authorities. Not a single one of these cases has been investigated; no perpetrators have been identified.

In 2009 systematic persecution of those espousing forms of Islam not traditional for the local region continued to be conducted by the Ministry of Internal Affairs. However such pressure leads only to the further radicalization of this segment of the population. This problem has become so severe that, in the spring of 2009, even Adilgeri Magomedtagirov, Dagestan's Minister of Internal Affairs, who had been in charge of the Republic's security forces throughout this period until his assassination,⁹ was compelled to acknowledge that it is senseless and counterproductive to persecute and apply pressure to those who attend "the wrong" mosques.¹⁰

In February 2010 members of Dagestan's Popular Assembly unanimously approved the candidacy of Magomedsalam Magomedov, who had been nominated by the president of Russia to be the new head of the Republic of Dagestan. The new president announced a course of modernization in the Republic to fight corruption and facilitate the rule of law and social dialogue.

Dagestan's new president and the people surrounding him more than once intervened in on-going situations associated with violations of human rights in response to appeals by the families of kidnapped and tortured individuals. One example of this is what happened in the village of Kara-Tyube in the Babayurt District in April of this year. On the morning of April 15 two insurgents were killed in the course of a secret police operation. In order to obtain information about the men killed, 18 local residents, including 3 women, one pregnant and one nursing an infant, were arrested. These people were held without charge for three days on the grounds of the district Ministry of Internal Affairs headquarters (the men were housed outside). The detainees were released only after the active intervention of journalists and rights activists, who appealed directly to the Vice Premier of the Republic of Dagestan, Rizvan Kurbanov, who reported on the situation to the president.¹¹

However, more often the attempts of Magomedov's team to intervene in situations of blatant human rights violations merely provide evidence of the lack of coordination between the action of security forces and those of the executive branch, or even the inability of the latter to influence the outrages committed by members of law enforcement and the secret police.

As an example of this we could cite the situation in Makhachkala's Kirov District police station involving the torture of Shamil Gaziyeu, suspected of participating in a terrorist act. Members of the police kidnapped him on May 18, 2010 and for several days hid him at the Kirov police station, torturing him into confessing to participation in the Kizlyar terrorist act of March 31. The intervention of the republic's Deputy Public Prosecutor, Magomed Dibirov, and Vice Premier Rizvan Kurbanov failed to have any positive results. The police continued their "investigative" activities, in violation of a large number of laws.¹²

It is extremely difficult for defense attorneys to work under such conditions. Frequently they are not allowed access to the accused and are threatened with reprisals. In 2010 in Dagestan three attorneys working on cases involving accusations of terrorist activity were brutally beaten. Sergey Kvasov suffered severe injuries as a result of an attack in the center of Makhachkala by a group of strangers. Three female attorneys were beaten by the police right in the police station as they were trying to perform their professional duties. Sapiyat Magomedova was beaten on June 17 in the Khasavyurt police station. Dzhamilya Tafirova suffered the same fate on June 2 in the Makhachkala's Sovetsky police station. To date none of the police involved has faced criminal charges as a result of any of these cases.

⁹ Adilgeri Magomedtagirov was assassinated on June 5 in Makhachkala.

¹⁰ Russian Information Agency Dagestan April 8, 2009.

¹¹ See www.memo.ru/hr/hotpoints/caucas1/msg/2010/05/m205847.htm.

¹² See www.memo.ru/hr/hotpoints/caucas1/msg/2010/05/m207117.htm.

One gets the impression that over many years of enjoying impunity the Dagestan police force has gotten out of control, and the authorities are not willing to take the necessary measures to reinstate order out of fear of losing the support of the law enforcement agencies. Purging the police of blatantly criminal elements would be no easy task, but the inhabitants of Dagestan will soon cease being satisfied with politicians who make solemn announcements without following through with concrete actions.

It must be emphasized that the *modus operandi* used by the Dagestan police are not leading to positive results. During the first six months of Magomedov's presidency the day-to-day situation in the Republic has worsened at an accelerating rate. As Magomedov reported on July 22, 2010, at a meeting of the Dagestan Security Council, since the first of the year, 23 terrorist acts were recorded in the Republic, and there was a 20 percent increase in the number of attempts on the lives of members of law enforcement agencies. In the words of Dagestan's Public Prosecutor, Andrey Nazarov, "this is twice as many as occurred during the analogous period last year."

The continuing persecution of the newspaper "Chernovik," which publishes articles critical of antiterrorism methods in Dagestan, was also reported. Criminal cases have been brought against the editor-in-chief and four journalists from this paper for "inciting hostility" (Article 282 of the RF Criminal Code) and a lawsuit that calls for closing down the paper for printing extremist material is being considered in court. Law enforcement agents have been threatening the staff of the newspaper.

The Republic of Ingushetia

In the Republic of Ingushetia, the eight year term of former president Murat Zyazikov – which involved epidemic corruption and arbitrary oppression by the police and intelligence services that went unchecked by the authorities – turned a significant portion of the population against the government.

The appointment of Yunus-Bek Yevkurov as the head of Ingushetia in the fall of 2008 and his immediate adoption of a course directed at the restoration of the rule of law in the Republic, glasnost, and dialogues with the public and opposition were extremely encouraging. However, here too, this policy was "torpedoed" by both the militants and the security forces.

Despite President Yevkurov's new course, kidnappings and extrajudicial executions have not ceased in Ingushetia. However, the number of them has significantly decreased. Evidently the kidnappings and illegal executions have mainly been performed not by the Ingush police, but by members of the FSB [the Russian Federal Security Service] and similar law enforcement agencies sent to Ingushetia from other regions of Russia, including the neighboring Chechen Republic.

Moreover, unlike in neighboring republics, in Ingushetia the problem of kidnapping is not covered up, but is actively discussed at the level of the Republic's president. During 2009 Yevkurov met frequently with human rights activists as well as the parents of kidnapping victims and even of dead militants so that together they could search for a way out of the situation that has developed. Ingushetia's president is attempting to bring the problem to the attention of the Russian federal government. On June 9 at a meeting of the RF Security Council in Makhachkala, Yevkurov discussed the case of the kidnapping of two young Ingushetians in the spring of 2009 with Dmitry Medvedev and RF Minister of Internal Affairs, Rashid Nurgaliyev. There was information suggesting that the victims were being held in Chechnya at the facility of Special Investigations Bureau-2.¹³

¹³ Special Investigations Bureau-2 (ORB-2) is a part of the RF Ministry of Internal Affairs and is located in Grozny. From 2003-2007 it was the site of the detention and torture of those suspected of organized crime and of belonging to the illegal armed opposition groups (for more details see: <http://www.memo.ru/hr/hotpoints/N-Caucas/doc1/2c.htm>). Special Investigations Bureau-2 was not under the control of Ramzan Kadyrov. In July 2007 a person loyal to Kadyrov was made its head, and the staff was replaced. In actuality this organization began to be controlled by the president of the Chechen Republic

Table 2. Number of kidnappings in Ingushetia established by HRC Memorial monitoring

Year	No. of people kidnapped	Of these			
		Freed by kidnappers or escaped	Found dead	Disappeared	Found in pretrial or local detention facilities
2007	30	8	1	4	17
2008	31	20	1	7	3
2009	13	1	4	5	3
2010	12	4	0	3	5

In 2009-2010 a new trend became evident – residents of Ingushetia began to be kidnapped outside of the Republic's territory.

But emerging hopes that the situation would improve in Ingushetia were dashed by an attempt on Yevkurov's life on June 22 of 2009 and the events that followed. The militants responsible for this attempt, by all objective criteria, played right into the hands of the security forces, who had no desire to operate within the confines of the law.

During Yevkurov's forced absence from Ingushetia during his recuperation, the dialogue between the Republic's authorities and the public ceased.

After Yevkurov returned to Ingushetia, this dialogue was renewed. The President of Ingushetia fired his cabinet for having failed to cope with the tasks they had been assigned. He attentively listens to the appeals of citizens concerning violations of human rights in the course of secret operations and has intervened in some cases, leading to the cessation of these abuses. However, unfortunately, there is an impression that he is still unable to achieve systematic changes for the better. The only agency of government that has the power to defend trampled human rights in Ingushetia is still its President.

The above opinion is clearly supported by the case of the Tsechoyev brothers, which received extensive public attention in the Republic. Beslan and Adam Tsechoyev were arrested at their home on June 8, 2010. Before this, security forces had searched their home, in a way that involved blatant violations of proper procedure, and found a grenade. The arrestees were taken to the Malobek police station and were not given access to an attorney. During the next few days, a team of emergency doctors was called to the building several times. The brothers' relatives learned from these doctors that they were being brutally tortured to get them to confess to associations with militants. Subsequently, an attorney inquiring at the district EMS station obtained a statement signed by the head doctor. "Beslan Tsechoyev was diagnosed as suffering from closed craniocerebral injury, brain contusion and contusion of the thoracic and lumbar spine." When they were arrested the Tsechoyev brother had no injuries.

No attorneys were allowed access to the detainees for a week; and an appeal to the public prosecutor failed to bring results. Only after the intervention of Ingushetia's president, Yunus-Bek Yevkurov, was access to the men given to the Republic's Human Rights Commissioner and then to an attorney. They confirmed that there was evidence of beatings and torture on the bodies of the detained brothers.

Adam Tsechoyev was freed on June 18 and his brother Beslan Tsechoyev was indicted for the crime of illegal possession of munitions according to Article 222 of the RF Criminal Code.¹⁴

[Kadyrov]. After this, the situation there changed for a time and torture no longer took place at the facility. However, since the start of 2009, rights organizations again began to receive information about abuse of arrested individuals occurring in Special Investigations Bureau-2. Starting in the spring of 2009, when the security forces of Ingushetia and Chechnya began to conduct joint operations, personnel from Special Investigations Bureau-2 began to work in Ingushetiya. A branch of Special Investigations Bureau-2 has opened in Magas, Ingushetia in the FSB Administration building.

¹⁴ See <http://www.memo.ru/2010/06/10/1006102.htm> and <http://www.memo.ru/2010/06/18/1806102.htm> .

This is only one of the many cases where there is documented evidence of the use of torture on those detained and arrested on suspicion of belonging to underground militant groups. However no Ingush policeman has ever been convicted of such crimes. Investigation of criminal cases brought on the basis of such evidence have been sabotaged by the investigatory agencies. Nevertheless, the results of summer of 2010 provide some hope that Yevkurov's policies has begun to bear fruit. There has been a striking (by a factor of five!) decrease in fatalities among the police and military and a fourfold decrease in those wounded by militants within Ingushetia, compared with the previous year. Whether this trend is a stable one – only time will tell.

The Chechen Republic

From 2007 through the first half of 2008, it may have seemed that peace and stability had been achieved in the Chechen Republic, albeit at the price of the serious violations of human rights that had occurred in preceding years. The rate of armed conflict had undergone a stable decrease and losses in the security forces had decreased. Human rights advocates reported fewer cases of the illegal use of force on the part of government employees. In January 2009, R. Kadyrov, president of the Chechen Republic, proclaimed that there had been a complete and final victory over the insurgency and terrorist underground. According to him there remained only a dozen or so insurgents in hiding.

However, starting in late 2008, it became obvious that it was premature to talk of stability having come to the Republic.

In the summer of 2009, the greatest losses among law enforcement personnel occurred in Chechnya, increasing by 150 percent compared to the previous year. In 2009 a series of terrorist acts were committed in Chechnya, including those using suicide bombers.

Losses of military and police personnel in the summer of this year decreased significantly – by a factor of two – compared to the previous year. However, at the end of the summer the insurgents demonstrated their ability to concentrate relatively powerful forces and deliver telling blows to their opponents. A striking demonstration of this was the nighttime attack on August 29 on Kadyrov's home village Tsentoroy (Khosi-Yurt), which he was visiting at the time. For clear reasons, this village had been considered until very recently to be the safest place in Chechnya.

The "Chechenization" of the conflict had a notable effect in the campaign against armed resistance during past years. However, it is obvious that today this resource has been exhausted. The authorities of the Republic are not able to keep Ramzan Kadyrov's promise to totally annihilate the underground and the insurgency. Furthermore, the totalitarian regime, based on force and fear, itself has given rise to new resistance. Young people are again going over to the insurgency in the mountains. The Republic government's response to this development was extremely harshly and it is again gambling on the use of illegal force. This force is increasingly expanding in scope and becoming open and defiant.

The leaders of the Republic of Chechnya have made no secret of their propensity to use illegal force, including extrajudicial executions. HRC Memorial has recordings of such speeches made by the President of the Chechen Republic and other high officials on the Republic's television channels.¹⁵

Within the territory of the Chechen republic the authorities employ the practice of hostage taking, which has been banned by international pacts and conventions.¹⁶ A campaign in which security forces burned down the homes of insurgents' relatives continued through 2009 and 2010.

Personnel from law enforcement agencies kidnap people they suspect of being in contact with the insurgents.

¹⁵ See <http://www.memo.ru/2009/11/17/1711092.htm>; <http://www.memo.ru/2009/05/29/2905094.htm> and <http://www.memo.ru/2009/07/16/1607096.htm> .

¹⁶ See <http://www.memo.ru/2010/04/12/1204103.htm> and <http://www.memo.ru/2010/09/09/0909101.htm>

Table 3. Number of kidnappings in Chechnya as determined by HRC Memorial monitoring

Year	No. of people kidnapped	Of these			
		Freed by kidnappers or escaped	Found dead	Disappeared	Located in detention facilities
2007	35	23	1	9	2
2008	42	21	4	12	5
2009	93	60	10	19	4

When evaluating these numbers it is important to remember that the work of the HRC Memorial in the Chechen Republic met with significant difficulties in 2009-2010. Between July and mid-December of 2009 Memorial temporarily halted the work of its branches in the Republic, and afterwards it became very difficult to perform proper monitoring on the territory of Chechnya. Furthermore, recently victims of kidnapping and other crimes and their relatives have been afraid to complain to official agencies or to human rights workers, lest they evoke further repression in response. Thus Memorial has only been able to see "the tip of the iceberg" when it comes to the total number of crimes. In 2010, it recorded 10 cases of kidnappings, although in light of the above, it is obvious that this number cannot be used for comparison with analogous information from past years to assess trends in the number of such crimes.

The law enforcement agencies in the Chechen Republic have, to a significant extent been staffed with people who were trained in force and violence in the ranks of illegal militants, which from the start have rejected the idea of legality and consider that they have the right to perform any operations using any methods.

Top-priority measures to alter the situation

Since the summer of 2009 the leadership of Russia has shown great concern over the surge of terrorism in the republics of the Northern Caucasus. In his public speeches, the president of the RF has identified three basic reasons for the ineffectiveness of the campaign conducted by government agencies against terrorism: corruption, clannishness, and the ineffectiveness of government agencies, especially security agencies. There is some hope that the government will finally begin to undertake some actual measures to combat these phenomena. However, the President did not want to or was unable to point to one other highly important factor that hampers the effective combat of terrorism in the Northern Caucasus – systematic outrageous violations of human rights on the part of security forces in the course of this campaign.

On May 19, 2010 Russian President Dmitry Medvedev met in the Kremlin with human rights advocates working on the problems of the Northern Caucasus. The meeting had been organized by the President's Council for the Development of Institutions of Civil Society. RF Vice Premier Alexander Khloponin, the Plenipotentiary Envoy of the President in the North Caucasus Federal District, participated in the meeting.

In their talks, Memorial representatives outlined their vision of the essential measures needed to improve the situation in the Northern Caucasus.

It must be acknowledged that the requirement of respecting human rights not only does not contradict the goals of ensuring security, but it is a necessary condition for achieving those goals. Adherence to law is an essential foundation for stability, and can only be achieved through systematic work on respect for human rights in the regions of the Northern Caucasus and elimination of the impunity of security forces.

- Criminal cases involving crimes associated with human rights violations throughout all the years during which counterterrorism operations were conducted in the Northern Caucasus must be investigated and the guilty brought to justice.

- The Public Prosecutor General of the RF must conduct a comprehensive review of the activities of security forces, the operation of public prosecution agencies and those of the Investigative Committee of the Russian Prosecutor General's Office in the Northern Caucasus. On the basis of the results of this review, these security agencies must be "purged" of individuals implicated in serious violations of civil rights committed in the course of counterterrorism measures.

- Any attempt to obstruct the work of a defense attorney must be stopped immediately, and those guilty held responsible.

- Russia must fully comply with the decisions of the European Court of Human Rights, including making systemic changes at the level of law enforcement and legislative practices, and should not restrict itself to paying monetary compensation to victims. Russia must actively cooperate with international organizations concerned with problems involving respecting human rights in the Northern Caucasus.

- It is essential that the conditions necessary for the unobstructed work of Russian and international human rights organizations in this region be created.