

CHECHNYA



Directed & Written by Nichita Borodin

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 - b. Digital or written mediums used during conference;
 - c. Physical violence or threats of violence toward an individual;
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[Equity Form](#)

We will try to get back to you by email or send someone as soon as possible to resolve the issue.

Director's Letter

It is my pleasure to welcome you to the Chechnya committee at RGSSMUNVI. This background guide and committee has been months in the works, from scrolling through old books to resolve conflicting information, to endless hours spent making this background guide. My name is Nichita Borodin, and I am a Grade 12 student at Richmond Green.

The Chechen conflict runs deep, much deeper than the war we discuss today, and continues to this day. This committee is set in 1998, long before Kadyrov's reign as undisputed despot of the land. It was a time full of hope, new beginnings, and above all else, a promise. A promise that one could fight to make a new home for their children.

Yet by no means is it a pretty state. Crime runs rampant, no one has a job, and everything is in ruins. Over the past centuries, several of these 'new hopes' have come and failed to bring anything but more misery. Maybe this one will be different. Do not let the dream of the Chechan state be deferred to another century.

Good luck,
Nichita Borodin
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Historical Background

Note: This background guide and all events should be noted as taking place on 31 August 1996, a day after the signing of the Khasavyurt Accord. Dates are presumed to be New Style unless marked otherwise.



Chechnya, 1996

Tsarist Chechnya

Chechnya is a small country located in the Caucasus, north of Georgia and Azerbaijan and south of Russia. The region is majority Muslim, having converted to Sunni Islam in resistance to Russian encroachment in the late 1600s.¹ Chechnya was formally incorporated into Tsarist Russia in 1859 following decades of conflict. This colonisation was marked by land seizures, and the establishment of an ethnic Russian bourgeoisie. During this time, the Qadiri sect of Sufism, a subdivision of Islam, gained significant popularity.

In the last decades of Tsarist Russia, two distinct social cultures emerged within Chechnya. The first was the traditional “Sufi brotherhood”. They were based on the “disciples of each master and upon the groups of Sufis who lived in common residences”. The other was a liberal ‘intelligentsia’ who wished to create a unified state for all of the mountain peoples of the North Caucasus. This nationalist spirit was never quite able to reach the same popularity as the brotherhood’s mass appeal however.²

Two Revolutions

Both of these national consciousness changes came just in time for the revolutions of 1917. The first, the February Revolution, was the result of long standing labour action and protests against the Tsar’s refusal to abdicate. Both the provisional government and the Bolsheviks (the radical faction of the Russian Social Democratic Labour Party) claimed to hold full power. This rather awkward arrangement led to numerous incidents of infighting, boiling over into the ‘July Days’ conflict, wherein protesters were fired upon, resulting in hundreds of deaths. Alexander Kerensky became the leader of a deeply unpopular provisional government. Urban workers organised in groups, calling themselves Soviets. A full scale uprising began, leading to the Petrograd (now called St. Petersburg) Soviet to seize power for themselves on the 25th of October [O.S]. However, this declaration was not universally accepted, leading the country to spiral into the Russian Civil War.³

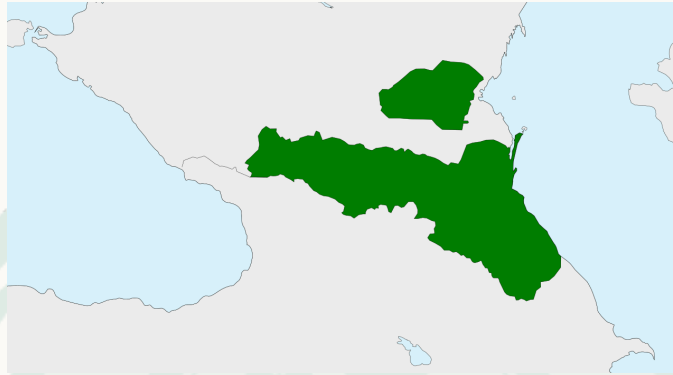
¹ (Lecha Il’iasov)

² (Gökay)

³ (Britannica Editors, “Russian Civil War”)

Russian Civil War

With the dissolution of any central authority, local ethnic groups took matters into their own hands. The one of interest is the Mountainous Republic of the Northern Caucasus (MRNC), commonly known as the Mountain Republic.



Map of the Mountain Republic on 11 May 1918.

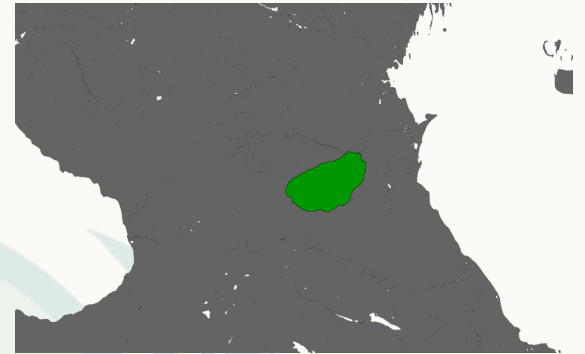
This republic was rather short lived, being embroiled in a conflict with Georgia. Georgian troops occupied the parliament of Abkhazian⁴; The Russian Volunteer Army captured the rest. Following a brutal conflict, The Grozny oilfields were set aflame, and the flames remained burning for 18 months. This was a golden opportunity for the Bolsheviks to increase their presence, having started to put down the rebellions as they expanded across the former Russian territories. Grozny Bolsheviks were capable of assuming control in 1917, eventually forming a Soviet Republic in March 1918. It was named the Terek Soviet Republic, after the river that cuts through it. The region shifted control bouncing between Red (Soviets) and White (Tsar loyalists) control repeatedly throughout these years. It fell to the Whites in 1919, then was recaptured for the final time by the Reds on January 11 1919.



Map of the Terek SR and other early republics in 1918.

⁴ (Abkhaz World)

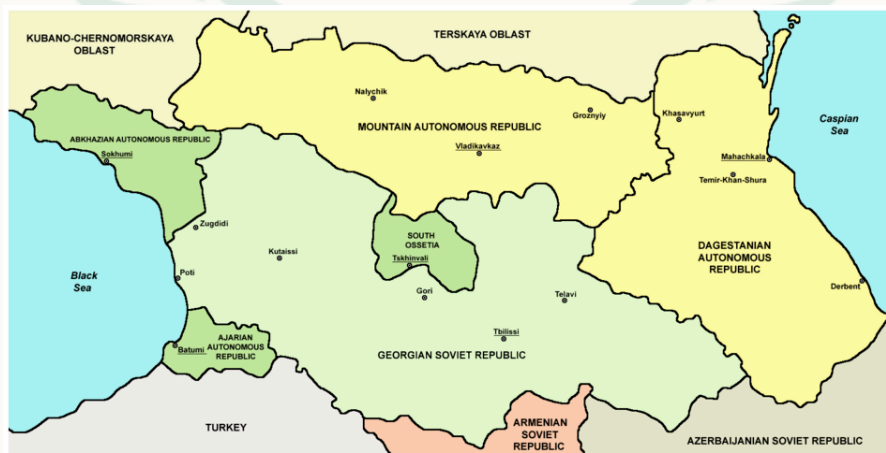
The North Caucasian Emirate was proclaimed as the successor state by Uzun-Hajji of Salta, who declared himself as Emir in September 1919. He secured support from the Ottomans and Georgia. However, was unable to remove the presence of Volunteer Army troops, leading to the Emirate becoming increasingly dependent on Soviet aid to fight off the Whites. In 1920, rebellions became increasingly common, particularly in the mountain regions. These fighting groups secured large support from the population, although never numbered more than 10,000. The ideology of the rebels was that of one that would become famous in the modern Chechen conflict, that of Jihad. Jihad is the literal translation of ‘struggle’, but represents a fight against ‘Evil’. The intention was simple: expel the infidels (sinners) and establish a theocratic state. The Reds suffered costly casualties in fighting off these rebels. However, the Reds had the manpower to replenish these casualties; the Emirate did not. Uzun-Hajji was killed during the revolts, integrating the territory into the Russian SFSR.⁵



Map of the North Caucasian Emirate in 1919.

Operation Lentil

Following all of this chaos, the region of Chechnya was organised into the Mountain Autonomous Republic, an autonomous republic within the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic. Chechnya was separated into its own Autonomous Oblast in 1922.



Soviet Caucasus as of 1922

⁵ (Gökay)

In separation, the rebels left a legacy of anti-Russian xenophobia. From 1928-1936 and from 1940-1944, the land of Chechnya was that of rebellions, uprisings, terrorism, religious fanaticism, and general chaos. This all came to a halt in 1944. Iosif Stalin, acting on information from the NKVD chief Lavrentiy Beria that Chechens were collaborating with Germans, began the mass expulsion of the Chechen and Ingush populations to central Asia, on 23 February 1944. This information was afterwards proven to be falsified. Roughly 123,000-200,000 out of nearly 500,000 who were displaced died in this transfer. This exile lasted for 13 years, and was not reversed until Nikita Khrushchev, eventual chairman of the USSR, took control. Under the *Khrushchev Thaw*, a period of partial liberalization in the USSR, ethnic minorities that were deported were allowed to return home.⁶



Although Chechens were allowed to return to their homelands, no Chechen faced numerous obstacles to reintegration. There were no Chechen language schools, and they faced a ‘glass ceiling’ preventing them from being promoted to high ranking positions. Each year, tens of thousands of men would migrate to Central Asia, this time looking for part time work, just to afford to feed their families. Very few Chechens were in the government, and despite massive profits from oil, the general population remained some of the poorest of the USSR. One Chechen put it as “[we have returned] not as masters of that land but as mere inhabitants.”

The forced expulsion left deep scars in the Chechen consciousness that never fully healed, leading to a long simmering of hatred towards Russians. This would prove critical for lighting the fuses for conflicts to come.⁷

Dissolution of the USSR

Just as the Tsarist regime of old dissolved, when the Soviet Union was dissolving, Chechnya saw opportunity. Gorbachev’s leadership had led to numerous reforms, in particular the concepts of Perestroika (‘restructuring’) and Glasnost (‘openness’). These reforms worried

⁶ (Dale)

⁷ Ibid.

the owners of the large corporations and the political elite, concentrated in the KGB. Known commonly as the Gang of Eight, they launched a coup in August of 1991. This last ditch effort, intended to save the Union from collapse, sealed its fate. Union republics such as Ukraine and Belarus realised Russian leadership could not be trusted. They declared independence after overwhelming referendums. Russia, faced with the prospect of a significant Asian and Muslim minority also decided to leave the Union, becoming the Russian republic on 26 December 1991.

The Caucasus wasted no time in returning to fighting. Armenia and Azerbaijan began fighting in August 1989,⁸ and Georgia began fighting with its Abkhaz minority in July of the same year.⁹

Dzokhar Dudayev

Dzokhar Dudayev was one of the most notable Chechen politicians in recent history. He would go on to serve as the first president of the new Chechen state until his assassination on 21 April 1996 by a Russian missile after his satellite phone call with a Russian MP for peace was tracked. His military career spanned from 1962-1991, commanding strategic nuclear bomber aircraft divisions in Ukraine and Estonia. It came to a halt in the Autumn of 1990, when he refused to suppress Estonia's independence movement. A resignation followed suit, and Dudayev returned to Chechnya around the late 1990s.¹⁰



In April of 1991, the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic (RSFSR) passed a law on the “Rehabilitation of Repressed Peoples.” Boris Yeltsin famously declared in August of 1990, “Take as much sovereignty as you can swallow!”¹¹ Chechens wasted no time, seeing this as an affirmation to their right to statehood. In May of 1991, Dudayev, declaring himself as chairman of the ‘ispolkom’, would assume all power in the republic ahead of the upcoming new elections. Dudayev secured support from numerous political organizations within Chechnya who

⁸ (Keller)

⁹ (Reuters, “Soviet Troops Struggle to Curb Georgia Strife”)

¹⁰ There are conflicting reports of what date Dudayev returned to Chechnya. May 1990, November 1990, and March 1991 are all reported by Gray, Dunlop, and Gall et al respectively. It is possible he left and returned multiple times, but there is no indication of this.

¹¹ (Oreshkin)

also sought an end to the Russian government. Dudayev and his supporters met on 8-9 June to declare themselves as the "Common National Congress of the Chechen People" (OKChN), granting the 'ispolkom' a name and legitimacy. Dudayev also secured Georgia's support and mutual collaboration on the basis of "mutual hostility to Russia and to communism". Georgia was seen as a potential 'back door' to the outside world, foregoing Russia.¹²

Chechen Revolution

The August Coup fired off when the official Soviet Chechen leader, Doku Zavgayev, was in Moscow to sign a treaty. Most officials in Grozny either supported the coup or would avoid taking sides. Zavgayev refused to take a stand on this position. This was in stark contrast to the OKChN, who accused the Gang of Eight of being "a group of government criminals". The OKChN called for general strikes, and for civil disobedience until the 'government criminals' were ousted. On the 20th of August, a militia acting on orders from the leadership of the Grozny Communists, Vitali Kutsenko, attempted an unsuccessful raid on the headquarters of the OKChN. Zavgayev returned to Grozny on August 21, and declared that "all was quiet in the republic". This would prove to be an irreversible mistake, as on the following day, Dudayev's OKChN seized government buildings, radio, and television centres of the now former ASSR. Dudayev went on television and announced that the "Chechen Revolution" had been successful.

A system of 'dual power' had been established with the OKChN and the Zavgayev's communists both contesting power. Dudayev may have had political power, but he struggled to obtain mass appeal. It is very possible that had Zavgayev been willing to use force to suffocate this revolution in the crib, he would have been successful. The now Russian Federation made the critical decision to choose Dudayev over Zavgayev. The plan was to oust Zavgayev, and place Salmbek Khadzhiev, a specialist in the Soviet oil industry, in charge instead. However, this plan backfired by removing the only well known figure against Dudayev, unintentionally empowering him.

Even under heavy pressure from Moscow authorities, the OKChN refused to back down, establishing a national guard instead. This guard was empowered with holding the main television and radio stations in the city. Over 1-2 September, the coup was completed, and the OKChN deposed the Soviets, and granted themselves full authority. Presidential elections were

¹² (Dunlop)

scheduled on 29 September. The only thing standing behind full control for Dudayev was Zavagev's deputies. 6 September was this faithful day, when Dudayev's national guard stormed the parliament building, arrested numerous deputies, and forced Zavgaev's resignation under extreme pressure. In the chaos, Kutsenko was either thrown out of a window or fell to his death.¹³

Moscow's response? Ruslan Khasbulatov, Chairman of the Russian Parliament, speaking on Russian TV, welcomed the fall of Zavgaev. On September 11, Yeltsin's close advisors flew to Grozny to negotiate some agreement between the OKChN and the Communists. Nothing came out, and the OKChN lurched further towards holding parliamentary and presidential elections in October, with Dudayev looking like the frontrunner.

A referendum was held on October 27, in which 90% voters approved independence, with a 72% turnout. On the same day, Dzhokhar Dudayev was confirmed as president. This culminated in a decree, declaring full sovereignty on November 1. Chechnya, for the first time since the Russian Civil War, was now de facto independent, as the Chechen Republic of Ichkeria.¹⁴

Independence

Seeing the instability, tens of thousands of non-Chechens such as Russians or Ukrainians left the new republic. Boris Yeltsin dispatched internal troops to Grozny. However, Dudayev's forces were able to encircle the Federation forces at the airport, and negotiate a retreat. Yeltsin's show of strength was humiliated in a most public way.¹⁵ The Ingush peoples, never really achieving peace with the Chechens, erupted in open conflict in what is known now as the Prigordony Dispute. This culminated in the violence of October-November 1992, where over 30,000-60,000 Ingush were forced to flee.¹⁶ The newly formed Republic of Ingushetia, on the east side of the Chechen Republic declared independence and joined the Russian Federation, cementing the feud and which "side" they had taken.

Independence revealed numerous issues in the new country. The growing hostility led to the severing of economic relations with Russia, who was Chechnya's main trading partner. Any

¹³ (Dunlop)

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ (Goldberg)

¹⁶ (Fuller)

legitimate economic endeavor such as oil crashed, while illegitimate ones like gun smuggling, counterfeiting, and drug production spiked. Most notably, both government and warlords alike purchased weapons from the Russian army stationed nearby, the very weapons that would be turned against them in the future war. Chechen smugglers would joke, “If you give me enough vodka, I can buy a tank.”¹⁷ It was clear who had the upper hand in morale.

A low level civil war had broken out. Dudayev was the president, but he did not have full power. The issue with much of the populace was not that Dudayev was dictator, but “his inability to construct an iron order”.¹⁸ Factions both sympathetic to and against Dudayev rose up, with conflict frequently breaking out into the streets. The situation kept escalating, and the violence only rose in scale.¹⁹ Russia fanned the flames by funding numerous anti-Dudayev groups.²⁰

Spring Crisis

By 1993, the issues between the president, Dudayev, and his parliament had boiled over. Dudayev established a dictatorship of the President. On April 17, Dudayev dissolved the Chechen Parliament, the Constitutional Court, the City Assembly in Grozny, and implemented a curfew. All events that would be eerily repeated by his future enemy, Yeltsin, in just a few months. The opposition mounted protests in June, but Dudayev, together with Basayev, had them dispersed. With full control. Dudayev placed numerous allies in charge of critical positions, such as Yandarbiyev as the Vice President, and Zakayev as the minister of Culture. Other departments such as the National Security Service were dissolved.

The opposition would not take this self-coup lying down. With support from Russia, opposition forces concentrated in the Northern regions, known for being less supportive of a sovereign Chechnya. On 16-17 December of 1993, the National Salvation Committee, a collection of numerous opposition figures, surrounded Dudayev’s residence, and demanded a restoration of Parliament. This barely lasted until the end of the month when numerous commanders in the group defected to Dudayev. Ibrahim Suleimenov, the leader, was captured by pro Dudayev militias, after which it dissolved for good.

¹⁷ (de Waal)

¹⁸ (Evangelista)

¹⁹ (Akhmadov et al.)

²⁰ (Kramarenko and Oleniak)

This did not mean the end of opposition activities however. Throughout July and August of 1994, a number of opposition figures such as the former Mayor of Grozny, Bislan Ganamirov, and a Russian politician, Ruslan Khasbulatov seized control over Urus-Martan and Argun, two cities that surrounded Grozny. Many of these figures met up on August 29, deciding to unite for the purpose of defeating Dudayev. Dudayev relented, restoring the Parliament on August 30 of 1994, yet the opposition figures did not quit. With support of Russian law enforcement agencies, they began military operations, successfully trapping Dudayev and his supporters in the capital by November. On November 23-24, the opposition figures, now calling themselves the Provisional Council, attempted to storm Grozny. This storming was their doom, with unprepared attacking focus up against loyal and fierce resistance from Dudayev's supporters. This marked the end of Russia's indirect support for overthrowing Dudayev.²¹

Invasion

On November 30, the Russian federation officially issued a secret decree to “restore constitutional law and order on the territory of the Chechen Republic”. A group of army units was moved from the North Caucasus Military district in preparation of an invasion. The Russian Parliament then adopted a resolution on December 9 authorizing the Armed Forces to conduct an “operation”. For five days after this, the minister of justice, Usman Imaev attempted to negotiate with his Russian counterpart, but to no avail.²²

First Battle of Grozny

For three weeks prior to New Year's Eve, Russian tanks massed above Grozny, calling on the Dudayevites to disarm. Dzohkar Dudayev chose to move into the bunker of the Presidential Palace, and refused the call for surrender.²³

The first attempt to storm the city of Grozny became symbolic of the failures of the Chechen War as a whole. The first mistake was timing. It was presumed that surrounding Grozny would take three days, and that Russian troops would be occupying the city after another 4 days. However, numerous failures combined with unexpected civilian resistance resulted in sixteen days for the Russian forces to capture the entrances to the city, notwithstanding encircling it. The

²¹ (Muzaev)

²² Ibid.

²³ (Gall and de Waal)

Russian minister of defence spoke against an assault on the city, still believing in the model of the city battles of World War Two (WW2).

There were four principal groups; North, North-West, West, and East. Each would attempt to enter from a route into the city, and encircle the Presidential Palace, where Dudayev and Aslan Maskhadov, the commander of the armed forces, were organising the city defense, in the centre of the city, all at the same time. Each of these had 1,500 men, at most. At the front were several “storm detachments”, primarily in North-West. Motorized Rifle battalions, reinforced by tanks and artillery were to lead the assault. Yet despite all of this, ordinary soldiers barely knew what was going on. A Lieutenant Colonel of a motorized rifle brigade would say “the only order was to go forward.”²⁴



The Russian army was seemingly unaware that they would be fighting a fierce and dedicated resistance. Some members of the Chechen Presidential Guard recount a Russian soldier peeking out of the tank hatch, asking where he could buy cigarettes. The response from the Chechens was a bullet to the head.²⁵

Helmuth von Moltke, a Prussian field marshal said “No plan of operations extends beyond the first encounter with the enemy forces.” This old adage was in full swing as once the attack began, everything broke down. The storm detachments had no idea what the others were up to, and radio communication was frequently interrupted. West and East groups both halted their attack. The 104th Airborne Division, part of Russia’s elite VDV, leading group east, was hit by friendly air strikes, losing five vehicles. North & North-West managed to reach north of the Residential Palace, but in doing so, the commander of the 81st Regiment was wounded. The other battalion halted shortly behind, both finding themselves encircled.

Group North’s collection of armoured personnel carriers (APCs) tried to reach the encircled 81st regiment, but all routes at this point were manned by Chechens. These regiments

²⁴ (Orr)

²⁵ (Gall and de Waal)

had to fight back to their front lines with low ammunition and no sign of relief with heavy casualties.

Following the battle, Chechen Information Minister Movaldi Udugov made an urgent appeal on Chechen television;

‘Guard the borders. Take up your arms, move on Grozny. Today, once and for all, we should solve the problem of the Russian occupation.’

Vice President Zelimkhan Yandarbiyev gave interviews to journalists underground from the palace, reportedly with a pet parrot. A parliamentarian from Russia was also present in the bunker, appealing to Russians against the war.

Chechen tactics would let vehicles into the streets, then block exits, trapping them. Russian soldiers had no idea what to do in an urban situation, unprepared for grenade attacks or the guerilla warfare they faced. Russian tanks could be fired upon from above apartment highrises, taking advantage of a vulnerability many Russian tanks had where the top was particularly weak.²⁶ Despite these failures, the Russian army continued a conventional strategy based on WW2 tactics. Mass forces, moving linearly, with emphasis on occupation of urban centres. While this works in defensive wars, it is inadequate against insurgents.²⁷

A story circulated following the battle claiming that the tactics in Grozny were not due to military strategy, but instead that during the birthday party of the Defence Minister, a bet was made. During what was described as a ‘drunken orgy’, it was stated that ‘whoever takes Dudayev’s palace will get three stars’. This attack was not done according to military sense, but as a show to encourage the Chechens to capitulate.²⁸

Guerrilla Warfare

The Russians could replace their staggering losses. The Chechens, suffering from a critical shortage of everything, could not. Gradually, over an extended bombing campaign and a slower paced assault, Russian forces managed to establish control of the city, taking thousands of civilians with it. Most Chechen forces left Grozny on the night of January 18-19. Battles

²⁶ (Gall and de Waal)

²⁷ (Dyck)

²⁸ (Gall and de Waal)

continued until Shamil Basasyev, a skilled commander with numerous successful engagements, left with his battalion on March 6.²⁹

While Grozny had been captured, the country had not. Chechen rebels battled Russian troops across minor towns and the mountains. Russian forces were known for a lack of discipline, killing, raping, and torturing civilians indiscriminately. This only caused the numbers in Chechen rebels to swell.³⁰ By the spring of 1995, the Russians had occupied the entire flatland of Chechnya, pushing rebels to the mountains.³¹

Budyonnovsk Crisis

In May 1995, a bomb fell into Vedeno, killing numerous of Shamil Basayev's family members. Basayev refused the customary condolences, saying "My [relatives] died like thousands of others, they are victims of this war and will go to heaven." This bombing was the final straw that convinced Basayev that it was time to end this war and "save us all".

Basayev gathered 119 fighters, proclaiming that he wanted to take the fight to Russia. The intended destination was never revealed, and what ensued was improvised. Abu Mowsayev, who was driving the convoy disguised as a Russian military transport, was stopped at a checkpoint on a highway leaving Budyonnovsk. When asked what he was carrying, he said it was "cargo 200", the code for corpses of soldiers killed in action.

Explaining that it would be sacrilegious to poke around this, Mowsayev attempted to dissuade the police from searching the trucks, which were full of Chechen fighters. The trucks were directed to the interior ministry headquarters, where Mowsayev said to the policeman "I told you not to do this." This was a code for all fighters to jump out of the truck, and secure control. Basayev then took command. With the 'cargo' now compromised, Shamil lost about ten soldiers, and had to change plans. He ordered his convoy to the nearest hospital. They took the entire hospital along with neighbouring regions as hostages, barricading themselves and securing exits.

Meanwhile, Yeltsin was attending a G8 meeting in Halifax, Nova Scotia. Rather than fly back, he put the prime minister, Viktor Chernomyrdin, in charge of the situation. The hospital

²⁹ (Ichkeria.net, "Chronology")

³⁰ (Roblin)

³¹ (Akhmadov et al.)

was then surrounded. Three initial attempts were made to storm the hospital with support from tanks and helicopters. This failed in all objectives but killed over 100 hostages.

At the same time, Basayev sealed off access to the hospital, such as underground passages or sewers. He also clearly articulated his demands;

- An immediate ceasefire.
- Withdrawal of Russian forces from Chechnya.
- Start of peace negotiations.

Basayev made clear that he was not operating with orders from Dudayev or Maskhadov, preserving their political credibility for future negotiations.

What is critical to note is that almost never in Russian history had such hostage taking happened. There was simply no procedure or policy for handling something like this. Chernomyrdin was also known to not be a “hawk”, and thought he could let the security services handle it. Of course, these services operated along traditional Soviet practices that “everyone including the hostages and hostage-takers must die and thereby destroy any full record of the incident.” Following the failure of this strategy, Chernomyrdin decided to negotiate.

Although not a full democracy, Russia was still a state affected by public opinion and television. The negotiations between Chernomyrdin and Basayev were broadcasted on television, whereby Basayev would release most of the hostages in exchange for the beginning of peace talks. The remainder would be released once Basayev and his crew would arrive in Chechnya.³²

1995 Negotiations

On June 19, 1995, the prime minister of Russia & the Minister for Nationalities, Viktor Chernomyrdin, and Vyacheslav Mikhailov respectively, in accordance with the Budyonovsk agreement, began negotiating with field commanders and Minister of Justice, Shamil Basayev and Usman Imaev.³³ The talks were mediated by the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE). Problems quickly arose however, the most poignant being the status of Chechnya. While this remained unresolved, both sides managed to agree on numerous aspects, such as the necessity of a ceasefire and trades of prisoners of war (POWs). The OSCE mediators played a critical role in making sure the talks continued. One large issue was that of language.

³² (Akhmadov et al.)

³³ (Muzaev)

The Russians wanted to refer to the region as the “Chechen Republic”, while the Chechen delegation referred to themselves as the “Chechen Republic of Ichkeria”. Was it an army, or “illegal armed formations”? These issues were eventually resolved by the OSCE creating two sets of documents, containing the preferred terminology for both sides.

Another round of talks began on June 27, and managed to agree to numerous aspects;

- POWs released on an “all for all” basis.
- The Chechen army would be either disbanded or reorganised into local self-defense units.
- A majority of Russian forces would withdraw.
- Free elections would be held.
- Both sides agree to work upon future solutions diplomatically

Unfortunately, the negotiations stalled at this point, and only the military sections of the agreement were able to be agreed upon. Anatoly Romanov, the Russian general argued vehemently with Aslan Maskhadov. Russian negotiators were known to frequently pause negotiations to call the Kremlin for guidance.

One section of interest was “[T]he delegation of the Government of the Chechen Republic Ichkeria condemns the terrorist act in Budennovsk and will assist the Russian side in apprehending and arresting Shamil and his group, which are accused of this terrorist act.”. This section was signed with purpose from the Russian side, needed to save face. According to Ilyas Akhmadov, Maskhadov told him that Shirvani Basayev, Shamil Basayev’s brother had come to him and told him that Shami understood the necessity of this motion, but with an unspoken threat that it could never be fulfilled.

These documents were sent to Dudayev, who to everyone’s shock, expressed severe dissatisfaction with them. He fired Usman Imaev, the head of the delegation, from all government positions, and denounced him in “the most abusive language”. Dudayev cited the extensive political concessions that Imaev made, such as agreeing to disband parts of the military, allow the pro Russian opposition to participate, and to organize elections on the basis of the Russian Constitution. Maskhadov commented that “We caught Imaev just in time before he could sign a federative treaty with the Russians”. Imaev would relocate to a rural village after the war, then later disappear after allegedly going to hold talks with the Russians, never to be found again.

Although these talks failed in the end, they were not for naught. They provided the infrastructure, the connections for future proceedings. The Chechen government showed that they were not just a bandit state, but a country capable of deciding its own policy. In addition, the military section was still agreed upon, allowing for a four month ceasefire and numerous POWs trades.³⁴

April 1996

Following a new escalation of battle in Chechnya, public perception of the war in Russia dipped, ahead of the June presidential elections. Yeltsin then unilaterally decided that on April 1, 1996, all military operations in Chechnya were to stop. This was followed by a declaration that there would be a phased withdrawal of troops, and a convention of a peaceful political forum. The President of Tatarstan, Mintimer Shaimiev, was to mediate. Unfortunately, by the end of April, Shaimiev refused to engage in any further negotiation activities due to Russia continuing hostilities.³⁵

On April 21, 1996, the president of Chechnya, Dzhokhar Dudayev was killed. How he was killed is of some contention, with the most widely accepted theory being as follows; In revenge for a critical ambush on Russian troops in Shatoy by Ibn al-Khattab, Russian intelligence successfully traced Dudayev's satellite phone call with a Russian envoy.^{36 37} A signal guided missile was fired and successfully destroyed the area. Following the death, a group of Chechens in government decided to keep his death a secret for two days while discussing what to do. There was no question on who would succeed the president, the Vice President, Zelimkhan Yandarbiyev, was well understood to be the candidate for this. There was no official decree for his appointment of vice presidency, so documents were instead created then backdated to legalize this transfer of power.

The announcement was made on April 23, 1996. While there was a blow to morale, the Chechens had no change to the effectiveness of their resistance.³⁸

³⁴ (Akhmadov et al.)

³⁵ (Muzaev)

³⁶ (Pelton)

³⁷ (Gray)

³⁸ (Akhmadov et al.)

Second Battle of Grozny

On March 6, 1996, Chechen fighters launched an attack on Grozny held by Russia. Throughout February, numerous small diversionary units had done reconnaissance by ambushing outposts, and seeing where the Russians would bring in reinforcements from. Ruslan Gelayev was in command for this battle. His unit attacked nearby in the locality of Sernovodskoye, near the border with Ingushetia. Approximately 350 fighters, including ones who simply saw the attack happening and decided to join in, entered Grozny from the south, north, and southwest. In the course of the two days they held the city, they repeatedly encircled and forced numerous pro Moscow police groups to capitulate.

Russian soldiers were forced on the backfoot. They barricaded themselves in defensive buildings such as outposts, and requested reinforcements on the radio. These reinforcements were then repeatedly harassed and ambushed on their way due to the Chechens' superior intel. After enough men had died trying to save those barricaded, the Russian army gave up. Maskhadov ordered the Chechen divisions to leave the city, which they did without any resistance. Some groups however remained and continued harassing Russian positions until March 12.

While this attack was successful, it was only a preparation. Maskhadov learnt a lot about the strategy of the Russians in this, and was determined to put it in use. Amazingly, the Russian army did not change anything in its procedure such as checkpoints or communications. This set the stage for a final showdown that would decide the war.³⁹

Operation 'Jihad'

Boris Yeltsin successfully secured 54% of the vote on July 3, 1996. As such, he was scheduled to be inaugurated on August 9. Aslan Maskhadov planned the last battle of Grozny both for its anti-Moscow impact, and due to many senior Russians military officers travelling to Moscow for the inauguration. The date was set as August 6.

Command for the Battle was to be divided between Maskhadov and Shamil Basayev. Maskhadov would develop the overall grand strategy while Basayev would be on the ground commanding divisions. The result was a complete success, trapping up to 7,000 Russian troops in the city, while falling to Chechen fighters. Basayev was reportedly extremely disappointed

³⁹ (Akhmadov et al.)

when Maskhadov agreed to a ceasefire and the beginning of negotiations on Chechnya's permanent status. Basayev thought that a ceasefire would let him crush the several Russian garrisons fenced in, and that the core of the Russian army would collapse with a few more days of active fighting. He believed that the emotional impact of this would force Russia to recognise the Chechen state.

The failure of holding Grozny began a dispute over the responsibility of failure in the walls of the Kremlin. Yeltsin placed the responsibility to end what seemed like an impossible war with Alexander Lebed, a charismatic paratrooper General who rose to fame in standing against the Gang of Eight. Once Lebed arrived he had this to say;

“When I arrived there the Russian Group of Forces was on the verge of defeat—1181 men were trapped without food, water, or medicine. Ammunition was running out. Units were starting to surrender. Not just eighteen-year-old soldiers, but the whole army . . . Was it really worth carrying on in such a situation? . . . There could be no talk of victory.”

In contrast, Russian General Konstantin Pulikovsky, declared that in forty eight hours he would bomb Grozny so hard that nothing would be left. While on the ground he may have been powerless to stop the destruction of his forces, in the air he remained king. This was met with pushback, as negotiations still kept going during a ceasefire that might have been broken. This bombing never materialised.⁴⁰

Khasavyurt Accord

In the presence of the OSCE, Alexander Lebed and Aslan Makshadov signed a final peace treaty. The most critical provision, according to Ilyas Akhmadov was;

“The treaty on the fundamentals of relations between the Russian Federation and the Chechen Republic to be determined in accordance with generally recognized norms of international law shall be reached prior to December 31, 2001.”

Although the issue of terminology came up again as it did in the 1995 negotiations, for the sake of coming together, both sides were able to suspend this vocabulary. The Khasavyurt Accord also established a joint commission composed of both Chechens and Russians to coordinate things like the withdrawal of forces, crime-fighting, and rebuilding efforts. The treaty

⁴⁰ (Akhmadov et al.)

wrote that the permanent status would be decided through negotiations over a five year period, but remained moot on details. There were simply no processes on how this status would come about. Some questions brought up by Akhamadov were;

- Would the negotiations even last five years?
- How would the parties reach decisions?
- Will there be referendums?
- What would happen if talks between the sides broke down?
- Would there be international mediation or observation of the negotiation process? ⁴¹



⁴¹ (Akhmadov et al.)

Topic 1 - Interior

Religion

Sufism is the primary division of Islam that Chechens are part of. Most Chechens are members of one of two Sufi branches, Naqshbandiya or Qadiriya.

Naqshbandiya began in Bukhara in Central Asia, was preached by a series of imams who also dipped their toes in politics. One notable Imam is Shamil Basayev. Although these Imams do have power, it remains highly decentralized, maintaining unity through a ‘community of purpose’.

Although followers of this faith remain, increasing in popularity is Qadiriya. Originating in the 12th century, Qadiri worship is known for being more dramatic, involving a loud ‘zikr’ in which participants go round in a circle, shouting holy prayers loudly. When Dudayev seized power in 1991, this zikr gathered dozens of dancers in the central square of Grozny. Qadiriya is more centralized, but still remains split into different sects, differing in their radicalization.

Common calls for a *ghazwa*, holy war, have found their way into mainstream political culture. Some politicians wish to introduce sharia law, but this has issues of acceptance of the mainstream. Women in Grozny wear short sleeve dresses and continue to work.⁴²

- Should Sharia law be implemented?
- What role should Islam play in day to day life?
- Should religious courts be empowered?

Politics

The Khasavyurt accords are supposed to bring stability. All sides claim that henceforth, everything will be resolved through negotiations and compromise. Yet this appears to be more and more difficult. Elections are scheduled for 27 January, 1997, just 5 months away. The main issues will be:

- What role should Islam play in daily life?
- Should we pursue more negotiations with Russia, or are they unreliable as a partner?

⁴² (Gall and de Waal)

- How do we rebuild?
- What do we do with the veterans (of which nearly everyone are)?

Some notable candidates are;

Yandarbiyev, the current acting president, is to run, relying on his long activity dating back to 1991 and status as the incumbent.

Articles in the Russian press are favouring **Aslan Maskhadov**, portraying him as the most conciliatory of the bunch. This is in part due to his Soviet military history. Maskhadov has a history of being in the public eye and commanding the army that liberated the country.

A significant candidate is **Shamil Basayev**, widely seen as a hero for his role in the hospital hostage crisis ending the war, but unpopular due to his Islamic platform. Basayev is also heavily associated with the war, of which everyone is exhausted by, and may struggle to run against Maskhadov's campaign of peace.⁴³

Movaldi Udugov, leader of the "Islamic Order" party, follows a niche fundamentalist strain of Islam, believing in an Emirate that would control swaths of Islamic territory across the Caucasuses, beyond the borders of Chechnya.⁴⁴

Akhmed Zakayev is also running, opposing the rise of radical Islam.⁴⁵

That being said, these posts are not set in stone. Candidates may drop out, others may join, and the right campaign and alliances may secure the presidency. A presidential run would also need to nominate a Vice President, who can get in voters from different niches. Once a president has been voted in, he must decide who to appoint within his cabinet.

Economy

It is said one of the silver linings of being at rock bottom is that the only way is up. Yet the Chechen economy continues to dig deeper. Prior to the 1990s, the economy was; 41% industry, 34% agriculture, and 11% construction. Nearly all of this has been wiped out.⁴⁶

⁴³ (Akhmadov et al.)

⁴⁴ (Smick)

⁴⁵ (Harding)

⁴⁶ (Muzaev)

Oil

Oil was and will continue to be the basis of the industrial complex. Oil fields were first developed in the 1880s, and by 1920 Chechnya produced 30% of Russian oil. This oil production started sliding after the 1970s, dropping more than 5 times. Oil production has also created a large chemical engineering industry, producing petrochemicals for the USSR and beyond.⁴⁷

Agriculture

Chechnya's lowlands are favourable for growing both food and animals. Crops harvested in particular are corn, barley, and grapes. Despite occupying only 5% of the farmland, vineyards represented one third of the income in the 1980s. However, vineyards are a decaying field, due to the increasing anti-alcoholism of prominent Chechens.⁴⁸

Construction

With nearly everything laying in ruins, construction is poised to be a critical sector for any new government to improve. Houses must be rebuilt, factories need to get back up running, all this is dependent on new construction projects. Construction is also known in the former USSR as being historically immensely corrupt, posing as a money vacuum. Great care must be taken to not fall into this same pothole.⁴⁹ Khozh-Ahmed Nukhayev is known to play a significant role in construction, buying up real estate and repairing it.⁵⁰

- How does anyone fix the economy?
- What role should foreign investors play?
- How do we direct the fixing of destroyed infrastructure?

⁴⁷ (Muzaev)

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ (Delachieve)

Topic 2 - Exterior

Moscow

While the Khasavyurt Accords may have been signed, there is by no means cordial relations between Moscow and Chechnya. The treaty states that outstanding issues must be resolved by negotiation, but there is no way to enforce this. The agreement is vague, perhaps intentionally so, meaning that all issues have been postponed, not resolved.⁵¹

Dagestan

Although also Muslim, Dagestan follows more strict interpretations of Islam. The region has a very diverse makeup, no ethnic group is more populous than 30%. A significant amount of the initial invasion force came from Dagestan, where they faced a crowd of civilians who disarmed the soldiers and refused to let them leave for Chechnya. Dagestan may be a potential springboard into getting more mountain republics to join the fight against Russia, but this must be handled with care. Dagestan is one route to get weapons into Chechnya.⁵²

Ingushetia

Ingushetia, formerly part of the same Socialist Soviet Republic (SSR) as Chechnya, split off during the chaos of the Soviet Union's collapse. They chose to rejoin Russia. The Ingush people, although a distinct ethnic group, have much more in common compared to outside of the SSR. Together, they are known as Vaniakhs. The Chechen and Ingush languages are different but mutually intelligible. Chechen society sees the Ingush as 'middle of the road' and conformist, while Ingush see the Chechens as 'hot headed romantics'.⁵³

The West

The Chechen war is seen as any other post Soviet conflict by the west. This means that coverage of the war is centred around how this is an internal upbringing, and emphasizes Russian

⁵¹ (Akhmadov et al.)

⁵² (Gall and de Waal)

⁵³ Ibid.

territorial integrity. International organisations such as PACE (Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe), the parliament of the Council of Europe, and OSCE (Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe) will be important in trying to get the attention of larger, more powerful European nations.⁵⁴ Dudayev flew to Britain, the USA, and the newly independent Bosnia, boasting of the oil industry, to some interest. In Germany, he secured a deal where Chechnya would obtain new oil equipment in exchange for 100,000 tonnes of heating oil. Furthering economic ties with the west will be critical to securing Chechnya's legitimacy.⁵⁵

Middle East

Many characters, in particular Ibn al-Khattab, have close ties with Middle Eastern donors. However, these donors are here to spread their faith. They are frequently the main importers of extremism, believing that there is no negotiation with Russia, and that the fight shall continue until martyred. Although these connections may be valuable, there is always a real risk in obtaining supplies from them.⁵⁶ Dudayev pursued a foreign policy of trying to obtain recognition from countries in the Arab world. In 1992, he flew to Turkey, Sudan, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, and Kuwait. However, he made the mistake of spoiling the information that was supposed to be confidential on television shortly after. Dudayev had an advantage of being a former military pilot, flying the plane to them directly.

⁵⁴ (Akhmadov et al.)

⁵⁵ (Gall and de Waal)

⁵⁶ (Al-Nowaiser)

Glossary

Emir

The highest ranking political leader in the country, typically in the Islamic world.

Emirate

A country led by an Emir.

Oblast

A subdivision of territory equivalent to a province, typically used in the post Soviet sphere.

Terrorism

The act of using violence and terror to achieve political or personal goals.

Religious Fanaticism

An extreme enthusiasm for a religious cause, often to the point of violence.

Referendum

A direct vote on an issue carried out by the populace of a region.

Ispolokom

A type of parliament used in Chechnya immediately after independence.

Ghazavat

A war for the purpose of expansion of muslim territory or population. Literally translates to 'holy war'.

Sharia Law

A body of law forming its basis on the Quran and other religious scriptures.

Tips for Research

This can be a difficult topic to research. Yet like many topics, there is a wealth of history, just waiting to be uncovered. Almost every book cited contains an explanation of battles and history in more detail than I could provide. They provide a strong knowledge of characters and why Chechnya is the way it is. I have collected some specific resources here that I found to be especially useful or interesting.

- *Interview of Dzhokar Dudayev*

This is a video interview of Dzhokar Dudayev, the first president of Chechnya. The interview goes in depth into Dudayev's ideology, philosophy, and what led him to this day. He speaks on his perception of 'Ruscism' and how it led to the wars. In the interview, he predicted the annexation of Crimea and the invasion of Ukraine, in 1995. 1 hour and 27 minutes.

English Dub and Original in Russian

- *The Chechen Struggle: Independence Won and Lost* by Ilyas Akhmadov

Ilyas Akhmadov, foreign minister and modern day prime minister, gives his account of Chechnya's history, lasting from Dudayev's ascension to his eventual exile. It is his first person account, as Akhmadov had a close friendship with Shamil Basayev and numerous other notable Chechens. 288 pages.

- *Fangs of the Lone Wolf* by Dodge Billingsley

This book is a collection of stories from veterans of both wars. It provides an accurate account of how Russians and Chechens choose to fight their wars, including accurate diagrams with plenty of detail. 172 pages.

May be found online [here](#)

- *Chechnya: Calamity in the Caucasus* by Carlotta Gall & Thomas de Waal
- *Russia Confronts Chechnya* by John Dunlop

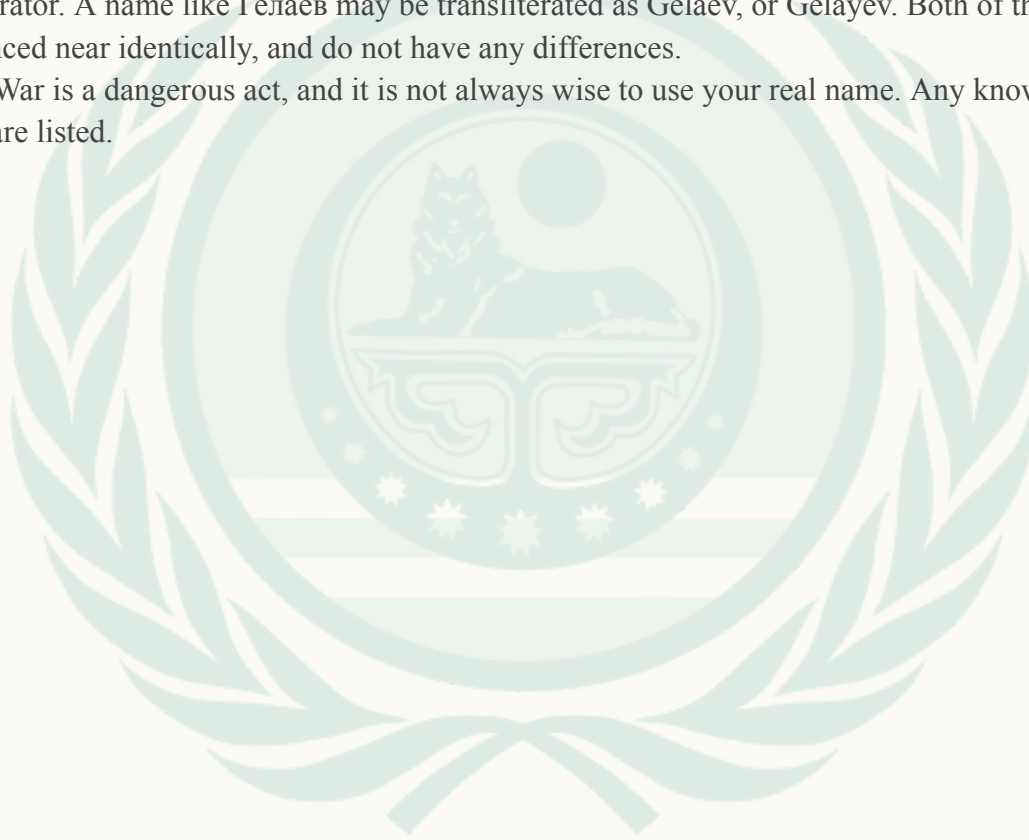
The preceding two sources are notable for being published in 1997 and 1998 respectively. What they lack in modern foresight they make up with more on the ground coverage, and a more suitable knowledge base for this committee.

Characters

Notes: East Slavic names are formed from three parts, a given name (first name), a patronymic, and a family name (last name). A patronymic is a part of a personal name formed by adding a prefix or suffix to the name. For example, in the name “Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky”, Peter is the given name, Tchaikovsky is the family name, and Ilyich is the patronymic, meaning “son of Ilya”. Patronymics are not generally used in speech.

Cyrilic is the alphabet that Russian and Chechen most commonly use. As such, when these names are transliterated into Latin, there are differences that may vary from transliterator to transliterator. A name like Гелаев may be transliterated as Gelaev, or Gelayev. Both of these are pronounced near identically, and do not have any differences.

War is a dangerous act, and it is not always wise to use your real name. Any known aliases are listed.



Aslan Maskhadov

Born in Kazakhstan, Maskhadov's family returned to Chechnya in 1957 at the age of 6. He pursued a military career, graduating with honours at the Leningrad Artillery, serving in the Soviet military until 1992, where he would return to Chechnya.

Appointed the chief of staff by Dudayev in July 1994, he led the defence of Chechnya. Under his command, Grozny was liberated in August of 1996, which began the peace negotiations with the Russian delegation that led to the Khasav-Yurt Accord, marking the end of the war.⁵⁷ According to the BBC, "Aslan Maskhadov did more than any other fighter in Chechnya to win the 1994-1996 war against Russia. He also did more than any other negotiator to bring peace".⁵⁸



Aslan Aliyevich Maskhadov

Born: 21 September 1951 (age 44)

Chief of Staff, Defence Minister

Military History;

Nov. Battle of Grozny

First Battle of Grozny

Battle of Gudermes

Second Battle of Grozny

Third Battle of Grozny

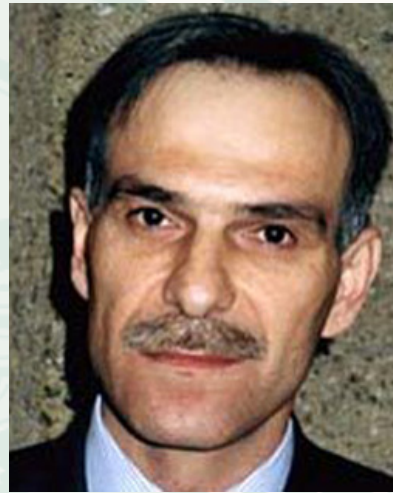
⁵⁷ (Waynakh Online, "Aslan Aliyevich Maskhadov")

⁵⁸ (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Chechen Republic of Ichkeria)

⁵⁹ (Medvedeva, "Aslan Maskhadov")

Ilyas Akhmadov

Born in Kazakhstan, Akhmadov's family returned to Chechnya in 1962. He studied at the Polytechnic University of Volgograd, and held a degree in political science from Rostov State University before entering the Soviets' Strategic Missile Forces. During the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, he obtained a minor clerical job at the Chechen Foreign Ministry. Once war was looming, he attempted to join with Shamil Basayev in August 1994, who flat out rejected him, saying "With your higher education you should find a better occupation than running around with a Kalashnikov."⁶⁰ Of course, Akhmadov did not listen, and Basayev found work with him anyway, helping Basayev obtain better supplies for his division. During this, he also grew a personal friendship with Basayev, despite their ideological differences. Afterwards, Akhmadov joined Maskhadov's general staff, becoming his Public Affairs Officer.⁶¹



Ilyas Khamzatovich Akhmadov

Born: 19 December 1960 (age 35)

Public Affairs Officer

Military History:

Nov. Battle of Grozny

⁶⁰ (Akhmadov et al.)

⁶¹ (Waynakh Online, "Ilyas Khamzatovich Akhmadov")

⁶² (Waynakh Online, "Aslan Aliyevich Maskhadov")

Khozh-Ahmed Noukhayev

Born in Krygystan, Noukhayev's family moved to Grozny in 1957. He went to school at Moscow State University, but was kicked out for unknown reasons. Following the war, Noukhayev used his control of construction companies to rebuild, buying up real estate in Chechnya and repairing it. Noukhayev is known to be friends with numerous Chechen politicians, including Dudayev, and funded his purchase of weapons. Nukhayev was a mediator in the negotiations between Yeltsin and Dudayev in the run up to the war.⁶³ In 1994, he became the head of the Foreign Intelligence Service, capable of carrying out assignments for Dudayev with plausible deniability for Chechnya.⁶⁴ Noukhayev is currently the Deputy Prime Minister under Yandarbiyev.⁶⁵



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Khozh-Ahmed Tashtamirovich Noukhayev

Born: 11 November 1954 (age 41)

Mob Boss

Head of the Foreign Intelligence Service

Akhmed Zakayev

Born in Kazakhstan, Zakayev initially trained to be an actor in Russia, graduating from an acting school in Moscow and working in a theater in Grozny. Dudayev appointed Zakayev as culture minister in 1994,⁶⁷ but as the war progressed he also served as a field commander, being promoted over several battles to the eventual role of the commander of the Western Group of Defense.⁶⁸ He held a pivotal role in the Third Battle of Grozny, and played a significant role in the Khasavyurt Accords negotiations.⁶⁹



Akhmed Halidovich Zakayev

Born: 26 April 1959 (age 37)

National Security Advisor

Military Commander

Culture Minister

Military History;

First Battle of Grozny

Third Battle of Grozny

⁶³ (Klebnikov)

⁶⁴ (Delachieve)

⁶⁵ (Strengthening Democratic Institutions Project)

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ (Bennett)

⁶⁸ (Specter, "Chechens' Leader Signs Peace Pact with the Kremlin")

⁶⁹ (British Broadcasting Corporation)

Ruslan Gelayev

Born in the Checheno-Ingush ASSR, Gelayev made a name for himself by taking command of a special forces battalion, the Separate Special Purpose Battalion (OBSN), to report directly to Dudayev. This battalion guarded the oil pipelines, composed of dozens of people Gelayev brought from his history in the War in Abkhazia.⁷⁰

Nicknamed the ‘Black Angel’,⁷¹ Gelayev frequently fought when the war was in the mountain stage. Notably, he achieved media coverage when he executed Russian POWs for bombing Shatoi.⁷² His military history dates back to the Abkhazia War in 92-93,⁷³ and he was the mastermind behind the Second Battle of Grozny.⁷⁴



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Ruslan Germanovich Gelayev

Also transliterated as Khamzat and Galaev.⁷⁶

Born: 16 April 1964 (age 32)

*Brigadier General*⁷⁷

Military History:

War in Abkhazia

First Battle of Grozny

Battle of Shatoy

Second Battle of Grozny

Battle of Yarysh-mardy

Third Battle of Grozny

⁷⁰ (Miroslaw Kuleba)

⁷¹ (Mamon and Pilis)

⁷² (Memorial)

⁷³ (Ichkeria Info)

⁷⁴ (Akhmadov et al.)

⁷⁵ (Unknown Copyright Holder, “Ruslan Gelayev”)

⁷⁶ (Billingsley)

⁷⁷ (Orlov et al.)

Ruslan Khasbulatov

Ethnically Chechen, yet chairman of the Russian Parliament. Khasbulatov is a powerful official in Russia, and has used that to attack Russian politicians' handling of the war. In 1995, he was a popular politician in Grozny.⁷⁸ However, that popularity has since diminished, due to Dudayev's rising popularity. He presents himself as a peacekeeper, frequently meeting with anti-Dudayev politicians.^{79 80} He currently leads the party "For the Revival of the Republic", popular in the northern, more pro Russian districts of Chechnya. His centre of support is in the village of Tolstoi-Yurt about 20 km from Grozny.⁸¹



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Ruslan Imranovich Khasbulatov

Born: 22 November 1942 (age 53)
Russian Politician

Dokka Umarov

Born in the Checheno-Ingush ASSR, Umarov studied civil engineering at the Grozny Oil Institute. While working throughout eastern Russia as an engineer, Umarov involved himself in criminal activities, being wanted for a murder in 1992. He joined the fight once the war began, being a member of the 'Borz' special forces battalion.⁸³ With two medals for military valour throughout the war, he now has political ambitions.⁸⁴



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Doku Khamatovich Umarov

Born: 13 April 1964 (age 32)
Brigadier General, Security Minister
Military History:
Third Battle of Grozny

⁷⁸ (Rotar)

⁷⁹ (Muzaev)

⁸⁰ (Sukhov)

⁸¹ (Strengthening Democratic Institutions Project)

⁸² (Savin)

⁸³ (Chechen Press)

⁸⁴ (Cunningham and Britannica Editors)

⁸⁵ (Caucas Emirate)

Taymaz Abubakarov

Born in Kazakhstan, Abubakarov's family returned on an unknown date to Grozny. Abubakarov worked as a mechanic in a thermal plant, and was involved in politics since 1985, advocating Chechen sovereignty. He was appointed the Minister of Finance in 1991, pursuing a technocratic governance. Managing the economy was a tough task, with hyperinflation, accusations of corruption, and black markets taking reign. Economics will be critical to rebuilding the country. Questions rise over Abubkarov's conduct, with an increasing amount of control of the economy being placed in his hands.^{86 87}



Taymaz Taysumovich Abubakarov

Born: April 16, 1948 (age 48)

Economic Minister

Turpal-Ali Atgeriyev

Born in the Checheno-Ingush ASSR, Atgeriyev is a military commander who led a unit of ~100 men defending the city of Grozny. In this, he learnt numerous tactics that both succeeded and failed. Most critically, he successfully utilised the population's defensive spirit to push back the Russians.⁸⁸ He disagrees with the act of kidnapping.⁸⁹



Turpal-Ali Aladiyevich Atgeriyev

Born: 8 May 1969 (age 29)

*Field Commander*⁹¹

Military History:

First Battle of Grozny

Kizlyar–Pervomayskoye Hostage Crisis

Second Battle of Grozny

Third Battle of Grozny

⁸⁶ (Ichkeria.net, "Taymaz Abubakarov – Truth and Lies")

⁸⁷ (Abubakarov)

⁸⁸ (Atgireyev)

⁸⁹ (Atgeriyev)

⁹⁰ (Unknown Copyright Holder, "Turpal-Ali Atgeriyev")

⁹¹ (Times Staff and Wire Reports)

Vakha Arsanov

Born in 1958 in the Checheno-Ingush ASSR, Arsanov worked as a traffic police captain in the Soviet days. Arsanov held the Terek Ridge Line during the defense of Chechnya during the war. He also notably participated in the first Battle of Grozny.⁹² Arsanov has been a long supporter of Dudayev, and will likely continue his legacy.⁹³



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Vakha Khamidovich Arsanov

Born: 1958 (age 37-38)

*Divisional General*⁹⁵

Military History:

Battle of Dolinskoye

First Battle of Grozny

Movsar Barayev

Arbi Barayev is growing up in a new country, one that has only known conflict and struggle. Having already lost his father and mother last year, he now only has his uncle Arbi Barayev.⁹⁶ Terrorism is risky work, and should Arbi Barayev fall, he seems ready to continue the legacy.⁹⁷



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Movsar Buharovich Barayev

Also known as: Suleimanov and Yassir

Born: 26 October 1979 (age 16)

Nephew of Arbi Barayev

⁹² (Ichkeria.net, “Maskhadov”)

⁹³ (Kuna)

⁹⁴ (Sputnik)

⁹⁵ (Strengthening Democratic Institutions Project)

⁹⁶ (Waynakh Online, “Arbi Barayev”)

⁹⁷ (Herman)

⁹⁸ (BBC, “Rebel Leader “Came to Die””)

Said-Khasanom Abumuslimov

Born in Kazakhstan in 1953, Abumuslimov studied History at Moscow University, receiving a PhD from the state university in Grozny. He went on to co-author the '91 constitution. Abumusilmov headed the Chechen peace delegation from 1992-1997, before being elevated to the role of Acting Vice President following the assassination of Dudayev.⁹⁹



¹⁰⁰

Dr. Said-Khasan Said-Magomedovich Abumuslimov

Born: 1 February 1953 (age 43)
Acting Vice President

Khozh-Akhmed Yarikhanov

Information about Yarikhanov's upbringing is very scarce. Appointed on 21 October 1996, Yarikhanov is the head of the Chechen oil company "Yunko" which was created in May 1995.¹⁰¹ This oil company will be critical to rebuilding Chechnya's economic success.



Khozh-Akhmed Yarikhanov

Born: ? (age ?)
Head of Yunko

⁹⁹ (Strengthening Democratic Institutions Project)

¹⁰⁰ (Ichkeria.net, "The Chechen Republic of Ichkeria Is a Subject of International Law")

¹⁰¹ (RFE/RL)

Salman Raduyev

Born in the Checheno-Ingush SSR, Raduyev graduated from the Institute of the National Economy in Rostov. He was noted to be involved in the Komsomol (Communist Youth).¹⁰² Raduyev was involved in forming a battalion in support of Dudayev, established in 1992.¹⁰³ Raduyev has had a history in the spotlight, seizing a hospital in Kizlyar in January of 1996 with 300 hostages. After negotiations, he let go of the hostages in exchange for an escape.¹⁰⁴ Raduyev desires to take the fight to Russia, making frequent combing campaigns against Russian railways and cities should Chechnya not be recognised.¹⁰⁵



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Salman Betyrovich Raduyev

Born: 13 February 1967 (age 29)

Field Commander

Military History:

Kizlyar–Pervomayskoye hostage crisis

Zelimkhan Yandarbiyev

Born in Kazakhstan, Yandarbiyev became a leader in the Chechen nationalist movement as the Soviet Union fell, not with a rifle, but by the pen. Yandarbiyev was a member of the USSR Writer's Union, and wrote numerous books on the independence effort. Yandarbiyev led the negotiations for the Khasavyurt Accord, notably demanding that Chechnya be treated as an equal to Russia. Following Dudayev's assassination, he has risen to Acting President. He has a vision of an Islamic Chechnya.¹⁰⁷



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Zelimkhan Abdulmuslimovich Yandarbiyev

Born: 12 September 1952 (age 43)

*Acting President*¹⁰⁹

¹⁰² (Milstein)

¹⁰³ (24 News)

¹⁰⁴ (Corley, "Obituary: Salman Raduyev")

¹⁰⁵ (Strengthening Democratic Institutions Project)

¹⁰⁶ (Politics in Rashka)

¹⁰⁷ (McGregor, "The Assassination of Zelimkhan Yandarbiyev: Implications for the War on Terrorism")

¹⁰⁸ (Medvedeva, "Zelimkhan Yandarbiyev in 2000")

¹⁰⁹ (Specter, "Chechens' Leader Signs Peace Pact with the Kremlin")

Akhmad Kadyrov

Born to a family of poor peasants in Kazakhstan, Kadyrov studied farming before entering the field of religion in the 1980s. He attended Islamic schools in numerous SSRs, before returning to Chechnya in 1991. He rose through the ranks quickly, being made the chief mufti or the religious leader by Dudayev, Kadyrov called for a holy war against Russia, saying “There are 1 million Chechens, and 150 million Russians. If each Chechen kills 150 Russians, we will win.”¹¹⁰ and participating in the Khasavyurt Accord.¹¹¹



¹¹²

**Akhmat-Khadzhi Abdulkhamidovich
Kadyrov**
Born: 23 August 1951 (age 45)
Chief Mufti

¹¹⁰ (Yashin)

¹¹¹ (Traynor)

¹¹² (President of the Russian Federation)

Ibn al-Khattab

Born in a northern border city in Saudi Arabia in 1969 to a Chechen family¹¹³, Samir was reportedly a brilliant student, scoring highly. At age 17, he changed his plans, joining the Afghan Mujahideen fighting the Soviets in 1987. Thus began his history of fighting for Islamist groups, in the name of *Jihad*.¹¹⁴ He arrived in Chechnya in 1995,¹¹⁵ for the purpose of continuing the victory over the Soviets. al-Khattab is close friends with bin Laden, al-Zawahiri, and has numerous ties with al-Qaeda.¹¹⁶ Basayev also became a close friend of his, achieving medals and a rank of General.



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Samir Salih Abdullah al-Suwaylim

Born 14 April 1969 (age 25)

Militia Fighter

Military History:

Soviet-Afghan War

Nagorno-Karabakh War¹¹⁸

Tajikistan Civil War¹¹⁹

Bosnian War¹²⁰

Shatoy Ambush¹²¹

¹¹³ (Khalilova)

¹¹⁴ (Al-Nowaiser)

¹¹⁵ (Williams)

¹¹⁶ (United Nations)

¹¹⁷ (Cedost News)

¹¹⁸ (Khalilova)

¹¹⁹ (Leghari)

¹²⁰ (Jamestown, "Kvashin Calls Reports That Khattab Was Wounded Rumors")

¹²¹ (Billingsley)

Shamil Basayev

Born in the Checheno-Ingush ASSR, Basayev was named after a leader of rebels against Tsarist armies in the 19th century. Yet he carries the legacy of resistance to extreme lengths. Basayev is characterized as lazy but cunning. In 1991, he stole an airplane in Russia, and threatened to blow it up if Chechnya was not freed. This began his history of using spectacle to draw attention from the world to the domestic crisis.¹²² He is the proud perpetrator of the Budyonovsk hospital hostage crisis¹²³, when asked about how history would judge him, he replied “It’s early yet to worry about history.” He has extensive influence and military history throughout the war.¹²⁴



Shamil Salmanovich Basayev

Also known as: Abu Idris

Born 14 January 1965 (age 31)

*Militia Commander*¹²⁶

Military History:

Nagorno-Karabakh War

War in Abkhazia

November Battle of Grozny

First Battle of Grozny

Budyonovsk Hospital Hostage Crisis

Second Battle of Grozny

Third Battle of Grozny

¹²² (Detenin)

¹²³ (BBC, “Obituary: Shamil Basayev”)

¹²⁴ (Akhmadov et al.)

¹²⁵ (Medvedeva, “Shamil Basaev”)

¹²⁶ (Waynakh Online)

Movladi Udugov

Born in Grozny in the Checheno-Ingush SSR, Movladi started out with propaganda early, being the editor-in-chief of a banned newspaper in 1988. Udugov ensured that Dudayev's broadcasts were heard by the people, being the de facto controller of the local TV station and the press spokesman.¹²⁷ He is said to "won alone the information war against the Russian official media" by releasing regular press updates to the international community, considered better quality than Russia's reports.¹²⁸ This heavily contributed greatly to the western perception of the war and won him Chechnya's highest honour.¹²⁹ Of note, he owns the only cell phone service in Chechnya.¹³⁰



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Movladi Saidarbievich Udugov

Born 9 February 1962 (age 34)
Deputy Prime Minister
Propaganda Chief

Abdul-Halim Sadulayev

Born and raised in Argun, Sadulayev studied Philology at the Grozny University, but joined as a militia for his local town once the war broke out.¹³² He then continued to study Islam, appearing on Chechen language televisions speaking on the topic frequently.¹³³



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Abdul-Halim Abusalamovich Sadulayev

Born: 2 June 1966 (age 30)
Militia Fighter
 Military History:
 Battle of Argun

¹²⁷ (Fuller, "Chechen Leader Demands Turkey Hand over "Terrorists"")

¹²⁸ (Strengthening Democratic Institutions Project)

¹²⁹ (Caucasian Knot)

¹³⁰ (Akhmadov et al.)

¹³¹ (Unknown Copyright Holder, "Movladi Udugov")

¹³² (Waynakh Online, "Abdul Khalim Salamovich Sadullayev")

¹³³ (Corley, "Abdul-Khalim Sadulayev")

¹³⁴ (Chechen Press, "Sadulaev")

Oleksandr Muzychko

Born in the Ural Mountains to a Ukrainian father and a Belarusian mother,¹³⁵ both repressed by the Soviets at the time. In 1991, Muzychko went to Grozny to transfer information to his nationalist organization, the UNA-UNSO. Once the war started, he led a detachment of ~200 volunteers¹³⁶ nicknamed ‘Viking’, and fought under Basayev’s command in the First Battle of Grozny. When asked why in Chechnya, Muzychko said he defends the Ukrainian and Chechen people from Russian aggression.¹³⁷ He became a brigadier general, and helped Dudayev’s family flee to western Europe.¹³⁸



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Oleksandr Ivanovych Muzychko

Also known as: Sashko Bilyi

Born: 19 September 1962 (age 33)

Brigadier General, Leader of the UNA-UNSO

Military History:

First Battle of Grozny

Arbi Barayev

Born in the Chechen-Ingush SSR, Barayev became a police officer, then a bodyguard to both his uncle, Vakha Arsanov and Yandarbiyev. Barayev formed a close personal friendship with him.¹⁴⁰ Once the war began, Barayev created the SPIR (Special Purpose Islamic Regiment). This regiment is the leader behind various criminal acts in the country, such as hostage taking, kidnapping, and oil smuggling. He is a ruthless man, known for having no mercy, kidnapping Russian engineers for money in 1994.¹⁴¹ He is also Movsar Barayev’s uncle.¹⁴²



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Arbi Alautdinovich Barayev

Born: 27 May 1974 (age 22)

Also known as: Abdu Sabur¹⁴⁴

Commander of the Special Purpose Islamic Regiment¹⁴⁵

¹³⁵ (Radio Liberty)

¹³⁶ (McGregor, “Radical Ukrainian Nationalism and the War in Chechnya”)

¹³⁷ (Россия-1)

¹³⁸ (Lionchuk)

¹³⁹ (RT)

¹⁴⁰ (Murphy)

¹⁴¹ (Bernstein et al.)

¹⁴² (Quinn-Judge)

¹⁴³ (RenTV network)

¹⁴⁴ (Center for Defense Information)

¹⁴⁵ (Quinn-Judge)



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