

The Second Caucasian wars

IREn5019 No War, No Peace: Frozen Conflicts in the Caucasus
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Structure

- Ingush-Ossetian conflict
- The roots of the conflict
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- Large scale violence
- Spiralling violence
- No war no Peace
- Dagestan
- Wrap up session



SEA OF AZOV

BLACK SEA

CASPIAN SEA

R U S S I A

G E O R G I A

A Z E R B A I J A N

T U R K E Y

A R M E N I A

Krasnodar Krai

Stavropol Krai

Adygea

Maikop

Karachay-Cherkessia

Sochi

Karachaevsk

Cherkessk

Mineralnye Vody

Pyatigorsk

Baksan

Nalchik

Elbrus

Kabardino-Balkaria

Beslan

Vladikavkaz

North Ossetia

South Ossetia

Nazran

Grozny

Magas

Ingushetia

Gudermes

Chechnya

Khasavyurt

Leninaul

Kalinaul

Bujnask

Dagestan

Makhachkala

Derbent

Uryan-Uba

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-  International boundary
-  Republic boundary
-  Disputed boundary
-  Regional capital



The roots of the conflict

- Most of the frozen conflicts in the post-Soviet space, Abkhazia, and South Ossetia, have re-emerged respectively in 2008 and 2010. The Chechen conflict has not terminated in a real sense. The Nagorno-Karabakh case has again become a hot issue in 2020.
- The Prigorodnyj district – only one in which two ethnic groups with lower ranked autonomous status came into ethno-territorial conflict with each other.
- The roots: nature of ethno-territorial policies in the Soviet era. Especially the punishment of many North Caucasian peoples by Stalin, in the form of systematic and organised deportations, have caused psychological traumas in the collective memories of those people.

The roots of the conflict

- Differences between ethnic groups:
- The Ingush speak a Nakh language close to Chechen, Ossetians speak an East Iranian language and are believed to be the descendants of the Scythian (resp. Sarmatian and Alan) tribes.
- Religion
- The Prigorodnyj district belonged to Chechen-Ingush ASSR.
- In 1944, Stalin gave the order to deport the Ingush and Chechens, and their ASSR was abolished.
- The real causes of the Prigorodnyj conflict are, in fact, created by the deportation of the Ingush and awarding the district to North Ossetia, by effect of which many Ingush were ethnically cleansed from the area.
- The roots of this conflict, indeed, can be traced primarily to political factors, not by any means to old or modern hatreds (Kaufman 2007) between the Muslim Ingush and the Christian Ossetians.

Northern Caucasus



Conflict escalation

- After the Ingush returned from exile, they have been seeking justice from the authorities. Armed clashes between the Ingush and Ossetians have occurred, the Ingush had petitioned the Soviet government for the return of the Prigorodnyj district to them.
- In 1957 the Checheno-Ingush ASSR was reconstituted in 1957 - the Prigorodny Raion part of North Ossetia.
- In early 1973, they staged a mass protest in Grozny to demand the return of Prigorodny Raion, the organizers were put on trial.
- After Perestroika, Chechnya announced its independence, but Ingushetia preferred to remain part of the Russian Federation, hoping that it would improve its negotiating position vis-à-vis North Ossetia.
- Ingushetia - the most pro-Yeltsin territorial entities in Russia, while the North Ossetian leadership sympathised with the hardliner communists.

Conflict escalation

- In September 1989, the second congress of the Ingush people in Grozny: the Prigorodny's a part of Ingushetia and re-establishment of a separate Ingush territorial entity and not the part of the Chechen-Ingush ASSR.
- In April 1991 the U.S.S.R. Supreme Soviet adopted a Law on the Rehabilitation of the Repressed Peoples that stated that Prigorodny Raion should be handed back to the Checheno-Ingush ASSR, but the Ossetians pressured Moscow to impose a five-year moratorium on implementing it.
- “Aside from the Ingush’s desire to remain within the Russian Federation, their particular relations with the North Ossetians, their distinct language, and their compactly-settled territory have contributed to their willingness to split the former Republic of Checheno-Ingushetia. In 1988-1989, before Chechnya had undertaken to separate from the Russian federal structure, 60,000 Ingush citizens signed a petition calling for the formation of an autonomous Ingush Republic. On 8 January 1992, the Chechen parliament announced the restoration of the 1934 border between Chechnya and Ingushetia”.

Conflict escalation

- The North Ossetian Supreme Soviet took a decision that suspended the right of the Ingush to live in North Ossetia. The Ingush resisted this demand and set up self-defence militias, which resulted in the escalation of tensions.
- North Ossetian President Akhsarbek Galazov oversaw the distribution of weapons to illegal Ossetian paramilitary groups. Creation of a National Guard of 5,000 men and 20 armoured vehicles. Meanwhile, the Russian demonstrated seeming indifference to the imminent crisis.
- War of words in 1992 plus both parties arming themselves
- October 1992: a series of incidents: Russian officials (including then-Emergency Situations Minister Sergei Shoigu, dispatched to Vladikavkaz, the North Ossetian capital, and gave the green light for the deployment of Russian Army troops, which made no effort to protect Ingush civilians. In Tishkov's words, "preventing casualties and destruction and trying to separate the conflict parties was not the primary motive behind the federal center's actions." Consequently, tens of thousands of Ingush fled for their lives to Ingushetia as marauding Ossetians systematically destroyed their homes. Both sides took hundreds of hostages.

Large scale violence

- After a time of tensions and skirmishes (including blow up of a gas pipeline a crush of 12 years old girl by the North Ossetian forces) between the armed Ingush and Ossetians the Ingush self-defence units were established. “The council also decided to close entrances and exits to all Ingush settlements and to subordinate volunteer organizations to the Ingush authorities. The Ossetians naturally saw this as a threat to their sovereignty, and actually regarded it a casus belli”.
- The large scale violence broke out on 30 October 1992. Russian troops entered the territory to “restore law and order” on 31 October. 6960 military personnel,
- Russian forces included: 116 tanks, 276 armoured personnel carriers (APCs) and 156 artillery units. However the violence went on.
- 10 November, Russian forces at the borders between Chechnya and Ingushetia.
- The largest number of people (over 450 persons) was killed in a short time between 30 October and 4 November 1992. According to official sources, 644 people had been killed by June 1994.

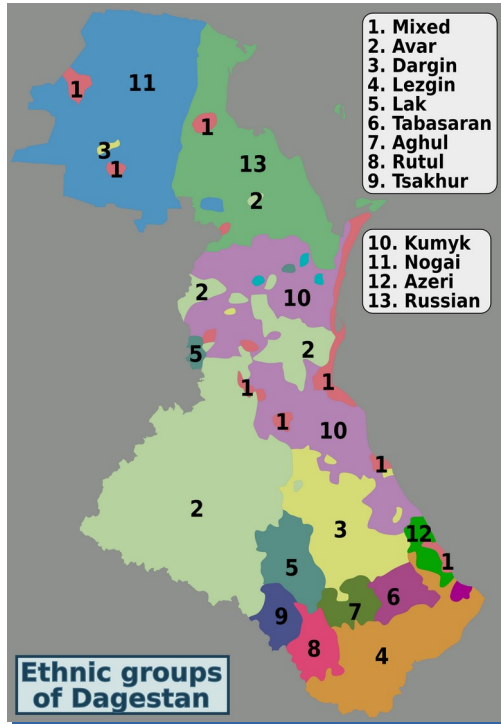
Spiralling violence

- The war in Chechnya contributed to the deterioration of situation: over 150, 000 refugees have flown into Ingushetia.
- New series of clashes in Prigorodniy district in the spring and summer of 1995 – lack of law.
- In Ingushetia, several incidents of Russian troops attacking civilians.
- July 1997 re-escalation of tension: Russian “joint action programme” which has been interpreted as heavily tilted toward the Ossetian standpoint.”
- Russia sent 200 billion rubles (then worth \$34.5 million) annually for the next two years: financial reconstruction in Prigorodny Raion and thus enable Ingush families to return. Yeltsin called for a 15-20-year moratorium on Ingush territorial claims, which Aushev deplored as tantamount to "burying one's head in the sand."

No war no peace

- A program of returning Ingush persons to Prigorodny Raion by the end of 2006 was only partially implemented. In October 2016, just 23,430 Ingush had succeeded in returning and most of them had problems finding work; Ingush and Ossetian children attend separate schools.
- No real reconciliation by Russia.
- Deep-rooted stereotyped perceptions of "the adversary," mythologized perception of past events: the mutual distrust and suspicion between the two nations still persists.

Dagestan



Dagestan

- In 1999 clashes on the Chechen-Dagestani border.
- On 28 May, Chechen attacked a Russian checkpoint on the border, prompting a Russian helicopter attack on their positions.
- Several more similar attacks took place
- The Islamic Peacekeeping Army, invaded villages in Dagestan in order establish an Islamic state over Chechnya and Dagestan.
- Russian Prime Minister Stepashin fired, in a fear not to lose Dagestan.
- Putin came to power, he claimed to restore order in two weeks.
- Dagestan supported Russia
- September another attack by Chechens, pretext for Russia to extent it military presence around Chechnya.

Dagestan

- “Dividing Dagestan up into ethnic autonomous regions would repeat the mistakes of Soviet ethnic federalism and could have horrifying consequences given the republic’s ethnic geography”.
- power-sharing arrangement
- As argued by Svante Cornell: “ the situation nevertheless remains worrying, especially given the persistence of an unrepresentative government with a power base in the two largest ethnic groups of the republic. The grievances of certain groups such as the Kumyks and Laks need to be addressed promptly to prevent further popular activism. However, the proposals to split up Dagestan into autonomous units, cherished by Tenglik, indeed seem to be a recipe for disaster rather than a recipe for lasting peace. Dagestanis do seem to share a certain overlapping common identity, heavily coloured by Islam, which may be capitalized upon to prevent communalism from expanding. Many Dagestanis are aware of the danger of the national question, and efforts are being undertaken both by government and opposition to seek to promote transnationality cohesion. There are promising trends, nevertheless the present structure of the republic needs to be revised sooner or later to cope with the new challenges that confront Dagestan in a new era.”

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- Wrap up session