

The Second Caucasian wars

IREn5019 No War, No Peace: Frozen Conflicts in the Caucasus
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10 November 2021

Structure

- Ingush-Ossetian conflict
- The roots of the conflict
- Conflict escalation
- 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

Elbrus

Kabardino-Balkaria

Nalchik

Beslan

Vladikavkaz

North Ossetia

South Ossetia

Nazran

Grozny

Magas

North Ingushetia

Gudermes

Chechnya

Khasavyurt

Leninaul

Kalinaul

Bujnask

Dagestan

Makhachkala

Derbent

Uryan-Uba

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





Ingushetia – smallest territorial unit in Russia, 412, 997 inhabitants, most mono-ethnic.

Established on 4 June 1992 as a result of separation of Checheno-Ingushetia.

All Ingushetia's leaders – security background.

First president: general Ruslan Aushev removed by Moscow in 2001 and replaced with Murat Zyazikov (dismissed in 2008).

General Yunus-Bek Yevkurov and most recently Mahmud-Ali Maksharipovich Kalimatov.

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 of which two ethnic groups with lower ranked autonomous status came into ethno-territorial conflict with each other, small-scale clash.
- 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 psychical 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. The Ingush are a family of an indigenous Northern Caucasian ethnic group known as Vainakh (Sunni Muslims). This group has a well-known record of disobedience toward Tsarist Russia.

In contrast, the mostly Christian Ossetians have been allies of Russia for centuries. After the USSR was established, the regular order of things had changed. However, structural transformation does not always involve a shift in attitudes.

In 1920: the Mountain Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic including Ingush, Ossetian, Chechens, Kabards, Karachai, Cherkess and Balkars. It was short-lived.

In 1924 Ingush Autonomous Oblast – Vladikavkaz an administrative center. Prigorodny part of Ingushetia.

In 1936 Chechen-Ingush ASSR.

In 1944, Stalin gave the order to deport the Ingush and Chechens, and their ASSR was abolished. 11,000 Ingush joined the Soviet army in the Great Patriotic War (WW2); 4,000 have been killed and 46 had received the orders of the Hero of the Soviet Union (Al- bogachieva, 2012: 45). The Communist party did not appreciate the wartime achievements of the Vainakhs properly. Chechens and Ingush were accused of treachery and deported from the homeland to Central Asia in 1944. During the first year in exile, approximately 30–50 percent of the deported population had died of hunger and cold (Telegraph, 2001).

Subsequently the Prigorodny District became a part of North Ossetia and around 30,000 ethnic Ossetians were placed in the houses of the deported Ingush.

Map of Prigorodny





On January, 9, 1957, the *Chechen-Ingush ASSR* was re-established. The Prigorodny region stayed within the boundaries of North Ossetia.

In the 1970-80s, the relations between the Ossetians and Ingush populations became tense. In 1972 Ingush intelligentsia prepared a lengthy text addressed to the Soviet Government . The authors expressed their dissatisfaction about the position of Ingushetia held among the Soviet Republics. In the letter it was said that the Ingush people were the victims of a conspiracy prepared by the nationalistic Ossetians, who skillfully utilized their connections in the communist party to acquire control first of Vladikavkaz and later of the Prigorodny region. It was argued that the efforts of the Ossetian elites not only created political tensions vis-à-vis Ingushetia, but simultaneously planted the seeds of hatred among the ordinary Ossetians.

In 1973, a mass Ingush demonstration in Grozny demanded restoration of Prigorodny in a constituency of Ingushetia.

Ekaterina Sokirianskaia has pointed out four factors that created conditions for the conflict in Prigorodny:

- a) “The nationalization” of politics in the region;
- b) The power struggle between the leadership of the USSR and the leadership of the Russian Federation;
- c) The inflow of refugees from Georgia;
- d) The emergence of free market of arms (Sokirianskaia, 2005/2006: 8).

Ingush, hoped that a new order in Russia would defy the Soviet past and help them to solve the problems.



April 26, 1991 the Law on the Rehabilitation of the Oppressed Peoples: restoration of the pre 1944 boundaries.

However, lack of clarity, in technical details. Russia planned the bilateral meeting: North Ossetian decided not to participate.

Problems with Ossetian from Georgia. At the same time, Chechnya was gaining strength. Ossetian afraid to be attacked by Ingush.

Ingushetia and North Ossetia started organize armed forces.

Northern Caucasus



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. The NO argued that the Ingush initiated the violence and visa versa. The Russian peacekeeping forces supporting the Ossetians to ensure that Prigorodny region remains under North Ossetia.

- 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."

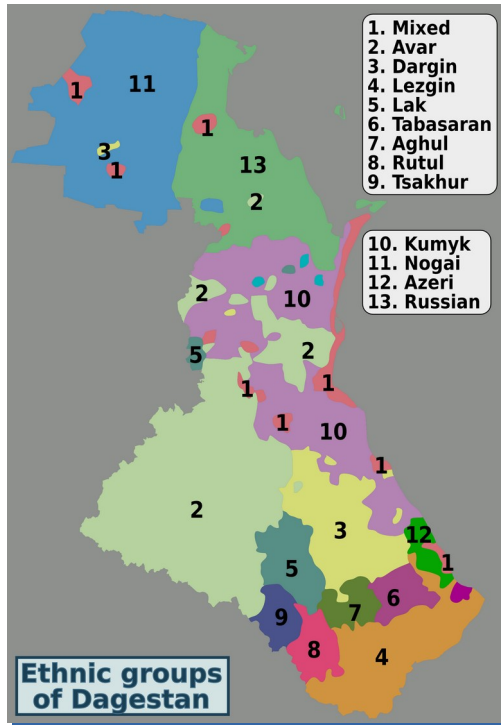
No war no peace

- 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. The creation of the United Investigative Group OSOG – only on paper.
- 20 March 1993 the Kislovodsk agreement: a multifaceted mechanism to regulate the security issues and proposed ways of the IDP return.
- 24 June 1994 the Beslan agreement: return IDPs in a two-stage process, rebuilt essential infrastructure.
- Demilitarization of the Ossetian fighters big problem. Ingushetia- a hub for the multiethnic terrorists.
- **Deep-rooted stereotyped perceptions of "the adversary," mythologized perception of past events:** the mutual distrust and suspicion between the two nations still persists.

In 2009 a historical agreement by Ingushetia Yunus-bek Yevkurov and Taymuraz Mamsurov. The leaders have jeopardized their political careers, as the decision was highly unpopular in both societies. The Ossetian side was taking responsibility for full-scale re-integration of the returnees in Prigorodny based on equal rights with the Ossetian citizens. In return, Ingushetia recognized the conflict territory as being in Ossetian jurisdiction.

Political discourse changed: the war, in a new context, was described as a common tragedy. Despite the initial skepticism, the policy of cooperation started to work slowly but steadily.

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 Chechenya.

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.”

Dagestan

In 1998 and 1999 institutional unification of Dagestani and Chechen Wahhabis.

The formation of the Congress of the Peoples of Ichkeria and Dagestan, Shamil Basayev, creation of an “Islamic Legion”

“The leaders of Congress will not allow the occupying Russian army to wreak any havoc in the land of our Muslim brethren. We do not intend to leave our Muslim brothers helpless.”

“take part in the jihad” and to liberate “Dagestan and the Caucasus from the Russian colonial yoke”.

The invasion of Dagestan

2 August 1999 a group of Magomedov's ("the Emir of the Islamic Jamaat of Dagestan") soldiers attacked a number of villages in the Tsumadi district.

6 and 7 August 1,500 armed Dagestanis, Chechens and Arabs – predominantly Wahhabis crossed Dagestani border from Chechnya.

10 August they announced the "independent Islamic State of Dagestan" and declared "Independent Islamic State of Dagestan" and war on "the traitorous Dagestani government " and "Russia's occupation units".

"United Command of the Dagestani Mujahids" led by Shamil Basayev. Idea of Islamic caliphate: "the longer strategy of establishing a North Caucasus system of military jamaats".

Mass mobilization of volunteers against this army . The villagers: occupants and unwelcome religious fanatics.

The Dagestani homeland security forces fought side by side with the regular units of the federal army and Dagestani militia and after two weeks of fighting Wahhabis to the mountains.

Deterioration of the Dagestani-Chechen relation: Dagestani public saw it as a Chechen territorial aspirations. On the other hand Chechens accused Dagestanis in betrayal.

Chechnya was perceived in Dagestani as a bad precedent, which achieved independence at the price of anarchy, clan conflict, religious extremism, economic catastrophe and criminality.

Conflict diffusion

Conflict spillover from Chechnya to Ingushetia and Dagestan.

Two major rebel uprisings: June 2004 in Nazran and October 2005 in Nalchik. The level of violence in Dagestan was greater than that in Chechnya and counterterrorist operations.

Since 2008 Dagestan a hotspot for violence in the Northern Caucasus.

Regional trends: unresolved territorial, religious and inter-ethnic conflicts.

“Caucasus emirates” by Chechen Doku Umarov: increasing Islamization, disconnect between elites loyal to Moscow and the population, the influence of clan politics and corruption, the existence of many different alternative sources of power competing with the political and religious leadership.

“Basayev network” : Dagestani veterans from Chechen wars, insurgent group, personal and social grievances against local elites.

In April 2009 president Medvedev announced the end of a decade long counterterrorist operation in Chechnya, however peace remains fragile in the region.

Diffusion of conflict are not passive but contribute to shaping the conflict dynamics and outcomes.

Dynamics, process-led diffusion of violence. Structural problems: lawlessness, corruption, unemployment and lack of youth integration in society in combination with the local traditions of vendetta.