



FFM Moscow

2008

A joint mission by experts from
Belgium, Austria and Poland

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I. Introduction

This report is the result of a joint fact finding mission to Moscow, Russian Federation by the Austrian, Belgian and Polish Asylum and Migration Agencies.

The mission took place from 01/12/2008 until 05/12/2008.

The aim of this mission was to gather as much information as possible concerning the present situation of ethnic Chechens in the Chechen Republic itself, but also in the other regions of the Russian Federation.

To collect this information the delegation had meetings with different organizations and experts on the subject. In appendix one can find an overview and short description of the visited organizations.

This report contains a general summary and also summaries of the different meetings.

The general summary gives an overview of the main findings of the mission and the most striking trends that could be discerned.

The summaries of the meetings give a more detailed insight into the specific talks that took place.

It must be mentioned that a meeting with the UNHCR Moscow office took place during this fact finding mission, but until now it is not possible to publish a summary of this meeting.

II. General Summary

1. Situation of Chechens in regions of the Russian Federation (outside Chechnya)

It is difficult to find clear information concerning the size of the Chechen Diaspora.

The Chechen Social and Cultural Association (further in text: Chechen Association) was almost the only one able to give some numbers, based on their own estimates. They estimate that approximately 200 000 Chechens live in the Moscow oblast and some 560 000 in all the Russian regions together (Moscow oblast included). They situate the main groups in the Krasnodar, Stavropol and Rostov regions, the Yakutsk area and Siberia.

A Professor of The Russian Academy of Science (further in text: Professor of The RAS) estimates that the Chechen Diaspora in Moscow amounts from 200 000 to 300 000 ethnic Chechens.

Memorial declared that they didn't have any really reliable numbers on the Chechen Diaspora, but they think that approximately 150 000 Chechens reside in the Moscow oblast.

The Moscow Bureau for Human Rights (further in text: MBHR) claims that at present around 1 million illegal migrants live in the Moscow region, but they have no data concerning the portion of Chechens in this group. Nevertheless they are convinced that the majority of Chechens live illegally in the Moscow region.

Other regions of the Russian Federation where the MBHR sees big Chechen Diaspora groups are the Astrakhanskaya and the Volgogradskaya oblasts.

During most meetings with the sources it appeared that in general a positive evolution can be seen about the position of ethnic Chechens in the regions and that they have only limited indications about difficulties that ethnic Chechens encounter when they resettle in different regions of the RF.

From the discussions with the sources it can be concluded that at present many Chechens in Moscow are apparently able to live a normal life. This can certainly be seen as an indication. However it must be said that no statistics on the proportion of Chechens that really encounter problems compared to the total amount of the diaspora are available, so there is no hard data to confirm this.

Most sources mentioned that they had no information about ethnic Chechens who encountered serious problems in the regions of the RF. In general there seems to be an improvement of the situation.

Therefore it can be said that cases of Chechens who encountered difficulties in regions of the RF should have to be assessed on case to case base.

As said, most organizations stated that the situation for Chechens in the regions of the RF has improved. Certainly during the last year this improvement got stronger, but it started already some time before.

In assessing the situation of Chechens in the regions of the RF Memorial and Human Rights Watch, Russia Office (further in text: HRW) are both the most prudent organizations. They claim that even persons with a low profile can potentially encounter problems.

The Chechen Association indicated that Chechens are still negatively represented in the popular media and that they aren't able to change this. On the other hand this anti-Chechen rhetoric toned down a bit recently, but not to that extent that it could change the negative image of Chechens in society. Most often these are tabloids such as "Komsomolskaya Pravda", "Moskovskiy Komsomolets" and "Izvestiya" that bring this kind of news coverage.

As always, the social position of a person is of primal importance to determine to which extent he might encounter difficulties. Wealthy Chechens with good connections will be able to live without any difficulties in the RF. Chechens with no connections and only limited means will find it more difficult to arrange everything and to solve problems when they occur.

In general one can also see a difference between the difficulties encountered by Chechens that left the Republic during the conflict years and those that resettle in the RF at present. The general circumstances for current migrants seem to be better.

1.1. Registration and documents

In the major cities there are large groups of Chechens present. A main point of interest for them is their registration. It seems to be that it isn't always easy for Chechens to obtain a registration, but it has to be noted that other (ethnic) Russian citizens also can have difficulties to obtain a registration.

Different sources stated that it still can be difficult for ethnic Chechens to obtain a registration, but that recently the situation has improved. As such it seems to be possible for Chechens to obtain a registration, but some hurdles have to be taken.

The Professor of The RAS mentioned that Chechens can be very inventive to legalize their stay. As an example the Professor of The RAS told us that Chechens use to the maximum the new rules that make it possible to stay somewhere for up to three months without registration.

Some Chechens buy used bus tickets from people who just arrived in Moscow and when they have to present their registration, they just show these tickets to prove that they only recently arrived in the city and still fall under the three month rule.

HRW as well confirmed that the new registration rules are a real improvement and that they make it easier for many Chechens to obtain a registration.

The Chechen Association, Memorial and Stichting Russian Justice Initiative (further in text: RJI) on their part stated that it is difficult for everyone to obtain a registration in Moscow, but that it will be even more difficult for ethnic Chechens. The administrative hurdles will be a bit higher for them and they might be forced to pay higher bribes. It certainly isn't impossible for Chechens to obtain a registration in Moscow, but, as said before, a bit more complex for them.

In general the RJI mentioned that in Russia most things will get settled, but that someone's rights often will be presented as a favour. So it sometimes can take a lot of effort to arrange something that ought to be quite simple. This can be very frustrating if one is confronted with it on daily bases.

When asked if there is an official policy not to register ethnic Chechens one of the sources answered that they don't think this is the case, but that much depends from the "man behind the counter". It is possible that he is a latent racist or just wants a bribe.

An important element with registration is the fact that one needs the permission of the owner of the lodging. This often can cause difficulties, but they exist for all Russian citizens. An owner can for example be unwilling to allow the registration, because then he'll have to pay taxes for it.

Nevertheless one of the sources admitted that there is a freedom of movement in the RF. Everyone can have difficulties to register and not only Chechens encounter difficulties with it.

At the same time hundreds of thousands of people including Chechens are living without any registration. According to this source registration in general is difficult but possible.

Memorial and the Chechen Association stated that at present it is quite easy for Chechens to obtain their passport.

1.2. Socio-economic situation

Several sources stated that it sometimes can be difficult for ethnic Chechens to find work in the regions of the RF. Nevertheless in some agricultural regions of the Russian Federation, such as Astrakhankaya, Volgogradskaya and Tverskaya oblasts, Chechens do work on animal farms or run trade business.

The Chechen Association declared that ethnic Chechens are often refused at jobs because of their ethnic origin, even when they have the right skills and specializations for it. The Chechen Association informs the authorities of such cases.

The Moscow Helsinki Group (further in text: MHG) said that until recently Chechens faced many difficulties to find a job in the regions of the RF, but the situation has improved and at present they have easier access to the labour market.

Most positive about the socio-economic situation of Chechens in the regions of the RF is the MBHR. They stated that Chechens are often capable to find their place in the local society. They seem to be able to make a good income and to establish quite good relations with the local authorities. Their relations with the local authorities are however often based on paying bribes, which of course doesn't bring a stable situation on the long term. This can also cause frictions with the local population, which will experience this relationship as unfair.

The Professor of The RAS mentioned that Chechen women often find work in the regions, but that it seems to be more difficult for men because Chechen men are more visible.

Memorial stated that there are no problems anymore concerning the access to schools for Chechen children. Besides there is also the Sunday school for Chechen children in Moscow organized by the Chechen Social and Cultural Association.

1.3. Specific groups

The SOVA Center for Information and Analysis (further in text: SOVA) stated that beside the racist violence mainly independent journalists and activists face a serious risk for persecution in the Russian Federation. This persecution happens independently of the ethnic origin of the victim. The same remarks have been made by the MBHR.

1.4. Judiciary and police

Problems with police

The sources almost unanimously stated that at present ethnic Chechens have far less problems with arbitrary checks by police. Nowadays Central-Asians are the group most targeted by police.

The sources stated that ethnic Chechens aren't specifically harassed by police anymore in Moscow, in contrast with some years ago when it did happen more often. They also confirmed that Central-Asians are now the most targeted group.

HRW and Memorial also confirmed that "ethnic profiling" towards Chechens by the police has strongly decreased lately and that Chechens face less difficulties with the police.

Also the Chechen Association declared that the security situation of Chechens in the Russian regions has notably improved. The difficulties that Chechens are confronted are now mainly related to economic issues.

What concerns harassment and police checks of ethnic Chechens the MBHR sees a strong decrease during the last two years. Before Chechens faced a serious risk for having problems with the authorities, but this has diminished now.

Following the MBHR ethnic Chechens are now far less linked with terrorism, which was the case before. On the other hand however the public opinion still often links Chechens with crime.

RJI noted that the actual amount of cases of harassment by the authorities can be higher than the ones reported. On the other hand RJI also remarked that Chechens can themselves minimize the risk for harassment, for example by travelling by car instead of the metro.

SOVA also stated that ethnic Chechens that are searched by the Chechen authorities would only rarely be searched by the local authorities in other regions. SOVA thinks that the federal authorities have a kind of deal with Kadyrov for him to restore order in the Republic. So the federal authorities don't want to be involved in this enforcement, the Chechen forces have to take care of this on their own.

The RJI on his turn declared that it had knowledge of some cases of arrests of Chechens in the Russian regions by local forces on demand of the Chechen authorities and also of cases of the arrest of Chechens in other regions by members of the Chechen MVD forces. The RJI thinks however that such cases are rare.

Memorial stated that Chechens that are searched for by the Chechen authorities have almost no possibility to resettle in other regions of the RF. There will always remain a risk to be searched for by the local MVD forces and as such it will be difficult to lead a normal life.

Fabricated cases

Fabricated cases do occur in the RF. There is however no statistical data available concerning the nature and the amount of such cases.

It seems however that in the RF persons who fall victim to such fabricated cases mostly have a non-traditional Islamic profile.

RJI mentioned that these cases were mostly initiated as an anti-terrorism trial, but that during the process they often were tuned down to a case of illegal possession of firearms or drugs. It is possible that ethnic Chechens are slightly more often targeted in such cases than other North-Caucasians, but as said before no clear statistics are available. RJI also stated that if ethnic Slavs fall victim to fabricated cases they seem to be less likely to be linked to terrorism, but rather on other articles of the penal code.

SOVA also stated that persons who adhere to a non-traditional form of Islam (irrespective of their ethnic origin) are the ones who face the biggest risk to fall victim to a fabricated case. SOVA said however that it is extremely difficult to assess in which cases the authorities had a genuine fear that Islamic groups had an extremist and violent agenda in which cases one can truly speak of fabricated cases. As such SOVA thinks that all these cases have to be evaluated individually.

Appeals against fabricated cases are possible in theory, but in practice will be very difficult. Corruption and inefficiency are widespread among the Russian judiciary and beside the Russian police and judiciary still can have a latent negative attitude towards non-Slavs.

Following RJI three elements are of cardinal importance for any complaint one files in the RF: the skills of the lawyer, the place of filing the complaint and the content of the complaint.

The Chechen Association also added that ethnic Chechens distrust the judiciary and often they will try to settle scores themselves, without turning to the courts for justice. The Association tries to change this and sometimes helps Chechens who apply to the courts for their case.

2. Situation in the Chechen Republic

2.1. Registration and documents

Memorial and the Chechen Association stated that it is quite easy at present to obtain an internal or international passport in the Russian Federation. However bribes still have to be paid.

Memorial thinks that the trade in fake passports is quite big, but hasn't got any statistics on the amount of persons who use such passports.

2.2. Socio-economic situation

All sources agree that the social-economic situation in Chechnya is still very bad.

There is a huge unemployment, low level of social benefits and so on. A lot of people work only in the building industry. The old industry that was destroyed during the war has still not recovered.

The system of social benefits is in place and working, but very corrupt and infected by the so called "otkat". On each level some money disappears so that the actual beneficiary gets far less than he is entitled to.

Most sources said that corruption in Chechnya is enormous and omnipresent and constitutes a mayor problem. It seriously slows down the further development of the local economy.

Nevertheless enormous reconstruction works have been done in Grozny and are also taking place now in other regions of Chechnya. MHG even mentioned that "the level of city reconstruction is

impressing”. But it turns out that this reconstruction isn’t able to create an enduring revival of the economy. It appears there are still not enough investments in the economy that are able to create lasting jobs. It also seems that part of the reconstruction work is only cosmetic. Nevertheless Grozny is alive today, the city is developing and the problems of water and heat supply have been solved.

As such many people seek an employment within the local power institutions because there just are no other (reliable) jobs and it is a guarantee of a good payment.

The Chechen Association declared that a big part of the Intelligentsia and managers has left the Republic and that they aren’t inclined to return. This certainly slows down the development of Chechnya, because there is a strong lack of competent managers.

The Professor of The RAS added that many Chechens are poorly educated, because the schooling system was inoperative for a long period due to the war and violence. This is of course very negative for the creation of new jobs and the development of the Republic.

2.3. Specific groups

The most marked risk profile in Chechnya is probably that of persons who in any way criticize or are in opposition to Ramzan Kadyrov.

Also the last NGOs that are active in Chechnya are faced with enormous pressure. All contact persons confirm this.

The MBHR also stated that in Chechnya independent journalists and employees of NGOs face huge pressure. Pressure on the media is so high that no independent media survived in Chechnya. All media outlets are controlled by the authorities.

Of course members of non-traditional Islamic groups and active rebels face difficulties and persecution.

Almost all organizations mentioned that at present the position of women is under mounting pressure in Chechnya. The rights and liberties of women seem to be more and more limited. The authorities promote the local traditions and a “correct” Islamic way of life. This trend however seems to be incompatible with a free and liberal lifestyle for women.

As an example many organizations mention that most women in public wear the traditional headscarf (“platok”) again (no veil). There still are women who don’t wear this scarf in public, but it seems that the social pressure is very strong.

The Professor of The RAS mentioned that this trend certainly is strengthened by the influx of rural population in to Grozny. The proportion of emancipated and educated urban population diminishes and that of the more conservative rural population increases, which causes a sort of cultural clash between urban and rural population where the latter seems to be getting the upper hand.

HRW added that the urban population is sometimes suspicious of the new arrival of the rural population, seen the fact that they often originate from the mountain region and as such are linked to the rebels by the public opinion.

Memorial is also worried about the current trends in the traditional “bridal kidnapping”. This tradition is still alive in Chechnya, but normally the position of the “bride” is protected by traditional customs and values. Nowadays however, it happens that men from within the republican power structures also kidnap women and take them as their wives, but without respecting the traditional customs and not allowing the family of the “brides” to protest against the engagement.

Memorial and HRW declared that family members of current rebel fighters face a potential risk of persecution in Chechnya. The pressure can be serious. There are cases of family members who were evicted from their house, threatened, and even cases of their houses being burnt down.

Memorial mentioned that the threats against family members apparently come from members of Kadyrov’s forces, none of the sources mentioned that the federal authorities are involved anymore in these actions.

Memorial also noted that at present family members of fighters aren’t killed anymore, the pressure doesn’t amount to such a level.

Nobody can give any statistics about the amount and frequency of cases of persecuted family members of rebels.

It must be noted that the Chechen Association said that cases of harassment of family members of current rebels have to be seen as isolated incidents. The Association stated that this kind of harassment certainly wasn’t widespread. Additionally, the Professor of The RAS mentioned that in his opinion family members of ex- fighters at present didn’t face any serious risks for persecution.

HRW stated that if a person is once targeted by the authorities there is a very serious probability that he will remain in their focus and will have further difficulties in the future.

HRW thinks it is very improbable that persons who rendered logistic assistance to the rebels during the first war would now face any difficulties because of that. However, person who at present render assistance to the current rebels are certainly in a potentially vulnerable position.

2.4. Safety situation

All organizations agree that the security situation in the Republic has improved during the last years. There are however different opinions about the scope and permanent nature of these improvements.

The Embassy of one of the EU MS (further in text: Embassy) declared that the security situation clearly improved, although it still remains fragile but stable.

Kadyrov has a firm grip on the Republic and his rule can be considered as a dictatorship. But if one leads a calm life, without meddling in politics, he/she can live quite normal in Chechnya. On the whole the Embassy stated that the humanitarian crisis is over, but the circumstances of daily life remain poor.

The Professor of The RAS confirmed that the security situation strongly improved and that one can live a normal life in Grozny. In the south of the Republic however remain some zones where the rebel forces still have a stronger position and where violent incidents still occur. As an example the Professor mentioned the Vedensky rayon, but also here the situation depends from village to village.

The Chechen Association and the RJI declared that at present the Chechens leave the Republic mainly because of the dire economic circumstances, while in the past they mainly left because of the security situation. This is certainly a good indication about the improving security situation.

Of all the organizations HRW is the most pessimistic about the security situation. HRW thinks that there is a certain improvement, but this remains limited and doesn't allow a save return. HRW admits that there are returnees, but the organisation thinks that they are partly attracted by campaigns of the republican authorities to invite returnees and partly return because of a strong love for the fatherland, which is omnipresent in the Chechen community.

HRW also stated that the amount of disappearances has strongly diminished during the last two years and that the cases of torture declined since the notorious ORV-II was reformed. It is clear

however that people are still being tortured and maltreated in local police offices in Chechnya, but not that systematic and protracted anymore.

The MBHR is remarkably positive about the security situation in Chechnya. They stated that incidents still do occur, but that they are very limited in frequency and scope. The MBHR is more concerned about the security situation in Ingushetia and Dagestan.

On the other hand the MBHR acknowledged that the police and judiciary in Chechnya are rather inefficient.

3. Migration movements between the Chechen Republic and other regions of the RF

None of the organizations had clear statistics about this migration movement. Their statements are based on partial indications and data.

The Professor of the RAS is convinced that in the past there was a clear migration movement from Chechnya to Moscow, but recently this movement has stopped and, as it seems, even inversed.

The RJI thinks that the bad socio-economic situation in Chechnya is at present the main push-factor for Chechens to move to other Russian regions. Before it was the bad security situation that forced Chechens to migrate, but this isn't the case anymore.

The Chechen Association also stated that the bad economic situation in Chechnya is the main push-factor for Chechens to move to other Russian regions. A movement that continues until now.

The Association added that for Chechens it often turned out that it is also difficult for them to make a living in the regions of the RF. Confronted with this they start thinking about emigration to Europe, where they hope to find an exit out of the dead-end in which they find themselves in the RF.

Beside the economic situation the Association mentioned two other reasons that cause Chechens to leave: the anti-Chechen propaganda in the media and the general negative attitude caused by it on the one hand and concern about the well-being and future of their children on the other hand.

Additionally Memorial mentioned that a big proportion of the Chechens that move to Europe actually search a better life, but that part of them also face serious difficulties that make it impossible for them to stay in the RF. One of Memorial's experts stated: *"There are evident reasons why quite a number of Chechens and Russian residents leave abroad. It is not because of*

dangers but because they want to have a better life. Though, it does not mean that there are no people who are in danger.”

4. General situation xenophobia and racist violence in the RF

All sources see an increase of racist violence and xenophobia during the last year. This racist violence however isn't directed specifically against Chechens or North-Caucasians, but against non-Slavs in general. Mainly Central-Asians are currently the victims of such violence; North-Caucasians only to a lesser extent.

SOVA stated that there always is a latent risk for non-Slavs to fall victim to racist violence, seen the fact that this violence is very indiscriminate. But on the other hand SOVA stated that one shouldn't overstate this potential risk for people leading an ordinary, low-profile life. The risk increases however if one engages in activities directed against racist and extremist organizations. In this the ethnicity of a person is of minor importance as a cause of the possible persecution.

Following SOVA and the MBHR it is possible for persons who fall victim to racist violence to resettle in another part of the RF to flee their attackers. The extremist groups are most often poorly organized and don't have the means to track down someone in other parts of the RF. Besides, their violence is only seldom directed against a specific person, but indiscriminately against all non-Slavs.

Monitoring by SOVA indicates that racist violence has strongly increased in the RF during the last years and they foresee a further rise in the near future, not in the least because of the poor economic outlook for 2009. Frustrations in some parts of society will search for an outlet and migrants are an easy target. The MBHR made the same analysis.

SOVA said that the prosecution of persons who committed racist violence lags behind seriously compared with the increase of the amount of cases. Only in approximately 10% of the cases convictions are made and recently there were still less convictions.

This is an alarming trend which seems to be at odds with the official talk of the authorities, who publicly declare that racist violence is a problem that should have to be dealt with. However it seems that no effective action is undertaken on the field to curb the trend.

SOVA noted that on the other hand one recently does see an increase of convictions of persons for the minor offence of “incitement of ethnic hatred”. SOVA concludes that the authorities do take action to counter racist violence, but that only the minor cases are dealt with, while more serious cases remain unpunished.

HRW thinks that the authorities are actually willing to react against the racist violence, but that they seem to be unable to really change the situation.

The MBHR is the only organization that stated that there is an increase in the amount of prosecutions of persons who committed racist violence. They also stated that victims of racist violence can apply for help to the authorities to obtain effective protection. There is no other organization that declared that victims of racist violence can turn to the authorities for real and effective protection.

5. Return

IOM saw a strong increase of returnees from the EU to the RF in 2008. In that year there were 1169 returnees in the first ten months, compared to 1485 in the entire period 2003-2007. These numbers only concern persons who return via IOM, probably the actual amount is far bigger.

In 2008 the biggest group of returnees originated from Poland (810), followed by Austria (173) and Belgium (150).

In 2008 the majority of returnees had as final destination Chechnya (75%). Other destinations were Dagestan (17%) and Ingushetia (3%). Only 3% goes to other regions of the RF, mainly Moscow and St. Petersburg. Belgium has a remarkably high proportion of returnees to Dagestan: 46 of the 150.

IOM has no knowledge of returnees who faced serious difficulties in the RF. None of their partners ever mentioned it. IOM however stated specifically that they only have limited means to monitor and follow up returnees.

IOM noted that obtaining a registration is more or less the main problem for returnees. Following IOM it can take up to six months to arrange all the paperwork, which can be very discouraging.

The Chechen Association confirmed that there are returnees, but can't give any statistics. Following the Association love for the fatherland is one of the main reasons that causes Chechens to return to Chechnya, despite of all the difficulties they can be faced with. This was also confirmed by HRW. Memorial mentioned that there indeed are returnees (no statistics available) and that the majority went to Chechnya.

6. Complaints at the European Court of Human Rights

The RJI represents approximately 160 of the 450 cases that are instituted before the European Court of Human Rights by persons of the North-Caucasus. The majority of these cases concerns persons who disappeared and were last seen in Russian detention.

Of the applicants represented by the RJI 90% live in the RF and of these the majority lives in Chechnya itself.

Following the RJI the majority of the applicants lives in the RF and Chechnya without having any difficulties. A small part however does have problems because of their complaint. These problems include: regular ID-checks and house searches, convocations at the prosecutor's office and so on. The RJI has knowledge of one person who disappeared and one person who was killed after filling their complaint at the ECHR. These two complaints date from before 2006.

In general the RJI thinks that filing a complaint at the ECHR is as save or as dangerous as filling a complaint at the Chechen authorities. The RJI noticed no decrease of the amount of harassments faced by applicants at the ECHR, but did notice that the nature of the harassment becomes less and less hard.

Memorial said that applicants at the ECHR can have difficulties and in the most serious cases can disappear. The applicants can face difficulties because of the fact of filling a complaint at the ECHR itself or because of the fact that they received a monetary compensation after a favourable verdict of the court. In this case they can be put under pressure to extort from them the compensation payment.

The RJI declared that at present it is perfectly acceptable to file a complaint concerning incidents that took place before 2000, because they deal with crimes committed by the federal troops, while it is still taboo to open a case concerning incidents that took place later, seen the fact that these crimes are committed by Chechen forces.

III. Summaries of meetings

Professor of the Russian Academy of Science, Moscow

1. Situation of Chechens in regions of the Russian Federation (outside Chechnya)

1.1. Registration and documents

In general one can speak of a slightly improved situation of the Chechen Diaspora in the Russian Federation. There is no exact data of the size of the Chechen Diaspora in Moscow but it is generally considered to amount 200 000 to 300 000 ethnic Chechens. Chechen women who live in Moscow prefer not to say they are from Chechnya, but rather that they are from Dagestan or Ingushetia. Generally it is the women who do the shopping and who work at the market. For Chechen men it seems to be more difficult to work and live in Moscow than for Chechen women. Women dress Russian style. Chechens speak Russian very well, better than people from for example Dagestan. They speak without special accent. Chechen men look different. It seems to be that they can be more easily recognised than Chechen women.

The main problem of all migrants remains registration. It is generally difficult to obtain a registration in Moscow. One of the reasons is the fact that in case of a registration the landlords have to pay taxes. Therefore many landlords refuse to give their consent to the registration. In such situations many NGOs provide help, for example Svetlana Gannushkina. Nevertheless it is usually not a big problem to register anywhere in the Russian Federation if you are willing to pay bribes. This applies to Chechens in the same way as to other citizens of the Russian Federation.

The example of one Chechen family was mentioned. It is a family with children – 8 persons. They live in a flat of 2 rooms. In fact they live in 1 room, because the second is rented to another Chechen family. They were not registered, nevertheless were living for many years without registration. The woman goes to the bus station, where buses arrive from other regions, she buys a ticket which she uses as a proof that she was out of Moscow and has now just returned. It allows her to stay in Moscow for 90 days without registration. This is one of the ways to survive for many years. Many families try to avoid registration. Having relatives in Moscow certainly helps. It is more difficult to obtain a registration for people who just came to Moscow to search for a place to live.

2. Situation in the Chechen Republic

2.1. Security

The security situation in general has improved a lot during the last years and in Grozny one can live a quite normal life as far as security is concerned. There is no war in the broadest sense. Several regions, like the Shatoy and the Nozhay-Yurtovsky district for example, are very safe. These regions are under clear Chechen control. There are still federal forces in Shatoy. On the road to Shatoy there are 2-3 checkpoints and there is a base of the Battalion "Zapad" (West).

Nevertheless, some districts are still insecure. In those districts the rebel fighters still manage occasionally to gain control for a short time (e.g. the Vedenno district). Also in some villages in this region, Dyshne–Vedenno and Elistanji for example, the rebel fighters manage to take control occasionally. In some of these villages the head of the local administration does not reside in the villages but rather in Grozny, due to security reasons. So it is clear that there are still some regions in Chechnya that are under rebel control, the rebels set up checkpoints on the roads, send their own photos by mobile phones – it means they feel safe. It must be said however that these zones are geographically limited to the south and mainly to the Vedenno region.

Generally, most Chechens seem to acknowledge that the Kadyrov regime is favourable for Chechen aspirations at this moment. In practice, Chechens reached their goals: de facto independence, no Russians in Chechnya.

An indication for this idea is the fact that some former advocates of independence returned to the Republic. A popular Chechen singer, Timur Mucuraev, who sings songs about Chechen independence in Russian, returned to Chechnya from Turkey after being invited by Kadyrov. In July, former fighter Magomed Hambiev made a trip to Europe in the name of the present Chechen government. Akhmed Zakaev, a main representative of the Chechen independence movement who lives in London already acknowledged that the present Chechen government achieved a lot for Chechen independence.

Chechen society is based on teyp relations. The former fighters join Kadyrov on a clan basis as well.

The situation is different for the composition of the jamaats, as they are based on Salafi ideology and traditional teyp-divisions play a less important role there.

The ideology has changed during the wars in Chechnya. The first war was against Russian federal forces, many Chechens took part in the movement for independence. The war happened

unexpectedly and triggered a reaction from the entire population. Between the two wars there was the Maskhadov regime, with a weak president. The weakness of the president allowed a split between different forces in society. There was no support from Moscow and many Chechens were disappointed about this period. During the second war, people didn't give much support to the fighting. Organized military groups started to move to jihad, but this was only a minority. The majority of the population was war-tired and yearned for a normal life. In the summer of 2002 there was a special meeting between Maskhadov and Basaev. They appointed together Abdul-Khalim Sadulaev as a President of ChRI. This was the moment when the ideology of the movement changed into an Islamic one. Theoretically the aim of the fight today is the formation of Imarat in Chechnya. In November [2008?] Kavkaz Center placed on its website a film about 'Bayat' – an oath. The fighters from Eastern Front took an oath for Dokku Umarov. Chechnya is divided into spheres of Kadyrov control and rebel control.

2.2. Specific groups

The situation of women in general is not good. They have more difficulties now than before. There is social pressure to behave in a culturally appropriate way. An ongoing influx of rural population into Grozny can be noticed. This rural group brought their traditional, religious way of behaviour and emancipated women are under pressure to adapt to these values. On the other side skilled people and ethnic Russians left the capital because of the war. These factors certainly contributed to the above mentioned growing social pressure towards women. For emancipated women and young girls it is not easy to live in Grozny. The case of a Chechen woman who was killed was mentioned. She was seen in some places with a Russian officer, and then she was accused, tortured, beaten. She was brought to her family. Later she was killed by her family because the family felt dishonoured.

On the part of Kadyrov he likes to present himself as a good Muslim. In the end this has led to the obligation for women to wear headscarfs when entering a building of the local administration or interacting with the local authorities in any other way.

The majority of the members of Kadyrov forces are former fighters. They seem not to have problems. Concerning the other ex-fighters the Professor stated that the cases have to be assessed on individual basis to see if they might encounter problems.

Families or persons who logistically supported fighters during the war[s?] do not face particular pressures these days in case they no longer support or publicly sympathize with rebel groups.

2.3. Socio-economic situation

The economic situation in Grozny got better over the last years. There is a lot of construction work going on and Grozny has been quite reconstructed. Nevertheless there is a high unemployment rate in Chechnya. This is one of the reasons why many young men seek employment within the security forces as they guarantee a secure job and good payment. It should also be noted that a big part of the present Chechen population is only poorly educated. This has also a negative impact on the socio-economic development of the region.

The old industry that was destroyed during the war has still not recovered.

At the same time one could notice a growing settlement of the rural population in Grozny, that was forced to leave the countryside because of the above mentioned economic reasons. This leads in the end to a "ruralisation" of Grozny, especially regarding some cultural aspects of the population of the capital. Before the wars there were 400 000 inhabitants in Grozny, now the number is 200 000. The number is growing now because of the above mentioned movement to Grozny of the rural population and other people – for example educated people who are trying to live in Grozny again. Anyway for all people it's better to settle in Grozny.

Chechens prefer to live in private houses, rather than apartments. A lot of people work in the building industry, also people from Dagestan come to Chechnya to find work in this sector.

Bribery still exists in the whole Caucasus. In Moscow this problem is less noticeable.

The system of the payment of compensations is working but part of the whole amount must be given back. Pensions and other social benefits are paid, but here the so called system of "otkat" is omnipresent. "Otkat" means that at every possible level some money "disappears" so that the actual beneficiary receives far less than he is entitled to.

Medical treatment in today's Chechnya is very basic. There are hospitals but there remains a problem because of a significant lack of qualified/trained personnel (due to the above mentioned emigration of the "intelligentsia"). Therefore many Chechens travel to receive medical treatment in Moscow or other parts of the Russian Federation (especially Vladikavkaz). In this context one has to keep in mind that medical treatment in the Russian Federation in general is free, but only at the place of your residence. A treatment outside of your place of residence is considered as an extra and has to be paid.

There are schools but there are not enough teachers to guarantee a decent level of education.

3. Migration movements between the Chechen Republic and other regions of the Russian Federation

There is no (not much) migration from Chechnya to Moscow now, as the economic situation in Moscow currently is not ideal either because of the crisis. The movement of thousands of Chechens to Moscow has stopped. In Chechnya there are more possibilities now. People prefer to return to Chechnya.

Nevertheless Chechens do travel between Chechnya and Moscow as well as between Chechnya and other parts of the Russian Federation on a regular basis. One of the main reasons for these trips is the current medical situation in Chechnya (see above 1.3.). A treatment outside of your place of residence is considered as an extra and has to be paid. Nevertheless such treatments and travels do occur quite frequently.

4. General situation xenophobia and racial violence

The situation of the migrants from Central Asia (Uzbeks, Tajiks) is however considerably worse. They are currently the main focus of racist attacks. The migrants from Central Asia are easy to recognize and often they don't speak Russian very well. The migrants from the North Caucasus in general are not a big issue in Moscow any more. The worst period for Chechens was the beginning of 2000, when there had been a terrorist attack in Moscow and the second war in Chechnya was taking place. Back then the militia followed special instructions to focus on Chechens. Chechens were frequently victims of police harassment during that period. Since 2006 however the situation has improved.

Racism and xenophobia are generally on the rise but the main targets are, as mentioned, migrants from Central Asia (who mainly are used as cheap unqualified labour). Specific recent incidents connected to Chechens are not known.

Human Rights Watch, Russia Office

1. Situation of Chechens in regions of the Russian Federation (outside Chechnya)

The expert of HRW we talked to mainly monitors the situation in the Chechen Republic itself, but doesn't follow up the situation of ethnic Chechens in other Russian regions.

Nevertheless two positive evolutions could be seen for the position of ethnic Chechens in other regions of the Russian Federation. The new regulation for registration is certainly an improvement and makes it also for Chechens easier to obtain a registration. Besides this it also seems that ethnic profiling by police forces has strongly diminished.

2. Situation in Chechen Republic

2.1. Security

In general one can speak of a positive development over the last years, compared to what Chechnya was during the wars. Nevertheless the situation in situ is not secure. The security situation got worse over the summer 2008 and many problems remain. Especially the months July, August and September have been marked by assaults and bombings. One could also notice a new approach by the local security forces. They compel family members of known rebel fighters to appear on TV and to beg their fighting relatives to surrender. Those family members of known rebel fighters are often exposed to harassment.

Individuals who once have had problems with the authorities or who have been persecuted by them, face the very serious risk of remaining in the focus of the authorities. They can face new difficulties, even if they are acquitted of previous charges.

It must be noted that the problem of disappearances has further diminished during 2008. In 2007 there was already a sharp decline of disappearances, a trend that has continued in 2008.

Some improvements can be noted concerning the problem of people being tortured. After the reform of the notorious police station ORB II the amount of brutal torture seems to have diminished.

It is clear that suspects still can be mistreated and tortured at regular police stations, but this doesn't happen as protractedly and intensively as at the ORB II before its reform.

Blood feud is on the rise and widespread. This is because the society as a whole in Chechnya is more and more based on traditional values and thinking. Nevertheless there are traditional "clan courts" who try to settle those issues. Almost everyone has a relative in Kadyrov's troops. That's why these troops take part in blood feud operations.

2.2. Specific groups

The situation of women is getting worse and worse. There is growing pressure on women to obey Islamic traditions such as wearing headscarfs or staying at home. On the other side there is no obligation to wear headscarfs in the street. Generally speaking there is a trend back to Islamic dress and values in Chechen society. There is a big pressure from the rural population who come to reside in Grozny.

HRW indicated several possible reasons for this evolution, such as frictions between urban and rural population (see infra), Kadyrov using traditional values for his own benefit and the fact that women have taken over some typical male functions during the war, a phenomenon some elements of society want to turn back.

Family members of known rebel fighters are in danger of harassment (see above 1.1.).

Salafi Muslims are as well in danger of harassment or persecution. In this context a Salafi preacher Mokhmadsaloros Denilovich Masaev was detained and tortured for preaching in Chechnya. Due to public pressure he was released. After recovering he returned back to Chechnya for preaching and is missing since then.

Any person who draws the attention of the local authorities on himself because of opposition to the Kadyrov government is seriously at risk of being harassed, detained or even killed.

Human rights defenders are in danger of harassment. Memorial staff acts under pressure and threat.

Concerning persons who delivered logistic assistance to the rebels, one has to make a distinction between activities during the first and the second war. It seems improbable that a person who rendered such assistance during the first Chechen war would at present face any persecution

because of his activities. HRW knows people who took part in the first war, they don't encounter any problems now. They had problems in 2003. People who assisted the rebels during the second war or at present are certainly in a vulnerable position. These cases have to be assessed individually.

2.3. Socio-economic situation

In general one can speak of a positive development over the last years, compared to previous times. There is a lot of construction work going on and Grozny has been quite reconstructed. Grozny seems like a new city. The changes can be seen over the last 2 years. However, this usually affects just the outside of the buildings that are being renovated. Corruption is omnipresent and a serious problem.

In Grozny there is a big influx of rural population, which causes quite some frictions between the traditional urban population and the conservative rural population. Also there sometimes can be a certain distrust towards immigrants from the mountain region as the population tends to link them instinctively with the rebels.

The medical treatment opportunities in today's Chechnya are limited. There are hospitals and they are even equipped, however qualified medical staff is lacking. Basic illnesses can be treated in Chechnya, more complicated ones require to seek assistance outside Chechnya. Therefore many Chechens travel to other parts of the Russian Federation, e. g. to Vladikavkaz, to receive proper medical care. However those treatments have to be paid privately as they are considered as extra and few people can actually effort to travel outside Chechnya to see a doctor.

3. General situation xenophobia and racial violence

Racism and xenophobia are generally on the rise. There are more cases with a racist or xenophobic background particularly in Moscow. There are surveys on this taking into account incidents in the metro and the individual metro stations. The main targets are migrants from Central Asia. However, first signs of governmental counteractive measures can be seen, but at this stage they are not sufficient. However, the new rhetoric can be heard on TV – people who are against immigrants are criticized. The promotion of friendship between nations can be observed now.

4. Migration movements between the Chechen Republic and other regions of the Russian Federation

Return to the Chechen Republic can be considered as not possible seen the present security situation. There is however at present an actual return movement to Chechnya taking place. HRW thinks that love for the fatherland is one of the main push factors. Chechens do not integrate easily in other places.

Besides this the Chechen government has an active policy to convince Chechens to return to the Republic.

Embassy of one of the EU MS, Moscow

1. Situation of Chechens in regions of the Russian Federation (outside Chechnya)

1.1. Registration and documents

There is freedom of movement in the RF. Everyone can have difficulties to register and not only Chechens encounter difficulties with it. Hundreds of thousands of people including Chechens are living without any registration. Russian citizens have similar problems to move from one region to another. To relocate to other regions is difficult but possible, due to the fact that registration is obligatory and to obtain registration is a difficult and time consuming process. One factor in all this can be the fact that one has the right contacts or not and family ties. This is not a question of ability – this is question of bureaucratic procedures which are vulnerable to cases of corruption. There certainly doesn't seem to be an official policy to refuse registration to ethnic Chechens, but incidents may occur depending on the attitude of the "man behind the counter".

In general, registration is difficult but possible.

Another example of a common problem with regard to the registration procedure is the fact that house owners, who rent out their apartment, need to officially declare that the tenants are living in the apartment with their consent. Owners often don't want to give such letters, because then they'll have to pay taxes. Without such a letter it is difficult to register. Besides that (as can be seen in the metro) registration and/or the help to register seems to be buyable. Paying bribes could work in practice to receive a registration independently of your origin in the Russian Federation.

1.2. Judiciary and harassment by police

Although the North Caucasus as a region is considered a dangerous and different area by many Russians, Chechnya and the Chechens in general are not really an issue any more in the Russian Federation. There are no relevant media reports. There have been no known incidents regarding Chechens and/or North Caucasians in Moscow over the last months. There is no anti-Chechen policy in the Russian Federation. There are no indications of such a policy. In 2006-07 there was such a policy against Georgians.

2. Situation in the Chechen Republic

2.1. Security

The security situation in general can be described as tense but stable for the moment.

Kadyrov keeps gaining influence and has de facto installed a dictatorial regime in the republic. The level of control of Kadyrov over the whole situation is high, but maybe not total. No freedom of the media, no opposition is possible. Nevertheless it seems that all people who live quietly are quite safe in Chechnya.

The Chechenisation of the Republic was very intense and the Republic became more Chechen (more independent) than it was before. A confirmation for this is the fact that the Chechen Diaspora in London congratulated Kadyrov on the achievement of such an independence.

The recent killing of Ruslan Yamadaev in Moscow (fall 2008) had a big impact on the power balance and the final consequences of this have to be seen.

In general it is clear that the humanitarian crisis in Chechnya is over, but the living conditions remain difficult.

The situation in Ingushetia is bad and remains unstable. There are a lot of killings and fightings between clans there.

2.2. Specific groups

The situation of women in Chechnya is very bad. One can see a dramatic rise of intolerance and social pressure, just recently (November 2008) 7 women were killed. According to some local authorities these murders were linked to the “un-islamic way of living” of those women. However, those cases have not yet been completely investigated. Many women started to wear headscarfs when appearing in public in Chechnya. We can observe the promotion of traditional values in Chechnya, this applies to women. Generally, those Chechens who follow a traditional style of living stay in Chechnya, others move to other regions, for example to Moscow.

Everyone who is against Kadyrov is under threat. Almost no NGOs are still active in Chechnya. Memorial is under pressure.

People don't want to talk about cases of persecution. It's difficult to find witnesses now.

The situation of family members of current rebel fighters can be problematic. Those people could be in danger of persecution and harassment but a general appreciation is extremely difficult due to the lack of sources.

The majority of ex-rebel fighters who fought during the first and second Chechen war have now joined the Kadyrov forces.

2.3. Socio-economic situation

War is over. In Chechnya there is no longer a humanitarian crisis.

The economic situation in the Northern Caucasus is not good. The unemployment rate is among the highest in the Russian Federation, in Chechnya it reaches up to 80%. The Intelligentsia has moved out/emigrated and the rural population has moved to the cities. There is a lack of adequate medical treatment opportunities and skilled staff in most branches.

Corruption is omnipresent and a major problem.

However, the level of reconstruction in Chechnya is high.

3. Migration movements between the Chechen Republic and other regions of the Russian Federation

As far as known, there is no indication of significant migration to Moscow anymore.

4. General situation xenophobia and racial violence

Racism and xenophobia are generally on the rise. Russian society is xenophobic in general. There are more cases with a racist or xenophobic background acknowledged by the authorities. For a long time such a background was denied by the authorities. One could notice a harsh rhetoric by officials in the media and harsh newspaper articles. However the main target of those articles and/or interviews were (and are) migrants from Central Asia. All attention goes now to the Central Asian migrants.

People with an Asiatic or African look were more often controlled by the police. Those people were (and are) in danger of harassment and/or racist and xenophobic attacks. People from the Caucasus constitute a group under suspicion. People have in mind that people from Caucasus are dangerous. But the racist violence isn't mainly directed against Caucasians. Primarily people (labour migrants)

from Central Asia – Uzbeks, Tajik people – are the victims of racist violence (regularly leading to deaths).

Generally Russian citizens have fear of terrorism. They don't understand Chechens and the Caucasus. They think that terrorism originated from there because Shamil Basaev was from Chechnya.

There are some first preventive programs in schools, but unfortunately they are only limited in scope and certainly not enough to change the general attitude. So the government seems to be willing to do something, but until now this willingness didn't have much practical implications.

The state brings little other instruments into action to fight xenophobia and racism. However the first signs of governmental counteractive measures can be seen. Judges started to use another terminology – instead of qualifying racist incidents as hooliganism they now use the article on racist violence of the Penal Code more often.

During the last year (2008) the number of convictions rose and the rhetoric by the officials in the media has changed. The Federal Migration Service for example tried to improve the general perception of migrants from Central Asia and Caucasus in its official discourse, but these efforts have been weakened more than once by incriminating statements of officials. There are no reliable statistics of the phenomenon, but it seems that the situation differs from region to region. There are active youth gangs in some of them. These gangs attack most often during events, such as football matches.

Stichting Russian Justice Initiative

As a disclaimer Russian Justice Initiative (RJI) stated that its main activity is representing applicants from the North Caucasus before the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg. RJI does not conduct systematic monitoring of the human rights situation in the Russian Federation.

1. Situation of Chechens in regions of the Russian Federation (outside Chechnya)

Registration and documents

As the RJI sees it, Chechens can have difficulties to find a residence and obtain registration in Moscow. Renting a place in Moscow is very expensive and the owners often won't be willing to register an ethnic Chechen in their apartment. Of course it is difficult for everybody to rent an apartment and to obtain a registration in Moscow, even for ethnic Russians, but RJI thinks that the hurdles might be more difficult to take for ethnic Chechens. It is possible that they'll have to pay more bribes or that they'll face more controls to obtain a registration, etc. This being said, RJI thinks that it certainly is not impossible for ethnic Chechens to rent a place in Moscow and to obtain a registration, but they may face more difficulties than the average ethnic Russian.

In general it can be said that in Russia one can get things arranged in the end, but quite often a persons rights are presented as a favor. So it sometimes can take quite some effort to receive things that should be most normal and obvious. This can be very tiring if one is confronted with it on a daily basis.

Judiciary and harassment by police

RJI thinks that the actual amount of cases of harassment by the police might be underreported. On the other hand they consider it to be possible for members of minority groups to minimize the risk of harassment. If people for example take their own car instead of the metro, the risk of having ones documents checked by the police will strongly decrease.

Fabricated cases do occur in the Russian Federation, but it is very difficult to give any exact data concerning the frequency, amount and evolution of such cases. RJI hasn't got any statistical data

on the occurrence of such cases; the organisation can only say that at present it works on one such case.

It must be noted however that RJI has knowledge of several fabricated cases in the Chechen Republic and the RJI has taken several of these cases to the ECHR.

As RJI sees it, fabricated cases in the regions of the Russian Federation (not Chechnya) mostly concern young men and more specifically young men that frequent mosques (and even more specifically, non-traditional mosques). All too often such a case will start as a “terrorism” trial, but most often it will be toned down to a case of illegal possession of arms or drugs. Ethnic Chechens may be more often targeted than other North-Caucasians for such cases, but as said there are no clear statistics available on this. When such a case would be opened against people from Central-Asia, then they are most often deported to their country of origin.

Fabricated cases also can be opened against ethnic Slavs, but most often these aren’t linked to terrorism, but to other articles of the criminal code.

Complaint procedures are available in theory, but ineffectiveness rules within the police and judicial system in general due to corruption. Also quite often there is a negative attitude within the police and judicial system towards “non-Slavs”.

Besides this the RJI thinks that the possible usefulness of filing a complaint in the Russian Federation depends from several factors. A first important element is the quality of the lawyer, a second element is the place where you file a complaint and a third element is the content of your complaint.

For example: in Chechnya it is nowadays perfectly possible to file a complaint about crimes committed by federal troops before 2000, but it won’t be possible to file a complaint against present Chechen law enforcement agencies.

Concerning the content of the complaint RJI gave the example that in Moscow it is certainly possible to file a complaint on registration procedures or racist violence as long as it concerns individual cases and not a generalized practice. It won’t be possible for example to open a lawsuit against the common but illegal practice in some Moscow regions to take fingerprints of ethnic Chechens when they register there. On the other hand it may be possible to open a lawsuit against an individual policeman who maltreated Chechens.

The RJI said it knows of cases where the Chechen MVD asked local MVD departments in other regions of the Russian Federation to arrest certain Chechens and to transfer them to Chechnya. On the other hand it is also possible that Chechen MVD go to another Russian region to arrest a Chechen there. There are no statistics available about the frequency of such arrests; however, they seem to be limited.

There are some famous cases of high-profile Chechens being shot in Moscow (Movladi Baysarov in 2006 and Ruslan Yamadaev in 2008), but it isn't clear for RJI to which extent such a persecution can also affect low profile Chechens in Moscow.

2. Migration movements between the Chechen Republic and other regions of the Russian Federation

The RJI sees the poor economical situation as one of the main reasons of the existence of a big Chechen diaspora in the regions of the Russian Federation. At present the conflict in Chechnya can't be seen anymore as a main factor to push the population to other regions of the Russian Federation, but it appears that economic hardship in Chechnya itself is a main push factor for Chechens leaving the Chechen Republic.

3. General situation xenophobia and racial violence

As said at the beginning RJI hasn't got the means to conduct extensive monitoring, but it follows a general consensus within the Russian NGO-community that says that racist violence is on the rise in Russia. As example it cites the monitoring of SOVA center and gives as examples the ethnic riots in Kondopoga in September 2006 and in Stavropol in May 2007. Also incidents like the expulsion of ethnic Georgians from Russia in September 2006 contributes to a general climate of xenophobia.

4. Cases of people of the North Caucasus at the European Court of Human Rights

Until now RJI has opened approximately 160 cases of people from the Northern Caucasus at the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg. Until now they obtained 34 positive decisions and they haven't lost a single case.

In total there are at present some 450 cases at the ECHR opened by people from the Northern Caucasus. It is clear that RJI represents a major share of these cases.

The majority of cases concern the disappearance of persons and mostly these persons had last been seen in Russian detention. RJI treated only one case of torture.

The majority (90%) of the applicants live in the Russian Federation and even the Chechen Republic. Those that left the Russian Federation probably didn't feel safe anymore.

A big part of the applicants live without any problems in Chechnya and the Russian Federation, but there are also cases of applicants that do encounter problems because of their complaint. RJI has knowledge of several applicants that are faced with frequent ID-checks and searching of their houses (also during the night) and of applicants who are frequently called to the prosecutors office for questioning. RJI has knowledge of one applicant who disappeared and one applicant who was murdered. Both these applicants opened a case before the ECHR in 2006.

In general RJI stated that opening a case before the ECHR can be as dangerous or safe as complaining at the local authorities in Chechnya.

For the RJI it is clear that at present it is acceptable to complain about cases that happened before 2000, because these are aimed against actions of the Federal forces. There is however still a strict taboo to open cases concerning incidents that took place later. In those cases the perpetrators are most often members of local Chechen forces and the current Chechen authorities don't accept any criticizing of their system. Also the perpetrators often live nearby the victims and this can make it very difficult for the latter to complain, since there can be a serious security risk.

Concerning the current trends in the occurrence of harassment of applicants RJI sees no decrease in the amount of cases, but on the other hand the gravity of the possible harassment diminishes.

RJI thinks that not the federal center, but local players are the source of the possible persecution of ECHR applicants. After all, the ECHR has already questioned Moscow on the treatment of applicants and the Federal authorities certainly aren't pleased with this and want to avoid it.

SOVA Center for Information and Analysis

1. Situation of Chechens in regions of the Russian Federation (outside Chechnya)

Specific groups

Besides racist violence SOVA stated that at present independent journalists and activists are one of the main risk groups to face persecution in the Russian Federation, this of course irrespective of ones ethnic origin.

Judiciary and harassment by police

People who adhere to a non-traditional version of Islam (irrespective of their ethnic origin) can fall victim to phony trials set up against them. It is very difficult however to draw a line between cases where the authorities have a genuine concern that some Islamic groups have indeed a truly dangerous and violent agenda and cases were peaceful, non-traditional Islamic groups fall victim to persecution. These cases should be assessed individually.

SOVA gave an example of a case where in a Russian region members of a non-traditional Islamic group were arrested. It turned out that this group had indeed a violent agenda. Afterwards however local authorities began to arrest other people in the region who adhered to a non-traditional Islam, but were not connected to the first group and had no violent agenda. They also faced prosecution and finally were convicted. Apparently the local authorities wanted to prove their zeal and show that they dealt with a major case.

To prosecute these non-traditional Islamic groups, most often the Law on Combating Extremist Activity is used.

As said before SOVA isn't focusing on ethnic Chechens in its monitoring.

However, the organisation thinks that at present a dictatorial regime is being established in Chechnya and that the federal authorities give Kadyrov a free hand to govern the Republic as long as the situation remains more or less stable.

When asked what the probability is of a person who is persecuted by the Chechen authorities to be searched by local authorities in other regions of the Russian Federation, SOVA said that such Chechens would only rarely be searched by local authorities if they resettle there.

It appears the federal authorities consider it a deal that Kadyrov takes care of the situation in Chechnya and that they want to stay clear of any murky business that comes with keeping the Chechen Republic under control.

2. General situation xenophobia and racial violence

SOVA states that racist motivated violence is a serious problem in Russia. In their monitoring they see a clear rise of racist attacks during the last years. SOVA also foresees a further rise in this violence in the near future due to the economic crisis that will hit Russia and that increases frustrations in some parts of society that will seek a violent outlet.

The statistics of SOVA are based on their own monitoring as there are no official statistics on racist violence publicly available in Russia.

SOVA mainly consults open sources and media to establish their statistics. They only include cases of racist violence in their statistics if they are 100% certain that the motivation of the violence was racism or xenophobia. Any cases where there are doubts about the real motivation are not included in the statistics., for example when there are personal elements or business interests involved or if the attackers and the victims are of the same minority group.

The main minority group that at present is targeted by racist violence is people of Central-Asian descent, in second place Caucasians are attacked and further there are dark-skinned people, Asians and other people of non-Slavic appearance who fall victim to this violence.

The criminal prosecution rates of this violence trails significantly behind the rates of hate crimes. According to available data, convictions are made in less than 10 percent of the hate crime cases that SOVA has documented. A worrying trend is also that recently the number of convictions of hate crimes has decreased. While there has been a trend of increasing convictions in 2004-2006, this has reversed and in 2007 there have only been 23 convictions, down from 33 in 2006.

This trend is certainly causing concern seen the rise in racist violence and the alleged willingness of the government to counter it.

In practice the Law on Combating Extremist Activity has been the main tool to combat racist crimes. However, the law is very broad and it appears that it hasn't proved to be effective in combating racist violence. In practice the law has mainly been used for convictions in cases of racist propaganda ("incitement to hatred") while it hasn't proved effective in convictions for racist violence. The amount of convictions for racist propaganda has increased from 12 cases in 2005 to 37 in

2008. As said before the amount of convictions for racist violence went down, whereas the amount of incidents of racist violence went up.

For SOVA it is clear that the minor offences are more often prosecuted, but that persons engaged in persistent and extremely aggressive racist propaganda and violence often go unpunished. SOVA thinks that the increase of convictions for minor hate propaganda cases stems from a desire to improve statistics, but that the willingness to counter the real problem is apparently still very small. As a side remark SOVA states that not only the willingness seems to be lacking but that there is also a problem with the competence of law enforcement staff and the quality of their work. As such it is possible that law enforcement agencies will pin down the first suspect they can find and try to build a case against this person even if there isn't any genuine evidence against him, just to prove to their superiors or the public that they are effective in combating crime.

Concerning the risk for non-Slavs of falling victim to racist violence, SOVA said that there always can be a latent risk for these persons, but that if you stay low profile, this risk shouldn't be overstated. The risk to fall victim of violence by extremist, racist groups becomes more acute, if one engages in activities that are directed against such groups.

As an example SOVA gave the case of an ethnic Armenian youth who lived in Moscow. As ethnic Armenian he lived a quite normal life in the capital, but at a certain stage he became active as an anti-fascist activist. Soon afterwards he received serious threats which accumulated in a bomb placed at his apartment. The bomb exploded and injured several police-agents that he had called for help.

In this example the Armenian only became a specific target of the extremist groups only after he engaged in anti-fascist activities. So not his ethnic origin, but his activities that made him a wanted target for these extremist groups.

Until some years ago racist groups were mostly composed of youngsters who committed random acts of racist violence. They were mostly badly organized and didn't have a general action plan.

Recently however, a new generation of racist groups appears. They are more experienced and plan their actions better.

It can be said that persons (irrelevant of their belonging to any specific minority group) who fall victim to racist violence can resettle to another part of the Russian Federation to flee their persecutors. Mostly the extremist groups that commit racist violence haven't got the means to trace down persons in other regions of the Russian Federation. Also their acts of violence mostly seem to be random and aren't aimed to one specific individual, but on all members of specific minority groups.

Additionally it has to be mentioned that quite often these racist groups are convinced that the public in general supports their actions. SOVA stated that the xenophobic and racist ideology and ideas of these groups are rather often supported by large parts of society. So there still is a latent xenophobic feeling present in Russian society, but on the other hand it is also clear that the majority of the society doesn't agree with the violent practices and methods of the racist groups.

Statistics:

Based on SOVA Center monitoring. See: <http://sova-center.ru>

Consolidates Statistics of Racist and Neo-Nazi Violent Attacks in 2004 – 2008, 1 November (by category)

Year	2004		2005		2006		2007		2008	
	Killed	Beaten, wounded	Killed	Beaten, wounded	Killed	Beaten, wounded	Killed	Beaten, wounded	Killed	Beaten, wounded
Total	50	218	47	418	64	514	86	598	80	310
Including										
Dark-skinned people	1	33	3	38	2	32	0	37	2	14
People from Central Asia	10	23	16	34	15	56	30	76	43	84
People from the Caucasus	15	38	12	52	15	72	26	56	20	52
People from the Middle East and North Africa	4	12	1	22	0	11	1	21	1	10
People from Asia-Pacific Region (China, Viet-Nam, Mongolia, etc.)	8	29	4	58	4	52	2	43	0	27
Other people of "non-Slav appearance"	2	22	3	72	4	69	19	87	8	18
Members of youth subcultures and leftist youth	0	4	3	121	3	119	5	193	4	68
Others (including ethnic Russians), or not known	10	57	5	21	21	103	2	85	2	37

Statistics of convictions for violent crimes with a recognized hate motive and hate propaganda, 2004 – 2008, 1 November**

Year	Number of convictions		Number of offenders convicted		including probational sentences or release from punishment		
	For violence	for propaganda	For violence	for propaganda	For violence	for propaganda	for propaganda
2004	9	3	26	3	5		2
2005	17	12	56	15	5		6
2006	33	17	109*	20	24*		7
2007	23	28	65	42	18		12
2008	23	37	77	49	19		15

* Estimated minimum.

** The table does not include sentences which we see as open misuse of the law.

Moscow Bureau for Human Rights

1. Situation of Chechens in regions of the Russian Federation (outside Chechnya)

Following data of the Bureau there are at present approximately 1 million immigrants in the Moscow region. The Bureau has no information on the portion of ethnic Chechens in this group. However the Bureau thinks that quite a big part of the ethnic Chechen immigrants live illegally in Moscow.

The Bureau says that ethnic Chechens also live in several other regions of the Russian Federation. Following the Bureau, some of the biggest groups of ethnic Chechens are located in the Astrakhanskaya and Volgogradskaya oblasts.

Socio-economic situation

The Bureau states that ethnic Chechens are often a very active group that is able to acquire its own place in society in different Russian regions. They often seem to do well in making a living and are able to have good relations with local authorities. However, relations with local authorities are sometimes based on paying of bribes by Chechens, so it can be considered as a rather precarious situation. In some cases this also can create tensions between the Chechen and the local population, as the latter will perceive the, paid for, "good" relation between Chechens and the authorities as unfair.

Specific groups

Persons who are involved in independent journalism or are working for NGO's certainly can face problems with the authorities. This risk is irrespective of one's ethnic origin.

Judiciary and harassment by police

The Bureau says that there still might be cases of harassment of ethnic Chechens by the police, but the amount of such incidents has sharply diminished during the last two years. During the war, IDP's could certainly face serious problems with harassment by the police, but Chechens who at present resettle in Russian regions from Chechnya, won't face the same amount of difficulties. The

situation has calmed down and ethnic Chechens are less linked to terrorism than some time ago. It has to be noted however that the society still quite often links Chechens with criminality in general.

2. Situation in Chechen Republic

Socio-economic situation

The socio-economic situation in the Chechen Republic is difficult. There is high unemployment, only low allowances, lacking infrastructure, low agricultural activity remains. No industry is active, although it was well developed before the war.

Grozny is alive today, houses are reconstructed, the city is developing. A lot of money is invested into reconstruction.

The federal authorities put a lot of efforts into maintaining the stability in Chechnya.

Specific groups

In Chechnya, but actually in most North-Caucasian regions there is a strong pressure on independent journalists and people working for NGOs. The pressure on the local press in Chechnya is so strong, that at present there isn't any independent media-outlet left anymore. All are obedient to the authorities.

Persons who are suspected of membership of extremists organizations can face serious difficulties. Also innocent people can fall victim to difficulties because of supposed involvement in such extremist organizations.

Other groups with a risk for persecution are of course active rebels and also members of non-traditional religious organizations (for example Wahhabi organizations).

Women-rights seem to be under pressure in Chechnya. The republican authorities are strongly promoting a renewal of local traditions and a "correct" Islamic way of behavior, which seems to conflict with the idea of women living an independent and liberal life. At present there is for example a strong pressure on women to wear headscarfs (not veils) when in public.

The Bureau stated that one still sees women without headscarf in the streets, but that women who don't wear a headscarf in public can encounter difficulties with members of law enforcement forces or other private persons.

The Bureau stated that there are not any facts known that secular women can be killed. They can be denounced but not killed. There are other countries in the world where the situation of women is more difficult.

On the question if it is possible for more liberal women to resettle in other regions of the Russian Federation, the Bureau answered that in theory this is possible, but that all depends from the profile of the person in question. In practice, daily life can be very hard for single Chechen women that resettle to another Russian region. Much depends of her profile, education, social network and so on and should be assessed case by case. There are not many organizations that help women with resettlement into other regions.

Generally the Bureau stated that there can be tens of persecuted persons not thousands.

The Bureau states that there is no information that ex-fighters encounter any problems. An important role played the amnesty schemes from the past. There is no information what so ever about discrimination against members of families of ex-fighters.

Security

The Bureau considers that the security-situation in Chechnya is quite stable these days. Some incidents still do occur, but it happens less and less often and they are more limited in scope.

Generally the independence of Chechnya is achieved, additionally Moscow sends money to Chechnya.

The Bureau is more worried about the security situation in Ingushetia and Dagestan. In Dagestan there is a stronger movement of Islamic radicalism than in Chechnya. The radical Islamic jamaats in Dagestan are well organized and in to frequent, active fighting. The actions of these jamaats are mostly directed against the authorities. In Ingushetia there is a high occurrence of violence and still very frequently cases of disappearances do happen. Of course it is possible that the nomination of the new Ingushetiyan president, Evkurov, changes the situation, but that remains to be seen in the near future. The Bureau thinks that the stable security situation in Chechnya is due to the strong government in place whereas Dagestan and Ingushetia have far weaker governments that are less able to control the situation.

The Bureau states that the judiciary and the law enforcement agencies in Chechnya and the Northern Caucasian republics in general are rather inefficient.

3. Migration movements between the Chechen Republic and other regions of the Russian Federation

The biggest inflow of Chechens to Moscow was recorded in the years 1993-96. Nowadays the movement has decreased.

Chechens live in agricultural regions of the Russian Federation – such as Astrakhanskaya, Volgogradskaya and Tverskaya oblasts. They live in communities. They work on animal farms, run trade businesses. This is a reason why the local population is suspicious about them. They are afraid of being replaced in the labor market. This is a reason of ethnic clashes between for example: Chechens – Kalmyks, Chechens – Russians.

4. General situation xenophobia and racial violence

The Bureau states that there is a clear rise in xenophobic and racist violence by nationalist-extremist groups in the Russian Federation. The Bureau thinks that the current economic crisis can still further aggravate the situation, as much people will seek scapegoats and target the immigrants. Data on racist violence they received from official sources shows that racist violence is clearly increasing.

In 2004, 69 attacks were recorded. During these attacks 25 persons died and 85 persons were wounded. The greatest number of incidents took place in Moscow, then in St. Petersburg, Novosibirsk, Vladivostok, Krasnodar region, Nizhni Novgorod and Samara, Pskov and Republic of Buryatia, Voronezh, Volgograd and Chita, Kursk, Vladimir and others.

In 2005 more than 200 attacks based upon xenophobia were recorded, whereby 25 persons deceased and about 200 were wounded.

In 2006 about 210 attacks based upon xenophobia with 56 deadly casualties and about 340 victims were recorded.

In 2007, 237 attacks were recorded, 76 persons deceased.

In 2008, 292 attacks were recorded and 122 persons deceased.

During the period since January till February 15, 2009 39 attacks based upon aggressive xenophobia were committed, and 16 deceased and 36 victims were their result. The attacks were recorded in Moscow (13 deceased, 29 victims) as well as in St. Petersburg and Leningrad region (1 deceased, 3 victims), Ulyanovsk (1 deceased), Ryazan (1 deceased), Kabardino-Balkaria (2 victims), Yekaterinburg, Nizhni Novgorod (by 1 victim).¹

The following were among the victims of attacks: Uzbeks (6 deceased, 2 victims), Kirghizes (3 deceased), Vietnamese (2 deceased), natives of African countries (1 deceased, 9 victims), Chinese (1 deceased, 2 victims), Armenians (1 deceased and 1 victim), Chechens (1 deceased), Daghestans (3 victims), Tajiks (2 victims), Kalmyks, Bangladeshis, Buryats, Kurds (by 1 victim).²

The main targeted group are the Central-Asians (Uzbeks, Tajiks), followed by Afghans and Caucasians (Dagestani, Ingush, Chechens) and Africans.

The main places where the attacks occur are the metro, local trains and markets.

Statistics of the Bureau show that the prosecution and conviction of persons who committed racist violence slowly increases.

The Bureau stated that persons (irrelevant of their belonging to any specific minority group) who fall victim to racist violence can apply for protection at the authorities and also can resettle to another part of the Russian Federation to flee their persecutors. Mostly the extremist groups that commit racist violence are badly organized and they haven't got the means to trace down persons in other regions of the Russian Federation.

The Bureau stated that every group of ethnic minorities can be in danger of xenophobic attacks.

¹ See: <http://antirasizm.ru/english.php>

² Idem.

IOM

1. Return

Concerning the number of voluntary returnees from Europe to the Russian Federation we can see a very sharp rise in the year 2008 when there were already 1196 returnees in the first ten months compared with 1485 for the entire period 2003-2007.

Of course these numbers concern only people who return with the assistance of IOM, possibly the actual amount of returnees is far bigger.

In 2008 the biggest group of returnees to the Russian Federation originated from Poland (810), followed by Austria (173) and Belgium (150). A distant fourth was Norway (40).

Concerning their destination it appears that the majority of returnees in 2008 went to Chechnya (75%). The other final destinations are: Dagestan (17%) and Ingushetia (3%). Only 3% goes to other regions of the RF (mainly Moscow and St. Petersburg). Belgium has a relatively high amount of returnees to Dagestan, 46 out of 150 returnees.

For returnees one of the main problems is often to get registered and be able to pass all the bureaucracy to be able to “plug in” to the system again. People are often sent from one service to another to obtain certain documents and in the end don’t receive any clear answers from anyone. Registration is however a sine qua non for reintegration. Following IOM it can often take up to six months to have the paperwork in order. As IOM said this can be a very discouraging factor for the reintegration of returnees and can sometimes even be an element that makes them leaving again.

IOM thinks it is most important to have a monitoring of the returnees in place after their return. At present however IOM doesn’t seem to have sufficient means to implement a full fledged monitoring. IOM states that it doesn’t receive enough means from partner states to organize reintegration. As such, close monitoring just isn’t feasible.

Taken this in account, IOM stated that it has no knowledge of returnees who encountered serious difficulties in the Russian Federation. At least none of their partners ever informed them about it and no returnees ever contacted them because of serious problems or harassment that they might have encountered.

IOM hasn’t got an implementing partner in Chechnya, but it’s a priority when they would receive more means (Vesta would most likely take that role).

In general IOM is convinced that returnees are quite certain of their safety in their home country, otherwise they wouldn't return.

Concerning their safety on return you have on one side the general situation in the country/region, but on the other hand one also has always to take in account specific elements linked to the individual. They can, for example, have problems with a certain clan that has a dominant position in their country/region.

As such IOM is convinced a risk assessment for each individual is necessary.

IOM has no data on the profile of returnees, but they can examine this in the near future.

IOM assists with different types of reintegration assistance, such as vocational training, setting up of small business, educational support, medical assistance and housing needs.

As key challenges to sustainable return to Chechnya and the Northern Caucasus in general IOM identifies several challenges. At first there are the main "push" factors for leaving the Republic: the political and socio-economic situation. Besides this returnees can have difficulties with obtaining accommodation, employment and adequate social services.

Besides this it is very important that a returnee has realistic expectations for his return. During the absence of the returnee the situation on the ground might have changed far more than he is aware of. Therefore IOM stresses that it is extremely important that before their return, the returnees receive accurate and up to date information about the actual situation in their country of origin. This is important to avoid strong disappointments after returning, which can lead to a second departure of the returnee.

Memorial and Civic Assistance (Rus. Grazhdanskoe Sodeistvie)

1. Situation of Chechens in regions of the Russian Federation (outside Chechnya)

Chechens in Moscow

It is hard to say how many people from the Northern Caucasus live in Moscow, but it is estimated that there are around 150 000 Chechens living in the Moscow region. It must be stressed that this number is an estimation, it isn't certain. It is known that in the initial period of war, 300 000 – 400 000 people left Chechnya. 15 000 of them were of another nationality than Chechen. The situation of Chechens, who left Chechnya on separate periods, is different. Those that left during the war faced more difficulties than those that leave now.

1.1. Registration and documents

Moscow and other regions of the Russian Federation

The situation concerning registration has been improved lately. Civic Assistance stated that 'At the moment there are less problems with registration than there used to be'.

Also it is not so common nowadays that people are stopped on the street and have their documents checked. In general ethnic profiling by the police towards Chechens has strongly diminished and Chechens face less difficulties with the police.

Noteworthy is that if a person buys his own flat, he won't have any problems with his registration.

Moscow's rules of registration have been changed. The inhabitants from other regions can now legally stay in Moscow without registration up to 90 days.

Nevertheless, in society Chechens are still quite often perceived as terrorists and sometimes Chechens are treated differently to other citizens of the Russian Federation. Homeowners are afraid to register Chechens in their flats. They are advised not to do so. What is more, renting a flat is very expensive, which also impedes registration. The flats in Moscow are really at a high price, so renting them is also costly. Civic Assistance claimed: 'If I would let my own flat, I would be given four times as much money as my salary.' However, all residents of Moscow face difficulties because of the high renting prices, not only the Chechens.

Some Chechens, who have problems with registration, ask for help at Civic Assistance. They try to help them. Because one of the problems concerning registration was renting a flat, Civic Assistance has bought one, and registered newcomers in it.

Chechen organizations help relatives. Sometimes rich Chechens pay for treatment.

Civic Assistance said that the delivery of falsified documents is a new, lucrative business nowadays. Civic Assistance gave an example of a family it knows personally. They received documents on the surname of genuine Moscow citizens, with their own photo and Moscow registration. Only then, on the basis of these documents the family applied for a visa to go abroad. Civic Assistance said that people with Moscow registration have bigger chance to get visa to the European Union countries. At present this specific family lives in a Scandinavian country.

According to Civic Assistance, the system of delivering documents is still corrupt. In order to get a passport in a shorter delay, one must give a bribe. The actual situation varies in each region, and it is difficult to give a general overview concerning the delivery of documents.

It must be noted that in Moscow it is possible to get documents without bribing.

Nevertheless Memorial thinks that there is a big market for fake passports, but it couldn't give any numbers about the amount of people that use such passports.

In Memorial's opinion it is possible to get passport but that it isn't easy, because the authorities sometimes discriminate against Chechens.

As an answer to the question if there existed a possibility to get a passport outside one's place of a permanent residence, we were told that it was still very difficult, because the applicant's data were checked in a passport office at the place of his permanent residence. In the case of ethnic Chechens, who have a permanent residence in Chechnya, their data will be checked in Chechnya itself. So the application with the data is sent to Chechnya, the applicant's place of permanent residence, from the office of his actual place of stay. Civic Assistance gave an example of such a situation: 'after three months an applicant comes to a passport office to get to know some information about the progress of his case. There, he is usually answered that an answer from Chechnya has not come yet. Then, the relatives of the applicant usually decide to go personally to Chechnya in order to "come to an understanding" with a clerk about getting a passport.

In Chechnya special devices to „produce“ passports are ready to use.

Among the people there exists a conviction that you can do everything if you have the money. As an experiment, a worker of Memorial tried to obtain a registration in Moscow for the notorious rebel Shamil Basayev. He did it with the help of the agency offering registration services. The whole event is recorded on a film-band. Civic Assistance described it in the following way: "the worker of Memorial called to registration agency and expressed his will to register Basayev. He was given an answer that there was a redecoration of the agency, but it was possible to meet next day in the underground. In this case we can conclude that these agencies do not even have their own offices.

At the meeting the person who was to be registered had to deliver his passport. After handing over the passport to the worker of the registration agency, the details of the registration were agreed. It was finished the next day and costed 500 rubles. The Memorial worker asked if the registration wasn't fake, but the man of the company told him that 'our agency has a direct contact with the police and everything we do is legal.'"

It often comes to a situation, when in someone's house a „virtual” tenant is registered and a landlord knows nothing about it. Civic Assistance stated: "the same can happen in my house, somebody can be registered there and I know nothing about it." This is the way how agencies offering registering services work.

Schools: In 1996 there was a regulation, according to which children could not be enrolled at school if their parents were not registered. In 2000 this regulation was abandoned and right now there is no problem with enrolling to school. The children are simply accepted, and if there is any problem, it can be solved after an intervention by Memorial.

1.2. Judiciary and harassment by police

It is not so common nowadays that people are stopped on the street and have their documents checked. In general ethnic profiling by the police towards Chechens has strongly diminished and Chechens face less difficulties with the police.

Memorial stated that Chechens that are searched for by the Chechen authorities have almost no possibility to resettle in other regions of the RF. There always will remain a risk to be searched for by the local MVD forces and as such it will be difficult to lead a normal live.

2. Situation in the Chechen Republic:

2.1. Registration and documents

In Chechnya there is a department of the Federal Migration Service active and it is headed by Asu Dudurkaev. There are special devices to „produce” passports that are ready to use.

2.2. Specific Groups:

Memorial stated: *"There are evident reasons why quite a number of Chechens and Russian residents leave abroad. It is not because of dangers but because they want to have a better life. Though, it does not mean that there are no people who are in danger."*

Former fighters and members of their families:

Memorial claimed: "If somebody used to be a fighter, that does not mean he is more in danger than a person who has never been one."

What is substantial, is personal activity (engagement) of a given person. For example Lora Gunter – an activist who fights for human rights and all the problems she encountered because of her activity.

We were told that many former fighters joined Kadyrov, some of them because they could not safely leave the rebel movement under the amnesty procedure. Now it turns out however that their lives depend on Kadyrov, they are his hostages in some way. They have to take part in various types of special operations to show their loyalty to Kadyrov. The ones, who have not shown enough loyalty, can be in danger.

Their families are also in danger as they are at Kadyrov's mercy. Not everybody is able to bear this situation. There are also such former fighters (not many of them), who do not want to fight any longer, but at the same time they do not want to support Kadyrov. For them, the only safe solution is to leave Chechnya.

The families that have a dispute with Kadyrov:

In this group one can find not only former fighters (who do not support Kadyrov), but also the members of the families, who have not accepted Kadyrov's rule. Memorial said: „Taking part in fights does not automatically mean that a person is persecuted, because many former fighters have joined Kadyrov." Only the ones who have not adjusted to (accepted) Kadyrov's rules are exposed to a serious danger of Kadyrov's adherents. Though, it must be remembered that all these people have many crimes on their conscience.

New fighters and members of their families:

Despite signs of stabilization in Chechnya, some young people decide to enter the present rebel fighters. Memorial: „Young people still go to the mountains."

It is generally considered that the group of people that join the rebels are mostly young boys. It is hard to tell what their exact reasons are, some will go because of their religious ideology and belief, others they do so because of the lack of work and some because of the irritating hypocrisy of Kadyrov's politics. The fact is that many young boys from mountainous terrains, which are

problematic ones, do not know what to do with their lives. There is great unemployment and if they want to earn some money, or just have enough to buy food, these boys have two options: either become Kadyrov's fighters or clerks in his administration, which for many is unacceptable because of cruelty and deceit of his regime. For some of them this leaves only one path open; to become fighters against Kadyrov. It seems that ideology and the religious belief of fighters have only a secondary meaning for these boys. Sometimes they are even incomprehensible for them, but still they regard them as closer to their own state of mind and even well-intentioned. Some young people enter the army of present fighters because of their personal experiences, or experiences of the members of their families. Some of the boys were detained, beaten and humiliated during operations of the official security forces.

Members of families of the above fighters:

They risk to be a potential target of Kadyrov's people. The fighters are Kadyrov's main irritation; he would like to defeat and destroy them as soon as possible. That is why the families of the young fighters in the mountainous regions can face difficulties with Kadyrov's people. The families are told to force their children or relatives to lay down their arms. Potentially they can be arrested. Members of the families or sometimes even friends of these young people are arrested. During one of his speeches, Kadyrov ordered regional heads of administration to take up their responsibility to prevent young people to join the fighters.

After this a local head of the administration of Argun started expelling the families of fighters. He demanded all the fighters' families to leave their houses and move somewhere else. Formally he reckoned that in his region there was not even one family whose member fights against Kadyrov. Later on he called off that statement. However, banishing families of the fighters still takes place. It happens that their houses are burnt, so the families have nothing left to live. These actions are executed by Kadyrov's people. The local police never reacts on such incidents and won't render assistance to people who are mistreated by other government forces. In the period summer-autumn 2008 there were 17 such cases in the Vedensky, Shatoysky and Nozhay-Yurtovskiy regions. Not all the victims of Kadyrov's people report such situations to Memorial. They do not want to talk about that and they do not report it.

Those that complain about human right violations:

As an example the case of Mohmadsaloros Denilovich Masaev was introduced. In 2006 he was arrested in the mosque in Gudermes and unlawfully detained in prison for four months. When released, Masaev wanted justice, so he demanded punishment of his tormenters. According to him, the officers of the Chechen MVD detained him in a secret prison of the MVD. At the turn of 2007/2008 Masaev asked some Russian and international human rights organizations for help (Human Rights Watch, AI, Memorial). On 18th March, 2008 during trial no. 55096 started by the

prosecutor's office, it was confirmed that Masaev was a victim of unlawful detention. On 20th July 2008 he gave an interview to „Novaya Gazeta” in which he accused Ramzan Kadyrov of detaining him illegally in a secret prison. On 8th August 2008 Masaev was detained and after that nothing has been heard about his whereabouts anymore. His brother demanded criminal proceedings to be started, but that was refused. He went to a police station, where he was told that despite the lack of an official arrest warrant, the police had received an order to arrest Masaev. In Memorial's opinion, the story of Masaev shows how "Kadyrov quenches any opposition".

Those that oppose human rights violations by the Kadyrov regime:

The people who have lodged a complaint to the European Court of Human Rights in Strasburg, can be considered as a menaced group. On the one hand they are seen by Kadyrov as enemies of Chechnya, because they lodged a complaint and are against him. On the other hand, there are people who have won their cases and were given a financial compensation and as such are considered to be wealthy persons. And if they have the money, they should share with the others. Because of that, they are exposed to kidnapping for ransom and other forms of extortion. It is unclear who exactly commits this violence, but apparently it can be plain criminals but also members of the official security services.

Also the advocates of the claimants, as well as human rights defenders are in danger. It is so, because they publicly criticize Kadyrov's regime for violating human rights.

Disobedient Imams and young people who are Islam believers:

The Council of Muslims of Chechen Republic sends out official sermons, which are preached in the mosques every Friday. Any person, who does not agree with what has been preached, is automatically suspected of wahhabism. It means that Kadyrov also has a strong control over the situation in the mosques.

Young zealous believers of Islam also can be potentially treated as confessors of wahhabism.

Returnees from abroad:

The local society assumes automatically that returnees from abroad have got money. They are kidnapped in order to extort ransom from their families. An example was given of a man who went to live in Egypt; after a while someone tried to extort money from his family.

Sometimes the authorities are not sure if a returnee comes back from abroad or from the mountains where he might have been involved in the rebel movement.

People who come back to towns or villages after longer stay in the mountains, can be suspected of taking part in the fights in the troops of Kadyrov's opponents.

Women:

According to Civic Assistance, in Chechnya, all young women, single women with children, as well as those who do not want to adopt strict Islamic rules, have a clear risk to their safety. Civic Assistance said: "every young woman is in a risk group." Memorial believes that this is a too far-reaching thesis, though in some individual cases such risk exists.

In Chechnya a custom of kidnapping a bride-to-be is still alive. In compliance with tradition, immediately after kidnapping, negotiations between the families should be started. If it is impossible to reach an agreement, the girl was released. At present, this tradition has taken a more brutal form which makes it hard for women to oppose. It often comes to a situation when a man violently kidnaps a bride-to-be and he has not talked with her parents before, only because he is in the troops of Kadyrov (which means he can do whatever he wants). He simply comes to a house and takes a woman with him, often using violence and intimidating her family. If the man is from Kadyrov's group, the family has very little chance that any negotiations would be successful. Any opposition to Kadyrov's people can have negative consequences for the entire family.

There are many stories about women. Civic Assistance gave as an example the story of a young, well educated woman, who had a medical degree and lived in Moscow. The woman was independent and wanted to continue her studies she dressed European style. In 2000 she went to Chechnya to be given a relocation after studies. During her stay in Chechnya she was kidnapped on the street by one of Kadyrov's man, who wanted her to become his wife. She was hit in the head and she lost consciousness. Her father was not able to oppose this marriage, seen the fact that the Kadyrovcy are too powerful to resist. So the girl was married to this man. After some time Civic Assistance managed to contact with this woman. She was forced to have a radical change in her life. Now she wears golden jewelry but does not study anymore, which is – according to Civic Assistance – a way of humiliating her.

Young girls wearing European clothes and treating Islam rules not very seriously, are also exposed to danger.

Civic Assistance gave an example of the six women, who were shot. Civic Assistance claims that these were "honorable murders", the reason of which was probably disobedience to Islamic rules. In the opinion of Memorial, such cases can have much more complex reasons. Memorial claims that it is rather impossible (such coincidence) that in such short time, in different families, honorable murders took place. According to Memorial, there could have been other reasons of these women's deaths.

At the night on 25/26th November, 2008 in Staropromyslovsky region of Grozny, three corpses of women were found. They had been shot in the head and the chest from a small distance. The corpses of two other women were found on the way from Grozny to Shatoy. The corpse of the sixth woman was found on the way to Petropavlovskaya Stanitsa. After two days, in Gudermes region, the burnt corpse of a seventh woman was found. She also had been shot in the chest. The proxy to the human rights in Chechnya, Nurdi Nukhazhiev said: "I regret to say, that there are women in our

society, who forget about the code of behavior of Highlanders. In case of these women, sometimes their relatives are men, who feel offended by them, lynch them.” From his opinion, it can be concluded that it was women’s fault. Ramzan Kadyrov also gave his opinion on the women’s murders (it varied from the one of Nurdi Nukhazhiev). On 28th November, 2008 during the session of the Cabinet, the regional heads and urban administration of the ChR, he stated: “It is outrageous. There has never been such behavior in the Republic. The conduct of murderers, no matter who they were, is not justified by any traditions. This is why I have ordered the intensification of preventive actions, directed towards early prevention of such crimes and towards spiritual and moral upbringing and healing the society.”

What is more, Kadyrov gave also his opinion on Chechen women’s clothes. On 11th November, 2008 Ramzan Kadyrov said: “I am really disturbed with the way our women are dressed. Our fiancées are sometimes almost – excuse me this word – naked, with uncovered head in the company of their mothers-in-law and her fiancé’s relatives. They are walking on the streets wearing short skirts and loose hair. I would like Chechen women to look like a real Muslim, who respects traditions and customs of our nation.” On 24th September, 2008 during an interview for the Komsomolska Pravda, he told to the correspondent: “I have the right to criticize my wife and she cannot do it. In Chechnya a wife stays at home. A woman should know where she belongs...a woman should give us lots of love. She is our property. A man is her owner. In our country, if a woman behaves inappropriately, the whole responsibility for that is on her husband, father and brother. In accordance with our traditions, if her behavior is not appropriate, her relatives kill her. It happens that a husband kills his wife and a brother kills his sister. This is the reason why our boys are in prison. But as a president I cannot allow killing. So let them even wear shorts.”

Single women with children:

Women, who want to leave their husbands, would probably have to leave their children as well. In Chechnya, according to the tradition, children belong to a husband and they must stay with him or with his family. Single women, who gave birth to children from an informal relationship, are regarded as the ones who live against Islamic rules. This is why they are exposed to a real danger and also in this case the children are considered to belong to the man.

Young men:

Civic Assistance classified young men to a group endangered with persecutions, but Memorial did not agree with that. Memorial claimed that young men were endangered during the conflict when young people were exposed to danger from the federal side. At present the conflict has stopped and the federal powers in Chechnya aren’t that active anymore on the field. The situation is controlled only by Kadyrov’s people.

Young people are however confronted with difficulties concerning their future. The economical situation in Chechnya is bad, people haven't got a job and quite often they haven't got the means to guarantee their own basic needs such as housing and food. They have two options: either join Kadyrov's people or the fighters in the mountains. The youngsters are "between the devil and the deep blue sea". The ones that go to the mountains often do not find what they have been looking for. On the other hand, Kadyrov is not tolerated by all young people. It is said that several failed attempts on the life of Kadyrov have been organized by them.

The members of Yamadayev group:

There is an inner fight about the power between Yamadayev group and Kadyrov group. All the Kadyrov's opponents are exposed to danger.

Co-workers of Memorial organization working in Chechnya:

In the past, the authority of Chechnya thanked Memorial for his work in the Republic. The former president of Chechnya, Alu Alhanov, understood that Memorial defended Chechens. At present, the Chechen official responsible for human rights – Nurdi Nukhazhiev – has a different attitude to Memorial. Memorial claimed: "This year I am afraid to write anything." It used to be that mothers protested in Moscow – today they are afraid to do so.

2.3. Security

Chechnya

Most of people leave Chechnya because of their financial situation. But some still are forced to leave because of other reasons. In Chechnya there is a strong authoritarian regime. The power lies in the hands of Kadyrov. The aim is Chechnya's independence. He achieves it by subjecting all federal structures in Chechnya to his own authority. "Putin" seems to be the only exception. The majority of former fighters are subordinated to Kadyrov and incorporated in the official Chechen security forces. It is claimed that those who don't join Kadyrov, are automatically considered as sympathizers of Islamic Fundamentalism.

The active militants of today fight for the creation of an Islamic caliphate. Young people decide to live in the mountains, because they cannot stand the regime, in which there is no place for the Chechen customs. Every adherent of Kadyrov can offend everybody, even for minor issues, as for example woman without a headscarf.

People live in fear. They prefer avoiding conflict situations with Kadyrov and his people. Even Memorial worries much more about his co-workers in Chechnya. Memorial is also concerned about the people whose stories they are to describe. Memorial claims that Chechens used to feel that

Memorial helps them by describing their stories in the reports as well as by interventions. This changed last year. There appeared doubts if Memorial helps or harms the people when describing their cases. Still there are disputes about that. Memorial is afraid of possible negative consequences of publishing the new report they have written.

3. Migration movements between the Chechen Republic and other regions of the Russian Federation

The influx of people with Chechen nationality to the capital varied, depending on the period of time. At present, there can be observed a migration of Chechens back to Chechnya. There are two reasons for that: the first is that Chechens want to avoid predicament situations created by the police officers, who often say to them: "go home." The second reason is that Kadyrov appealed to the people to come back to Chechnya and they are afraid to oppose him.

Social Movement “For Human Rights” (Rus. Za Prava Cheloveka)

Despite earlier announcement, Mr. Lew Ponomaryov –the head of the organisation– did not take part in the meeting. Instead another expert of this organization took part.

1. Situation of Chechens in regions of the Russian Federation (outside Chechnya):

1.1. Socio-economic situation

In Moscow there lives a party nomenclature which was disposed of by Dudaev. The Soviet nomenclature operating in Chechnya was completely liquidated. In Moscow there also live intellectuals and Mafia members.

The wealthy people live in Moscow almost without any problems. They are able to afford, in case of need, to give a bribe and to buy themselves out. Those who are poor are in far worse situation, they can not afford to pay bribes without which it is difficult to do anything. All in all, peoples' situation depends on the amount of money they possess. Those who run a business may count on the protection on the part of special services. This is another world, another environment.

In Moscow lives a Chechen elite of old type. They comprise a large number of people. What has been attracting them for all these years to Moscow were the possibility of earning money and the opportunity of free intellectual development (the intellectuals). Those who are the most prominent among the old emigration get on well. However, there are a lot of ordinary members of the diaspora who are exposed to day-to-day problems, lots of them stay in Moscow illegally without the required permits. In previous years drugs were planted on Chechens, now this practice has been abandoned. Money is already not extorted at the streets on such a large scale as it used to be in the past.

At present such individuals struggle with problems of economic nature. They have difficulties in being employed. The organization called *Za Prava Cheloveka* attempts to help these people. However, the fear of and aversion to Chechens are deeply rooted into the Russian society.

The Chechen diaspora is susceptible to committing crimes. The diaspora is mainly located at the suburbs of Moscow (Ruza – the Moscow district). In other parts of the Russian Federation there are a lot of Chechens, too. Some operate while being the members of criminal groups.

2. Situation in Chechen Republic:

2.1. Socio-economic situation

Chechnya stays under the regime of Kadyrov. Everything is dependent on his will. Full discipline and order are established. Military skirmishes take place only in the mountains. Once there was a lot of robbery in Chechnya and as a result a lot of anarchy. Now it is over. In this respect the situation of normal inhabitants of Chechnya improved. So did the economic situation. There is more work.

In Chechnya there is no warfare between the clans. There is only Kadyrov and others. Any individual who stands against him is his enemy irrespective of his clan membership. Among those who attempted to oppose him was e.g. Yamadayev, but Kadyrov has already succeeded in dealing with him.

While depicting this situation, it is worthwhile to emphasize that Kadyrov is a Chechen nationalist. Therefore, on one side he does not tolerate any criticism directed against him and simultaneously on the other side he allows and even supports taking legal actions by every inhabitant of Chechnya against all violations of the law on the part of the federal army. The complaints may be filed with the Council on Human Rights which was established by Kadyrov. We were said that among Kadyrov's merits one could find elements such as: suppression of warfare, rebuilding the Republic, suppression of robbery, establishing of a relative peace (gunfire takes place only in the mountains) and restriction of the federal forces' influence.

2.2. Specific groups

Fighters: they started to fight on Kadyrov's side and they became the members of Kadyrov's administration. The objective of their fight was to gain independence for Chechnya and some consider this objective as accomplished. After all, the federal centre has at present only a very limited impact on Chechnya. The army of the Russian Federation failed to win in this conflict. After the death of Maskhadov all combatants went to Kadyrov's side. Putin agreed for such solution that he consented not to chase these individuals and not to prosecute them. Those who did not join Kadyrov departed.

Those combatants who keep on fighting became the members of Jamaats - the Caucasus Islamic movement. Their objective is to establish a caliphate and to destroy the Chechen statehood. Their ideology is close to that of Hamas organization.

The North Caucasus Region is a secular territory. This region is not characterized by the tradition of religious devotion. The number of people who would be willing to sacrifice themselves for the establishment of the caliphate is low. The idea of the caliphate is not close to most of them. In spite of that many young people still decide to join the troops in the mountains. Anarchy and corruption are the real reasons for which people make their way to the mountains.

During the first and the second war every individual participated in the fight. Every man had a weapon. When the front was over, people resumed their peaceful life.

Men are checked, they are asked questions like: how long was you engaged in guerrilla warfare? Were you detained? Did you participate in fights like others? Men depart because they are afraid that someone may be interested in them.

2.3. Security

Military skirmishes take place only in the mountains. Once there was a lot of robbery in Chechnya and as a result a lot of anarchy. Now it is over. In this respect the situation of normal inhabitants of Chechnya improved. So did the economic situation. There is more work.

The federal centre has no impact on what is happening there. Nor has the Ministry of Defense of the Russian Federation.

At present there are no reports about mass disappearances of people. Nevertheless, "the otherness – different views" lays the foundations for individual's vanishing irrespective of whether you are a politician or a religious dissident. Those who perform opposing or deviant activities are particularly threatened with problems.

3. Additional topics

Situation in the Northern Caucasus:

The meeting was devoted to discuss the situation in the Northern Caucasus, not only in the Chechen Republic.

We were told that the situation in the Northern Caucasus is tragic.

Republic of Ingushetia: Regular guerrilla warfare is on. Hundreds or thousands of people have been kidnapped. Lately the most notorious incident has been the murder of the lawyer Magomed Evloev (Маромед **Евлоев**) who was the owner of the web page www.ingushetia.ru

Ingushetia saw the change of President. The office of president, held so far by Zyazikov, was taken over by Yunus-Bek Evkurov. There is some hope for improvement of the situation. Maybe the situation will change at least a little.

Currently, the abductions, firing at military columns and federal service raids are a day-to-day reality. People began to protest and as a result of these protests the individuals who had been detained started to be released from the places of their arrest.

Ingushetia keeps on falling into ruin. Hundreds or thousands of people have been kidnapped or have disappeared without any trace. Death squadrons are active. They have relationships with the combatants.

Dagestan: the extent of kidnapping is not as large as in the Republic of Ingushetia; nevertheless a few hundreds of kidnappers' victims have been reported. The kidnappers, when given bribes, release the hostages.

The business connected with extorting money for the victim's photograph, the photograph of his/her grave or for returning the victim's body is thriving. There is a graveyard close to the town of Mahachkala where the corpses of the combatants are buried.

In 1999 Wahhabism was forbidden in Dagestan. But there was no definition of Wahhabism whatsoever, which opened the way for abuse of this law by the authorities. The Wahhabism teaching is prohibited in religious schools.

There are a number of different nations and clans in Dagestan living in the South as well as in the

North, in the mountains as well as in the valleys. In the valleys the practice of bribery, anarchy and shooting of people are widespread. Due to these practices it is still uneasy to stay in Dagestan. In April and May 2007 ten people were kidnapped, in April 2008 the number of people who were abducted increased to 50. At present there is no mass kidnapping. Previously people disappeared with no trace, now people do not vanish, but they simply refuse to testify. Difficult situation in Dagestan follows from the fact that the power is exercised by a weak president.

In October 2008 young people were murdered. They were last seen driving a car and some time later their dead bodies were found. The authorities declared that these individuals had died while fighting but post-mortem examination proved that they had had their hands broken. Therefore, it is not possible for them to have died during a fight. In another case, 10 dead bodies of young people were discovered. They were at a wedding party and had an argument with each other. Afterwards their dead bodies were found. Again it was declared that they had lost their lives in a fight. However it seems impossible that all of them, every single member of this group, died while participating in a fight. In this case the court proceedings are pending. The only individual who is able to assess their injuries is the expert appointed by the court.

The situation is very complicated. People living in the mountains are most religious and independent. Those living in the valleys are more secular, but in these regions there is strong corruption.

3.1. Socio-economic situation

What constitutes a real problem is corruption, bad economic situation and the current which is cut off during winter. Due to these factors people suffer a lot. A teacher earns 5 000 rubles, half of which is returned to the local authorities.

3.2. Specific groups

Religious dissidents. Among the religious dissidents we may classify the Salafits who are not the Wahhabis and who do not obey the Spiritual Board – the Board of Dagestan Muslims which is connected with special services. These individuals are threatened on the part of the Dagestan Ministry of Home Affairs – the Organized Crimes Combating Department VI.

The cases of disappearance and detentions affect mainly the Salafits, the religious opposition and generally the opposition. No one exactly knows who is responsible for such kidnapping – it is

generally said that masked men deal with that but part of these activities are attributed to the people of Kadyrov.

While comparing three republics – Dagestan, Ingushetia and Chechnya, one may declare that the worst situation is in Dagestan and then in Ingushetia. At present the extent and number of kidnappings in Ingushetia is decreasing.

In Kabardino-Balkaria the situation is a little better than that in Ingushetia and Dagestan. There is a strong opposition which operates underground. In Nalchik persecution took place. Some believers were arrested, forcibly intoxicated with alcohol and forced to eat pork. The force departments' aim is to unleash the conflict in this Republic. The feeling of fear is common and far-reaching.

Moscow Helsinki Group

At the very beginning of the meeting MHG said that it had thought that when the conflict was on, it was necessary to help everyone – combatants as well as civilians. Maybe the latter were even in more desperate need of help because they had no weapons to defend themselves. Now the situation is far more complicated. MHG is aware that many people make up their histories in order to gain shelter in one of the European Union states. However, irrespective of that there are still many people who are exposed to serious problems in Chechnya and generally in the Russian Federation. As far as the general situation in Chechnya is concerned, we may say that it has improved.

1. Situation of Chechens in regions of the Russian Federation

Chechens in the Russian Federation outside Chechnya are mainly concentrated in regions where there has always been some Chechen diaspora, which acts as a pull factor to attract other Chechens. Another place where there is a considerable Chechen diaspora is those regions where the oil industry is located.

MHG has many acquaintances among the Chechens. MHG said that in spite of their own poverty, Chechens still stood out as those who helped even their remote kinsmen. They are very family-oriented. They help each other. There are no orphanages in Chechnya. The children who were deprived of their parents are now brought up by their kinsmen. In the regions of Chechnya they live in encircling. Among them there are different individuals. However, we may find rogues among them too, like in any other country.

2. Situation in the Chechen Republic

2.1. Socio-economic situation in Chechnya

In comparison with the previous years when the Chechens had many difficulties in finding a job (no one wanted to employ them), now the situation has improved. In Chechnya the life is easier and better.

Grozny indeed has been reconstructed. MHG admitted that the level of city reconstruction is impressive. The city is clean, new and repainted. There are fountains and posters with the image of Kadyrov. Behind the painted facade there is often nothing. Nevertheless, people are walking down the streets – high-heeled women with the painted nails. Kadyrov has introduced the obligation for women to dress in headscarves. MHG gave as an example the case of woman who was dismissed because she did not want to wear a headscarf.

Owing to the general disapproval of the Chechens in the Russian Federation, they can be tempted to make a step into the criminal world as there are no other possibilities open for them.

2.2. Specific groups

Among those who have problems with Kadyrov there are inter alia co-workers of Helsinki Group. MHG said: "I know what they are persecuted for, for example Rashid Bogatyriev – worker and lawyer. He was a deputy minister for the Republic of Ichkeria Press, he worked for the independent news agency (as lawyer and barrister) and helped prepare the complaints as lodged in Strasburg. He was kidnapped. His kinsmen collected the amount of 20 000 USD as a ransom. He was instructed to depart because if it happened to him to be kidnapped again, there would be no ransom. His wife and children found a shelter in Sweden."

Among those who apply for the refugee status there may be terrorists.

Among the groups of individuals which may have fears in Russia there are political prisoners and victims of political reprisals. These are the individuals who were devoid of their freedom as a result of their political opinions.

The risk groups involve the so-called "limonowcy". Once it was a group of people with the nationalist and Bolshevik views. They changed four years ago. Now it is the youth organization. The intellectual young people started to join that organization. The catch-phrases that they propagate have changed too. Among the current catch-phrases there are human rights, social justice, protests under the banners of the human rights defenders. The methods of their fights involve for example the occupation of Putin's cabinet, disposition of his portraits or publication of posters with the catch-phrases about the social justice.

The scientists who work with the foreign institutions may be included in the risk group. They are considered to be the potential spies by the Federal Security Service and they are suspected of

conveying confidential information.

Among the individuals who are particularly exposed to danger are Muslims who are referred to as the Wahhabites. In the Federal Security Service there is a special department established whose objective is to catch spies and terrorists. Due to the fact that the department has serious difficulties in discovering real spies and terrorists, they make their own spies and terrorists out of ordinary people and they attribute to them the intentions and activities that have nothing to do with the reality. They do this to show off before their superiors.

2.3. Security

Explosions happen but such incidents are exceptionally scarce. Kidnapping still takes place but far less and mainly against a background of confrontation with Kadyrov or Kadyrov's troops. Those who have problems with Kadyrov will have problems in any part of the Russian Federation including Moscow.

3. General situation xenophobia and racial violence

At present what one may observe is the increase in the xenophobic tendencies. MHG says: "when the Soviet government ruled, nominally the USSR used to be a multinational state but in practice there was not such a tremendous mixing of people".

The main aim of contemporary Russian TV is to spread propaganda. While the conflict was on, TV announced that Chechens were full of hatred towards Russians. This led to the mass negation of Chechens in entire Russia. The approach towards individuals who come from Caucasus has always been negative. The attitude towards Chechens is negative everywhere and was instilled in people's minds long ago. It was Lermontov who wrote in his poems in the 19th century about the aggressive Chechens ready to draw their daggers. These poems (lullabies) were used to frighten the children.

The propaganda is also responsible for creating the image of Chechens who allegedly were to blow up the apartment blocks in 1999. Until now the culprits haven't been found and the people still consider Chechens to be responsible for these violent acts.

4. Additional topics

Chechnya doesn't worry MHG as much as Ingushetia and Dagestan. At present the situation in these two Republics is far worse. Kidnappings take place there everyday. Dead bodies of those who were murdered are discovered everyday.

The inhabitants of Ingushetia flee. They have problems with settling down in other regions.

MHG admitted that he pleaded for specific individuals in Europe. MHG does this only if is sure that this individual is in danger and when MHG knows that person and his history.

The Chechen Social and Cultural Association

The organization has 22 departments in the territories of the Russian Federation. The issues that the organization deals with are as follows:

- Cultural and legal education
- Legal aid; human rights problems, day-to-day problems of ordinary Chechens in the Russian Federation (health care, educational system, access to documents);
- Assistance as rendered to the students and young learners
- Organization of cultural events: lessons, lectures, festivals, concerts
- Promotion of knowledge on the Chechen culture and history

1. Situation of Chechens in regions of the Russian Federation (outside Chechnya)

The Chechens make their way to Moscow and to Siberia. In these regions they often find an unfriendly or even hostile attitude. The Association stated that the fight against the problem of a hostile attitude towards Chechens is one of the main problems that they are working on. This negative attitude towards Chechens stems from the long-term anti-Chechen propaganda campaigns which were promoted *inter alia* in the media. The Association tries to change this, but admitted that they didn't have the means to influence this kind of reporting. Chechens have no entrance to television and also in the written media they have only limited influence. Among the newspapers that report in a negative way about Chechens are popular outlets such as the 'Moskovskiy Komsomolec', 'Komsomolskaya Pravda' and 'Izvestya'. In the past the Association has even prosecuted a correspondent of the "Moskovskiy Komsomolec" for calling Chechens 'terrorists'. This stigmatizing way of reporting stems from the fact that Russia has always needed an internal enemy who would attract all attention. The Chechens are very sensitive to every single word. This comes from their mentality, therefore every word that is pronounced in mass media against them is taken seriously by them.

The Chechens do not like to prosecute an action in court. The Association has her own lawyers, but the Chechens rarely ask for their help and scarcely lodge complaints. That is because of their mentality. Sometimes they solve their problems on their own.

Other members of the Commonwealth of Independent States. Last year 19 people were killed in Kazakhstan. From January to October 2008 in the Russian Federation 256 assaults against the xenophobia background were reported as a result of which 113 individual died and 344 were

injured. Those who are responsible for these attacks are the groups of skinheads. The number of victims may be even higher because the authorities are afraid of revealing real information.

Conc. Kazakhstan Association said: "We have sent a letter to the president Nazarbayev. We wrote that the Chechens had been the first to instruct the Kazakhs how to build dwelling-houses". The conflict usually starts when 3 Chechens come across 30 Kazakhs. That is when the incidents occur. If 3 Chechens happen to meet with 10 Kazakhs, there is no chance for the battle to ensue.

Education of children. The Chechen Association has organized the voluntary class for children in Moscow – the so-called Sunday school. This school is attended by approximately 100 Chechen children. At this school they are taught the Chechen etiquette, history and culture.

Moscow is a transfer station – a place for transitional stay before the further journey.

The reasons for which the Chechens leave:

- Impossibility to feed their families;
- Pressure as exerted by mass media;
- Anxiety about the future of their children. In Chechnya the educational system is ruined, the possibilities of being admitted to the university are limited;
- Operation of the judicial system which has accusatory nature.

Among the internally displaced persons (IDPs) who still haven't resettled there are many ethnic Russians, invalids and pensioners. They receive food and 15 rubles a day. In the so-called TAC's there also still live Chechens. Persons who live there receive help which is sufficient to survive, but not to live a decent life.

A few years ago the Chechen population of Moscow was higher than that of Grozny. Presently the number of Chechens who live in Moscow and the Moscow district amounts to 200 000. The Russian Federation outside the borders of Chechnya, is populated by 560 000 Chechens. In Kazakhstan there are 60 000 Chechens and in Europe 100 000. Among the most populated Chechen Diasporas in the Russian Federation which live outside Moscow there are Rostov district, Krasnodar district, Yakuck area and Siberia.

1.1. Registration and documents

Until a few years ago the situation concerning registration was very difficult. Now, the situation has improved; in general Chechens can obtain a registration, but difficulties remain and it still can be

more difficult for Chechens than for other Russian citizens.

Following a new legislation it is now possible to stay for 90 days in a place where one isn't registered without the need of registration. But one has to keep in mind that without registration it is virtually impossible to find a permanent place of work. However, many problems relating to the registration procedures are common for all other citizens of the Russian Federation.

Documents (including the delivery of documents in Moscow and other regions):

There are no legal or procedural problems connected with the delivery of documents (for example passports). Problems are of purely bureaucratic nature. These problems exist in the whole Russian Federation and all her inhabitants, also ethnic Russians have to deal with them.

All in all, the Chechen life is harder than that of other ethnic groups, but the individuals of other nationalities have their own problems too.

1.2. Judiciary and harassment by police

Since some time there are less security problems for Chechens in the regions. Ethnic profiling by police has strongly diminished. Difficulties that Chechens encounter in the regions are now more of economic nature.

Young Chechens who start their studies in Moscow however are still often forced to give their fingerprints upon registration which is illegal and seen as humiliating by any Chechens.

As an example of difficulties ethnic Chechens can encounter the Association told the following: "A group of Chechens was working at a building site. The construction workers left the mobile phone and their money in the changing room. When they came back, they realized that their belongings missed. They had been stolen. No one was present, except for the guards. The construction workers called for them and asked them to give their belongings back. The guards declared that the only thing which they could return was the mobile phone but money was for them. Then they called police. When the police arrived, they claimed that the Chechens wanted money from them."

If there happened to be any explosions, the Chechens would be the first to be suspected. These are the forms of constant harassment. The Association says: "In such circumstances we write the official letters that the law has been violated. Sometimes it brings positive effects".

2. Situation in Chechen Republic

As far as the medical care is concerned, we were informed that among the consequences of the

conflict in Chechnya there was the fact that many Chechens suffered from oncological diseases. The treatment is expensive. So are the medicines. The Association renders assistance when a Chechen should be hospitalized. The Association is in touch with the public institutions.

The Ministry of Health of the Russian Federation specifies the limited amounts within which the individuals may enjoy the medical care free of charge in the parts outside their place of residence. If there isn't enough funding to finance the medical care of all the patients, then the organization attempts to be of help.

2.1 Socio-economic situation

There are a lot of new buildings which are erected quickly. The problem of water and heat supply has been solved. It is not like it should be but the authorities are trying to solve the problems people encounter in the Republic.

During the military activities an undefined number of the inhabitants of Chechnya died. A lot of them fled.

One of the main problems for the economical revival is the lack of qualified, professional staff. Many experts have fled during the conflict and aren't replaced yet. Currently, the major problems in Chechnya involve the high unemployment rate and high number of individuals who require medical treatment. A significant increase in the number of people having cancer as well as in the number of neurotic people who are ill as a result of stress has been reported.

The Chechens return, they try to settle themselves again. Multi-storey dwelling-houses are built and people are provided with building materials. However the prices have risen. This means that the compensations that were assigned to rebuild houses amounting to 350 000 rubles (10 000 USD) are insufficient to rebuild a house. The Chechens prefer to live in a single-family home rather than in a block of flats. At present only construction workers are able to be employed without a problem. Others have difficulties in finding jobs. Those are the ones that most frequently depart to other regions of the Russian Federation in search of work.

Medical care in Chechnya. The situation is still improving, there is medical equipment and infrastructure available but in comparison with the situation in Moscow it is still bad. However, if one keeps in mind that recently everything was ruined and completely devastated, there is no doubt that now the situation is much better. Young individuals again want to study medicine. There are

approximately 100-150 medicine students in Moscow and St. Petersburg. But it is still not enough. Chechnya is short of the experts. Therefore, a lot of people leave Chechnya to undergo treatment outside her borders.

In general, what is lacking in Chechnya is qualified, professional personnel: doctors, lawyers, etc. Some doctors have just started to return. Chechnya also needs pedagogical staff: mathematicians, physicians. It was agreed that the specialists must come back to Chechnya. That is top priority.

The poor economic situation is currently the most serious problem in Chechnya.

"People have to decide what their lives should be like in the future. Among the Chechens there are different kinds of people. The youth is the group which feels it best. What raises fears is the problem that they do not know what to do. There are thousands of young individuals who are students. When they finish their studies, they are not able to find work and among them there are good experts. What constitutes a real hindrance to their finding a job outside the borders of Chechnya is their nationality. Association is informing authorities about that. The Association said that pays a lot of attention to that problem. According to them, if this situation is to continue, it will become a serious social problem.

In Chechnya it is still not easy to run a business, though this is a much wider problem and it surpasses the Chechen borders. This problem is a concern to all Russian territories. Russia herself has a lot of problems which still await solutions.

2.2. Specific groups

The fighters. The Chechen Association members know individuals whose sons, young people, were active in the rebel groups in the mountains. But the Association has no knowledge of cases of persecutions directed towards their families. Even if such problems occur, they may be classified as single incidents but for sure they do not have large-scale dimension. One of the members of the Association said: "I have not heard about the persecution of the fighters' families. I have not even seen the fighters for a long time."

2.3. Security

In Chechnya the safety situation has significantly improved. All Moscow based members of the Chechen Association frequently visit Chechnya. Chechnya can safely be visited during day and nighttime. The telephone system is working again. In comparison with before, the situation is far better now. Of course, there are still certain difficulties.

In the past Chechens left Chechnya because of the bad security situation, but at present the main reason to leave Chechnya are the dire economic situation and a lack of money necessary to feed their families. Some of them come to Moscow (as well as to other cities of the Russian Federation) in search of work. The extent of destruction in Chechnya was enormous, there were 200 000 peoples dead. Grozny was practically devastated. Peoples fled out of helplessness. The Chechens have often extended families (5-6 children) and it is difficult to feed a family with many children. Moscow is an expensive city, you have to pay for everything and money is what lacks. However, once the situation seemed even worse because of the lack of security and now this problem has been practically solved.

3. General situation xenophobia and racial violence

Part of the Chechen problems overlaps those problems with which Russia struggles and they have relevance to xenophobia which is fuelled inter alia by the politicians like Zhirinovskiy and others.

Unfortunately the number of assaults upon immigrants in the Russian Federation and particularly upon individuals coming from the Central Asia but also upon those from Caucasus has increased lately. In Moscow during January-October period 48 people were killed and 162 were injured. Among the victims there were predominantly Tajiks, Uzbeks and Kirgizs. In the years 2004-2008 also places of worship were sometimes vandalized or assaulted. The most frequent objects of assault were the synagogues. In years 2004-2008 50 incidents were reported. The mosques were ranked second – 19 incidents reported during 2004-2008 and the Orthodox churches were classified third with 13 incidents which occurred during the same period.

In general the regions of the Russian Federation are less subject to the violations of law.

4. Additional topics

Situation of Chechens in European Countries

While addressing us, the members of the Association expressed their gratitude and rendered thanks (to Austria, Belgium and Poland) for the fact that these states allow the Chechens to enter their territories and that they help them in difficult situations. What was emphasized was the fact that the Chechen nation would never forget that and would return their kindness in the future. Chechnya needs specialists now and that the industry could not redevelop because of the lack of professional and educated personnel. The hosts of the meeting regretted that the Chechens did not participate in any professional trainings in the European Union states (including Austria, Belgium and Poland) and did not learn languages, not did they want to integrate. We were said what it would be a great contribution of the European Union states in which the Chechens lived if they prepared and educated the professionals who were now wanted by Chechnya and who maybe one day would come back to Chechnya because "this nation loves Homeland more than anything else".

When asked why there are so many people leaving the European Union and going to Chechnya now, the Association answered that this is caused by the fact that the Chechens are very attached to their land, families and they miss them a lot.

The hosts of the meeting came to the conclusion that maybe the aversion of the Chechen refugees to the integration packets (language courses, professional trainings) resulted from the level of education as obtained by the individuals arriving at the European Union states (or, what happened frequently, the lack of it). We were advised that the Chechen refugees should work with the individuals who knew the Chechen mentality and who could converse with them and persuade to enjoy the offered integration packets, including all courses.

IV. Information on consulted persons and organizations

“Memorial” Human Rights Centre (Правозащитный Центр «Мемориал»)

In January 1989 hundreds of delegates representing 250 groups and organizations gathered in the Moscow Aviation Institute Community Centre and established the All-Union Voluntary Historical and Educational Society “Memorial”. In the next years this mass social movement transformed into a real organization, more precisely into a union of regional organizations. In 1992 eventually the word “pravozashchitnoe” («правозащитное») was added to “historical” and “educational” in the name and the term “all-union” was replaced by “international” due to the fact that the Soviet Union no longer existed. The Society Statute was passed, management board and its executive body – Working Board – was appointed. The current society “Memorial” came into existence. From the very beginning of Memorial’s activity many professional scholars were amongst its members; they included historians, philologists and writers and often they were dissidents. Thanks to them the current “Memorial” is more famous for defending human rights than as a historical and educational society. The election of Sergey Adamovich Kovalev (Сергей Адамович Ковалев) as society chairmen in 1992 gave an important impulse to this evolution³.

Public Charitable Organisation of Forced Migrants Assistance “Civic Assistance” (Общественная благотворительная организация помощи вынужденным мигрантам «Гражданское содействие»)

“Civic Assistance” Committee (Комитет «Гражданское содействие») can be described as the first public organisation for help to refugees and forced migrants in the Russian Federation – it was established in 1990, even before the state migration service came into existence. Already from the start the organisation often acted as mediator between migrants and official authorities. The Committee constantly maintains relations with all the structures concerned with forced migrants’ issues: migration, education, public health and social help bodies, prosecutors and police⁴.

International Organisation for Migration (Международная организация по миграции)

³ Source of information: Что такое «Мемориал», in: ПЦ «Мемориал» [<http://www.memo.ru/about/index.htm>], as viewed on 18 December 2008; Подробнее о Международном историко-просветительском, правозащитном и благотворительном обществе «Мемориал», in: ПЦ «Мемориал» [<http://www.memo.ru/about/news.htm>], as viewed on 18 December 2008.

⁴ Общественная благотворительная организация помощи вынужденным мигрантам «Гражданское содействие», in: [<http://www.refugee.ru.komitet.htm>], as viewed on 18 December 2008; «Гражданское содействие» Общественный комитет помощи беженцам, in: [<http://www.humanities.edu.ru/db/msg/39386/>], as viewed on 18 December 2008; Общественный комитет помощи беженцам «Гражданское содействие», in: [<http://law.edu.ru/org/organization.asp?orgID=1134184/>], as viewed on 18 December 2008.

Established in 1951 as the Provisional Intergovernmental Committee for the Movement of Migrants from Europe with its headquarters in Geneva (Switzerland). The amount of member-states increased from 67 in 1998 to 122 in 2008 and is still increasing. IOM Office in Russia was opened in Moscow in 1992 based on the Agreement on Cooperation between the Government of the RF and International Organization for Migration, among others in the field of forced migrants' assistance. Enrico Ponziani is the current head of the IOM mission in the Russian Federation⁵.

All-Russia Public Movement “For Human Rights” (Общероссийское общественное движение «За права человека»)

Established on 20 November 1997. Currently 80 regional and local human rights organisations are members of the movement. It is headed by a board consisting of 8 people – coordinators of large regions, corresponding to federal districts. Lev A. Ponomarev⁶, famous human rights defender and adviser to the academic Andrey Sakharov. Movement “For Human Rights” allows to join together human rights and other public organisations, including free trade unions as well as individual citizens. The statutory objective of the All-Russia Public Movement “For Human Rights” is to support the rule of law and develop civil society in Russia. The Movement is unique for its variety of proactive possibilities which correspond to a wide range of human rights defence activity. It also operates its own website (www.zaprava.ru) and the information agency “For Human Rights”, which regularly spreads information on the web⁷.

Russian Justice Initiative (Правовая Инициатива по России)

After the outbreak of the second Russian-Chechen armed conflict (1999) it became clear that serious human rights abuses took place. To render legal assistance to victims of these abuses the “Chechnya Justice Project” was created and implemented by Russian Justice Initiative (the Netherlands) and “Justice Initiative” (Ingushetia). At first victims of human rights abuses were

⁵ Sources of information: Международная организация по миграции (МОМ), in: [<http://www.unrusiia.ru/institutions/iom.html>], as viewed on 18 December 2008; Международная организация по миграции (МОМ), in: [<http://www.iomrussia.ru>], as viewed on 18 December 2008; Вторая Всероссийская ассамблея неправительственных организаций по противодействию торговле людьми, in: [http://sartracc.sgap.ru/Photogal/MOS_assamb_0306.htm/], as viewed on 18 December 2008.

⁶ Lev Ponomarev – born on 2 September 1941 in Tomsk. In 1965 he graduated Moscow Institute of Physics and Technology, doctor of physical and mathematical sciences. In 1988 he was initiator and one of the founders of All Russian Society in Memory of *Victims* of Political Repression “Memorial”. In 1989 he became a confidant of A.D. Sakharov, during election of people’s deputies USSR. Between 1989-1990 he was active participant of pre-election speeches and mass free actions of democrats. One of the founders of All-Russia Political Movement “Democratic Russia”. In years 1990-1995 deputy to Russian parliament. In 1997 he was initiator of establishment of “Hot Line” and movement for human rights, headed by him until now. On the basis of information: bdg.press.net; Source of information: Лев Пономарев, исполнительный директор Всероссийского движения «За права человека», in: [<http://vip.subscribe.ru/person/80/>], as viewed on 18 December 2008.

⁷ Sources of information: О Движении «ЗПЧ», in: [<http://zaprava.ru/odvizenii.htm>], as viewed on 18 December 2008; Общероссийское общественное движения «За права человека», in: [<http://www.zaprava.ru/kontent/view/12/26/>], as viewed on 18 December 2008.

helped by members and volunteers of the Human Rights Watch organisation office in Moscow. But in the mid-2001 it became obvious that these efforts were not sufficient. Due to that fact at the end of 2001 a group of human rights defence activists established in the Netherlands the organisation "Justice Initiative in Chechnya", with its office in Moscow and another organisation in Ingushetia, known as "Justice Initiative" in order to jointly implement the "Chechnya Justice Project". In December 2004 organisation "Justice Initiative in Chechnya" was renamed to "Russian Justice Initiative"⁸.

Moscow Helsinki Group ("Moscow Group of Assistance to Implementation of Helsinki Accords in the USSR", Moscow Group "Helsinki") [Московская Хельсинская группа (Общественная группа содействия выполнению хельсинских соглашений в СССР, Московская группа «Хельсинки»]

MHG was established in 1976 in Moscow and is one of the oldest among the currently active human rights organisations in Russia. The founder and first leader of Moscow Helsinki Group was a famous physicist, Armenian SSR Academy of Sciences correspondent-member, professor Yuri Fyodorovich Orlov (at present he is honorary chairmen of MHG). In the period 1977-1982 activists of Moscow Helsinki Group were persecuted by the authorities and some of them were forced to immigrate. In 1982 the Group activity was suspended. On 28 July 1989 human rights defenders: Larisa Bogoraz, Sergey Kovalev, Viatcheslav Bakhmin, Alexey Smirnov, Lev Timofeev, Boris Zolotukhin announced the reestablishment of the MHG. Yuri Orlov, Ludmilla Alexeeva and Kronid Lubarsky later joined them. Larisa Bogoraz was the first chairwoman of the new Moscow Helsinki Group and in 1994 she was replaced by Kronid Lubarsky. In May 1996 Ludmila Alexeeva, who returned from exile in 1993, became chairwoman of MHG. In November 1998 she was also elected as President of the International Helsinki Federation⁹.

Moscow Bureau for Human Rights (Московское Бюро по правам человека)

Is a non-profit partnership, registered by the Moscow Registration Chamber on 27 February 2002. The Bureau for Human Rights maintains contacts with leading non-governmental organizations of the RF, the Commissioner on Human Rights in RF, the RF President Commission on Human Rights, the State Duma of RF, the Russian Academy of Science, Russian art workers' associations and a range of national and regional organisations¹⁰.

⁸ Source of information: О нас – Правовая инициатива по России, in: [<http://srji.org/about/>], as viewed on 18 December 2008.

⁹ Sources of information: Исторический очерк, in: [<http://www.mhg.ru/history>], as viewed on 18 December 2008; О НАС: Члены МХГ, in: [<http://www.mhg.ru/about/13A03F9>], as viewed on 18 December 2008.

¹⁰ Source of information: Московское Бюро по правам человека, in: [<http://antirasizm.ru/abortus.php>]. as viewed on 18 december 2008.

The SOVA Center for Information and Analysis (Информационно-аналитический центр «СОВА»)

SOVA Center was established in October 2002 by a group of workers of the “Panorama” Center for Information and Research and the Moscow Helsinki Group. The SOVA Center carries out monitoring and research work on such topics as nationalism, xenophobia and religion-society relations. It is also interested in human rights. Most of the “SOVA” projects are developed and published on the internet. The director of the SOVA Center is Alexander Verkhovsky. Galina Kozhevnikova is his deputy¹¹.

Human Rights Watch, Moscow Office (Московское представительство Хьюман Райтс Вотч)

Human Rights Watch organisation was established in 1978 as Helsinki Watch group (at present branch of Human Rights Watch) in Europe and in Central Asia as a response to the call for help of human rights defenders in Moscow, Warsaw and Prague. It was created in order to gather information and observe the implementation of the Helsinki regulations in the field of human rights. On 23 March 2004 the Human Rights Watch Office in Moscow celebrated its tenth anniversary of activity¹².

Association of Chechen Social and Cultural Unions (Ассоциация чеченских общественных и культурных объединений)

Established 4 years ago the Association of Chechen Social and Cultural Unions tries to provide help in different fields for Chechen migrants in the Russian regions. One of the founders and chairmen of the Association is Bazhaev Mavlit Jusypovich (born on 10 January 1950), who at the same time (together with his brother Musa) manages the oil concern “Alians”¹³.

¹¹ Source of information: Информационно-аналитический центр «СОВА», in: [<http://sova-center.ru/1541AC7/>], as viewed on 18 December.

¹² Source of information: Хьюман Райтс Вотч , in: [<http://www.mhg.ru/partners/159742E/>], as viewed on 18 December 2008; 10-летний юбилей московского отделения Хьюман Райтс Вотч , in: [http://www.owl.ru/cgi/Content/runbroker.cgi?broker=Brokers::Showcontent&action=printversion&id_news=54128/], as viewed on 18 December 2008.

¹³ Source of information: Ассоциация чеченских общественных и культурных объединений, in: [http://www.chchnyafree.ru/article.php?IBLOCK_ID+371&SECTION_ID=0&ELEMENT_ID=78129/], as viewed on 18 December 2008; Ассоциация чеченских общественных и культурных объединений, in: [<http://www.chechenasso.ru/features/index.html>], as viewed on 18 December 2008.