Ilya Yashin, the author of "Threat to National Security," says the goal of his report about the Chechen President is "to open Russian society’s eyes to the fact that Ramzan Kadyrov, with the connivance of the country’s authorities and secret services, has become a figure that poses a threat to Russia’s national security." His report tells about the regime established by Ramzan Kadyrov in Chechnya, reveals his crimes and corrupt schemes and shows how he impacts the current Russian political system.

We believe that Ramzan Kadyrov is not only Russia’s internal threat – he has definitely become a global danger. Kadyrov is known not only by his public intimidation of Russian pro-democracy opposition leaders, human rights activists and journalists, he’s also known for his countless violations of freedoms and human rights in his republic. There are not only suspicions, but also clear traces, of his involvement in the assassinations of Anna Politkovskaya, Natalia Estemirova and Boris Nemtsov. There are also known cases when Kadyrov’s opponents were murdered not only outside Chechnya, but also outside of Russia. One of his archenemies, Sulim Yamadayev, was killed in the UAE. His former bodyguard Umar Israilov, who publically spoke about Kadyrov’s numerous crimes, was shot dead in Austria. Law-enforcement structures of those countries were not able to interrogate the President of Chechnya.

One year after the assassination of Boris Nemtsov, Ramzan Kadyrov enumerates his new enemies in his Instagram and in Chechen official media outlets. He calls Russian oppositionists as "leash-dogs of the U.S." Today Kadyrov is posting photos on social media photos of former Prime Minister Mikhail Kasyanov and Vladimir Kara-Murza, leaders of Parnas political party, through a sniper rifle lens. It’s not too far of a stretch to believe he will soon declare some world leaders are his enemy and he’ll start chasing them.

Besides, it’s very important to note that Kadyrov keeps over a million Chechens who live abroad and are citizens of other countries as his hostages. They can’t openly criticize Kadyrov as they still have close relatives in the Republic of Chechnya. Chechnya’s leadership put enormous pressure on these people – including abduction and torture. Because of Chechen control over its former citizens, the leadership of their new countries can’t protect those who have fled to the U.S. and Europe and they can’t provide them with a basic freedom common in the West – freedom of speech.

Kadyrov has puzzling control of Putin and the leadership of the Russian government. He flaunts his power in very public and embarrassing ways and he seems to be becoming more brazen on a near daily basis. Kadyrov is the creation of the Putin regime and is our common problem at a global level. The very least the West can do to protect itself is to put Ramzan Kadyrov and his accomplices on the Magnitsky List for gross violation of human rights, add Kremlin’s propagandists there for creating the atmosphere of hatred and start an independent international investigation of Boris Nemtsov’s murder. People like Kadyrov revel in the impunity. If there is no political will in the Kremlin to rein him, there should be international procedures to stop this unaccountable criminal.
Today, the whole world is worried about the threat posed by the ISIS terrorist organization. Radical Muslims have essentially declared war both on Russia and on modern civilization as a whole. Thousands of innocent people have already fallen victim to this war. World leaders declare their readiness to stand up to ISIS as armies and security forces engage in the battle: on Russian President Vladimir Putin’s orders, the Russian air force has been carrying out bombing raids against ISIS sites in Syria since the fall of 2015.

However, few people seem to have noticed that in recent years our own local Islamic state has formed on Russian territory. This isolated “Chechen caliphate” functions according to its own traditions and laws while regularly receiving multi-billion ruble subsidies from the Russian federal budget. Chechen leader Ramzan Kadyrov lives in the lap of luxury while privileging Sharia law over Russian legislation and building up his military might. Militants from Chechnya carry out terrorist attacks against Kadyrov’s opponents both in Moscow and outside Russia.

With each passing year, Kadyrov grows more confident of his invulnerability while his attitude towards the federal government becomes increasingly arrogant. Kadyrov knows that he enjoys the support of the powerful Chechen army, a fighting force that has sworn personal loyalty to him. Most importantly, he knows that he has the loyalty of President Putin. Neither the security forces nor the Russian government can force Kadyrov to comply with Russian laws or bring Chechnya back inside the framework of Russia’s sovereign rule.

The future prospects for the relationship between Chechnya and the Russian federal government are a cause for serious concern. Kadyrov’s regime has accumulated sufficient resources to enable it to raise the issue of secession from Russia in the event of political instability in Russia itself. It cannot be ruled out that while he is at it, Kadyrov could potentially also seize portions of neighboring territory.

In essence, the result of Putin’s policy in the North Caucasus has been the emergence of a state entity in southern Russia that poses a real threat of a new large-scale war. A dangerous regime has formed in Chechnya, and its loyalty depends entirely on the Russian federal government satisfying Ramzan Kadyrov’s financial and political appetites.

No single politician or government agency can guarantee today that the Islamic state which Kadyrov has created in Chechnya, and which is currently reveling in a climate of permissiveness, will not be transformed over time into another ISIS prepared to declare jihad against Russia, just as Ramzan Kadyrov’s father did in the past. The present report provides an analysis of the gradual process of formation of a dangerous criminal organization in Russian territory that has substituted itself for the Chechen state. This is the story of how Ramzan Kadyrov has become a key and potentially uncontrollable figure in Russian politics: along the way, he has copied Vladimir Putin’s political style, tailoring it to his own ethnic and religious specificities.

The goal of this report is to open the eyes of Russian society to the fact that Ramzan Kadyrov now poses a real threat to Russia’s national security. And he has reached this status with the connivance of the Russian authorities and intelligence services.

1 ISIS, the “Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham,” is a terrorist organization that is outlawed in Russia and in many other countries.

For all other footnotes, please see page 64.
CHAPTER 1
RAGS TO RICHES

Ramzan Kadyrov was born on October 5, 1976, in the village of Tsentaroi in the Chechen-Indish Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic. He was the second son of Akhmad Kadyrov, who would later become president of the post-Soviet Chechen Republic. Ramzan Kadyrov graduated from school in 1992 but could not continue his studies at the time, since, after the collapse of the Soviet Union, Chechnya was drawn into a conflict with Russian federal authorities. In 1992, the Chechen Republic adopted a Constitution in which it proclaimed itself to be an independent sovereign state.

ETHNIC CLEANSING

This period in Chechnya’s history is characterized by a sharp rise in crime. Moreover, the new Chechen authorities began implementing a policy directed at driving out representatives of other ethnic groups: this policy was accompanied by murders, robberies and ethnic cleansing. "The late journalist Paul Klebnikov described these events as ‘a genocide of Russians in Chechnya’ even before the beginning of military operations in 1994. ‘This was a bloody war against the civilian ethnic Russian population of Chechnya, a so-called ‘forced Chechenization’’ wrote Klebnikov. In 2000, Russian President Vladimir Putin described these events as ‘a large-scale genocide against the ethnic Russian population.’ These events were the result both of the weakening of the central authorities and of the population’s demand for the restoration of justice after Stalin’s deportation of the Chechen people. Chechnya’s new authorities successfully capitalized upon these sentiments.

In July 1999, the Russian Ministry for Nationality Affairs reported that from 1991 to 1999, more than 21,000 ethnic Russians had been killed in Chechnya, not counting those who died during military operations, and that more than 100,000 apartments and houses belonging to representatives of non-Chechen ethnic groups had been seized. With the connivance of both federal and local authorities, more than 46,000 people were essentially enslaved when they were deprived of their passports and property.

It was at that time that the until then unknown figure Ramzan Kadyrov first rose to prominence. "We make no secret of the fact that we fought against Russia. I, too, fought in the First Chechen War - everyone knows that. I was not even 17 when I first held a machine gun in my hands," he admitted. According to journalist Yulia Latynina, on one occasion, when Ramzan Kadyrov was in the office of the presidential envoy to the Southern Federal District, he uttered the notorious statement: "I killed my first Russian when I was sixteen years old." It is easy to calculate that Kadyrov turned sixteen in 1992, that is, two years before Russian troops entered Chechen territory. Based on the above, Kadyrov began killing even before the First Chechen War, and he did not use weapons only against soldiers.
CHAPTER 1 RAGS TO RICHES

and other terrorists. 1996

Ramzan Kadyrov with Shamil Basayev
and other terrorists. 1996

THE FIRST CHECHEN WAR

On December 11, 1994, Russian President Boris Yeltsin signed a decree on the entry of Russian troops into Chechnya to restore constitutional order. This was the beginning of the first war between armed Chechen separatists and Russian security forces.

In August 1995, during a meeting of field commanders in Vedeno, Chechen leader Dokhar Dudayev appointed Akhmad Kadyrov as the republic's Chief Mufti. His candidacy had been put forward by Shamil Basayev and Ruslan Gelayev, a pair who later became notorious throughout Russia for their terrorist activity. At the time, Akhmad Kadyrov was a close ally of Shamil Basayev. The two men often issued joint statements. Thus, in 1996, the NTV television channel showed a video in which Basayev, sitting next to Kadyrov, declares: “We will continue to fight! If we can, we will seize Vladivostok, we will seize Khabarovsk, we will seize Moscow! We will fight to the end, and no one except Allah can stop us.”

In 1995, Akhmad Kadyrov declared a holy war or jihad against Russia, and in essence called on all Muslims to kill the infidels. At the time, the elder Kadyrov said: “There are one million Chechens and 150 million Russians. If each Chechen kills 150 Russians, we will win.” However, a few years later, Kadyrov clarified his previous statement: “No, in 1995 and 1996, I called on Chechens to kill as many Russians as they could. I never said 100, 150 or 200...I said to kill as many as you can. It is no secret that I called for a jihad at the time. But I did not say 150.”

In 2000, Vladimir Putin publicly stated that, “During the First Chechen War, Mufti Kadyrov waged armed warfare against Russia.”

Ramzan Kadyrov was not widely known during the First Chechen War. In her last interview before her assassination, the journalist Anna Politkovskaya noted that at the time the younger Kadyrov “had the reputation of a boy who stands in the corner while the adults talk and is only allowed to approach them to pour tea.” Politkovskaya described Ramzan Kadyrov’s “past achievements” as “shooting, killing and kidnapping.”

Two days after this interview, she was shot dead in the entrance to her apartment building in Moscow.

In 2013, the Rossiya TV channel broadcast a documentary entitled “Kadyrov’s Heart.” The correspondent asked the Chechen leader point blank if he regretted siding with the separatists during the First Chechen War. “No, I am not sorry to have been on that side. If I had not been there, I would not have learned the truth. It was a big learning experience for me,” Kadyrov declared.

In a broadcast on NTV, Shamil Basayev, seated next to Akhmad Kadyrov, threatens to seize Russian cities. 1996

After the signing of the 1996 Khasavyurt Accords between the leaders of the Chechen separatists and official Kremlin representatives, Russia withdrew all of its troops from the territory of Chechnya and de facto recognized its independence.

Soon after that, the situation in Chechnya deteriorated. On one side of the conflict were the allies of Shamil Basayev, who was supporting the establishment of an Islamic state that would include Chechnya and neighboring Ingushetia. Their opponents were the supporters of Chechen President Aslan Maskhadov, who insisted on Chechnya’s remaining a secular state. The political crisis in Chechnya led to armed conflict and basically resulted in a dual power structure. In this context, in 1999, Mufti Akhmad Kadyrov entered into a conspiracy with a majority of the heads of Maskhadov’s security forces in an attempt to seize power in Chechnya. He opposed both Maskhadov and Basayev’s “Wahhabis” at the same time.

The Second Chechen War began in August 1999. After Basayev’s militants invaded Dagestan, the Russian army launched an operation directed at destroying militants in Dagestan and restoring the sovereignty of the Russian Federation over Chechen territory.

Akhmad Kadyrov became the Kremlin’s main ally in that confrontation. In 2000, the newly elected president of the Russian Federation, Vladimir Putin, appointed Akhmad Kadyrov as head of the Chechen administration. Considering Kadyrov’s biography, Putin noted that this appointment was a personal and “difficult” decision that was “received with varying reactions in Russia.”

“SWITCHING SIDES TO JOIN FEDERAL FORCES”

Vladimir Putin and Akhmad Kadyrov

Ramzan Kadyrov joined his father in switching over to the side of the federal forces and was accepted into the Chechen structure of the Interior Ministry of the Russian Federation. In the rank of senior police lieutenant, Kadyrov officially commanded a platoon of the Interior Ministry’s patrol-sentry service, but was in fact made head of his father’s security service, in which approximately 1,000 combatants were placed under his command.
CHAPTER 1 RAGS TO RICHES

Ramzan Kadyrov, who was shot dead in Vienna

Kadyrov’s former bodyguard, Umar Israilov, who was suspected of involvement in armed underground resistance. In 2009, Israilov was shot dead in Vienna as he was leaving a grocery store.

Most officers in the Chechen presidential security service were former rebels, who had fought against the Russian army but were later granted amnesty as a result of negotiations with Ramzan Kadyrov. Former rebels and terrorists who joined Kadyrov’s personal paramilitary force received weapons, service pay and legal status. In return, they pledged their personal loyalty to the junior Kadyrov, who thus began forming his personal guard corps.

It is worth mentioning that Ramzan Kadyrov has a short fuse for amnestied rebels who have betrayed his trust. For instance, after being released under amnesty, former separatist fighter Umar Israilov worked as Kadyrov’s bodyguard before fleeing to Europe where he discussed the crimes of his former boss. Israilov revealed cases of abductions and torture that had taken place between 2003 and 2005. According to the fugitive, sometimes, after lunch, Kadyrov would go to a secret place between 2003 and 2005. According to the fugitive, sometimes, after lunch, Kadyrov would go to a secret prison where «for dessert» he personally tortured people. It is worth noting that Ramzan Kadyrov came to this meeting with the head of state dressed in a tracksuit.

At his father’s funeral, Kadyrov made a slip of the tongue when he promised to continue the work of his father, who “did so much to establish Sharia law in Chechnya.” This slip of the tongue was in many ways prophetic.

On January 29, 2008, Ramzan Kadyrov declared that all those involved in his father’s murder had been eliminated. “The person who took responsibility for the murder has been eliminated; those who were involved indirectly have been eliminated as well, and what the Prosecutor’s Office is doing is of no importance,” he said in an interview with Ekho Moskvy radio. Ramzan Kadyrov neither mentioned any names nor supplied any proof of the guilt of those who he claimed to be responsible for his father’s death.

The Russian authorities’ investigation of this terrorist attack failed to bring to justice either the perpetrators of the crime or those who ordered it. No names have ever been mentioned.

The assassination of Akhmad Kadyrov

Despite its growing numbers, the Chechen presidential security service was not up to the task. On May 9, 2004, a terrorist attack at Dynamo stadium in Grozny left 56 injured and seven dead, including Chechnya’s President Akhmad Kadyrov. Ramzan Kadyrov, who was responsible for guaranteeing his father’s safety, was not in Grozny at the time. On the day of the tragedy, he met with the Russian president in the Kremlin, where Vladimir Putin expressed his condolences to the junior Kadyrov. It is worth noting that Ramzan Kadyrov came to this meeting with the head of state dressed in a tracksuit.

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THE POWER STRUGGLE IN CHECHNYA

After his father’s murder, Ramzan Kadyrov began a sustained struggle for power in Chechnya. Enjoying as he did an informal relationship with President Vladimir Putin and possessing rather remarkable control over the security forces, he quickly became a key figure in the Republic. As noted by Carnegie Center expert Alexei Malashenko, before his father’s death, the younger Kadyrov had no political background and no special merits in the eyes of the Chechen people. The fact that Ramzan Kadyrov was the son of the assassinated president of Chechnya was the sole reason for his rise to power. It is important to remember that other potential candidates for top positions in Chechnya fell victim to the same terrorist attack at the Dynamo stadium in Grozny that killed Akhmad Kadyrov. For example, Khussin Isayev, chairman of the State Council of Chechnya, an educated man and an experienced politician, whom the media repeatedly described as a potential successor to Akhmad Kadyrov, died in the same explosion.

At the time, Ramzan Kadyrov’s age was the only legal obstacle that kept him from immediately becoming the new leader of Chechnya. According to the Constitution, Kadyrov was not eligible to run for president until he turned 30. However, Kadyrov was not shy about his political ambitions. Thus, on May 13, 2004, during a joint meeting, the State Council and the government of Chechnya officially addressed a request to President Putin that he support Kadyrov’s candidacy to become president of Chechnya and that he “take all measures to remove obstacles preventing his registration.”

IN CHECHNYA

THE POWER STRUGGLE

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ramzan kadyrov frame from the video

those who have not yet understood will soon understand.

Ramzan Kadyrov, who was shot dead in Vienna

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In effect, a dual-power structure had formed an open battle with Alkhanov and publicly criticized the head for president. Having become prime minister, he entered into Kadyrov was forced to support publicly. On August 29, the Chechen Minister of the Interior Alu Alkhanov, who The Russian federal authorities, however, were betting on Kadyrov, who had established control over enormous financial flows from the Russian federal budget. The conflict between the president and the prime minister of Chechnya soon took on the character of an armed confrontation. Kadyrov was backed by former combatants who had been integrated into the system of the republic's Interior Ministry, while Alkhanov was supported by senior officers of Chechen combat units under the command of Russia's federal security forces, such as Sulim Yamadayev, the head of the «East» battalion of the 291st Motorized Rifle Division of the 42nd Guard Motorized Rifle Division of the Chief Intelligence Directorate (GRU), Movladi Baisarov, commander of the «Gorets» («Mountaineer») special division, subordinate to the tactical department of the North Caucasus Directorate of the Federal Security Service (FSB), and Said-Magomed Kakyryev, commander of the GRU-controlled «West» battalion.

In mid-April 2006, a conflict broke out between riot police (OMON) officers loyal to Alkhanov and the «Kadyrovites», as a result of which the former were disarmed and taken to police headquarters. After this incident, Kadyrov ordered his loyal security forces to shoot to kill in similar situations. Later, Kadyrov called Alkhanov to warn him against «bothering his guys because they are combatants, and they miss war, and if they are further provoked, they will definitely start one.»

On April 25th, a shooting match took place in downtown Grozny between the security detail of the Chechen president and that of the Chechen prime minister. The day before, Alu Alkhanov had forbidden any armed individuals from entering the building that housed the government. The «Kadyrovites» tried to enter the grounds of the government complex but were stopped by officers from Alkhanov's security service. As a result of the shooting that ensued, one of the president's bodyguards was injured. According to the media, Kadyrov called Alkhanov and demanded that the «building be abandoned within thirty minutes». Federal security force units were dispatched to downtown Grozny to defend the government building. This armed confrontation lasted for several hours.

By 2007, the Kremlin virtually admitted that the policy of checks and balances in Chechnya had failed. In February, Russian President Vladimir Putin accepted Alu Alkhanov's resignation and virtually handed all powers of government in Chechnya over to Ramzan Kadyrov by appointing him as acting president. On March 2nd, Kadyrov officially became head of the Chechen Republic.
CHAPTER 2
CHECHEN KHANATE

REGIME OF PERSONAL POWER

The political system established by Kadyrov in Chechnya can be described as a regime of personal power. His authority in the republic is practically unlimited. Parliament, the media, and the judicial system are all controlled by the region’s leader. Kadyrov declares that Vladimir Putin is the only limiting factor of his personal authority in the republic. “I am Putin’s man. His word is law for me. How can one not worship him? Putin is a gift of God”

Ramzan Kadyrov as good as prohibited opposition activity on the territory of Chechnya. “I said that the word ‘opposition’ should be forgotten [in the republic]”. From his point of view, opposition is harmful to the state. “We have no opposition, this system is made up to undermine [state] authority. I will not allow to play with the people,” Kadyrov clarifies. Not one political party except United Russia is active on the territory of the republic. Furthermore, it appears to be impossible to monitor elections, since independent observers are concerned about their own safety.

Due to a total lack of political counterbalance, Kadyrov’s regime guarantees almost 100 percent of the vote for Putin and the United Russia party in elections for positions at all levels of government. “The voter turnout during the elections would be no less than 100 percent and maybe even more,” Kadyrov once stated in the run-up to the elections in the republic, and his forecast turned out to be close to reality. Today, out of 41 members of the Chechen Parliament, 37 represent the United Russia party, the regional branch of which is headed by Kadyrov himself. During the 2011 elections to the State Duma, the local electoral commission registered a 99 percent voter turnout, and United Russia’s electoral list with Kadyrov at its head received 99 percent of the vote. During the 2012 presidential elections, Putin received 99.73 percent of the vote in Chechnya, with a 99.59 percent voter turnout.

Arkady Lyubarev, an expert of the Golos Association, openly calls the results of the elections in Chechnya falsified. Political analyst Dmitry Oreshkin describes the republic as an area of a specific electoral regime, where “an independent observer risks his own head by coming to the polling place”. Even the supporters of the current regime have to admit that elections in Chechnya are an obvious fraud. “The political system in Chechnya is based on authoritarianism, and it is able to guarantee proper results. I have not seen similar results since the Soviet times,” Vyacheslav Nikonov, a State Duma member from United Russia, commented on the results of the 2011 parliamentary elections.
Kadyrov called for the imprisonment of the organizers of the rallies for fair elections that took place in Moscow in the run-up to the presidential elections. “Those who organize protests are the enemies of Russia and were it up to me, I would throw them all in prison”.

Human rights activists help the relatives of missing persons to write requests to law-enforcement bodies and to the European Court of Human Rights. Lawyers that human rights activists involved in this activity have already won more than 50 cases in the Strasbourg court that ordered the Russian state to pay more than €12 million to the victims.

Ramzan Kadyrov does not hide his hostility toward Memorial. “These people are the enemies of Russia,” he declared on Grozny TV channel in 2010. One year before that statement, Natalia Estemirova, an activist of Memorial, had been abducted in the Chechen capital. Her body was later found with bullet wounds to the head and chest. According to the head of Memorial, Oleg Orlov, one of Estemirova’s last reports pertained to kidnappings by the “Kadyrovites” in the village of Akhkinchu-Borzoi and a public shooting of one of those abducted. This report put Kadyrov into a rage. Orlov directly accused Ramzan Kadyrov of organizing the assassination of his colleague. “I know who is to blame for Estemirova’s murder. We all know this person. His name is Ramzan Kadyrov. He threatened Natalia, insulted her, considered her his personal enemy.”

“Power in Chechnya is yet again seized by legalized rebels. The local king of beasts with a cushy job and a Hero of Russia star on his chest blatantly takes credit for the victories of army special forces,” Russia’s Deputy Prime Minister Dmitry Rogozin said before his appointment to the government.

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CHAPTER 2 CHECHEN KHANATE

ARMED UNDERGROUND FORCES

Putin’s main objective in vesting all government powers in Kadyrov was the destruction of underground separatist forces that employed terrorist methods in their struggle for the republic’s independence. In exchange for exclusive powers and authority, Kadyrov was first of all supposed to solve this particular problem.

Despite the ongoing special operations against the separatists in Chechnya’s mountain regions and the legalization of a number of rebels in Kadyrov’s structures, underground radical Islamic forces are still present on the republic’s territory. Once in a while, they become active by carrying out militant raids on Chechen cities and attacking police officers. All in all, the situation remains rather tense.

Thus, on December 4, 2014, a group of Islamist rebels attacked Grozny. Militants gunned down a traffic police checkpoint and seized the House of the Press, after which hostilities between Islamists and Russian law-enforcement forces continued around the city’s Old Market, Mira Street and the public school # 20. Russian army units and heavy vehicles were used to repel the assault. Rebels killed 14 and injured 36 law-enforcement officials. One civilian also died57.

On June 26, 2015, Islamist militants gunned down policemen in a residential district of Grozny63. On July 29, 2015, an armed confrontation involving underground rebels and policemen took place near the villages of Itskhan-Yurt and Maytyp5.

The republic’s unresolved social problems is one of the main reasons why armed underground forces are still present in Chechnya. For example, despite the enormous federal grants allocated to Chechnya, Ramzan Kadyrov’s government failed to solve the problem of mass unemployment. The authorities are reporting that in 2015, the republic’s steadily decreasing unemployment rate has dropped to 13.9 percent60. The real picture has nothing in common with official reports. Substandard living conditions in the context of growing polygamy, which is considered a norm in the traditional Chechen society, create an ideal atmosphere for radical Muslim organizations to recruit young Chechens.

The ostentatious Islamization of the republic is an important characteristic of Ramzan Kadyrov’s policy. Outwardly, Chechnya looks like a religious state based on medieval Asian traditions. In 2010, Kadyrov publicly stated that “Shar’ia law is above Russia’s laws” and “Islam’s enemies must be destroyed”69. However, the religious character of Kadyrov’s regime is a considerable degree an instrument of political influence. For example, Alexei Malashenko, an expert at the Moscow Carnegie Center, believes that “religion, with the help of mosques, first of all allows Kadyrov to control the population”69.

For instance, in accordance with conservative Islamic traditions, it is practically impossible to meet wounded heads on the territory of modern Chechnya. These regulations had been forced upon the population. Kadyrov publicly supported painball attacks against women with uncovered heads in the streets of Grozny63.

“One vice squad keeps watch by our college entrance. These people visually estimate skirt lengths and how scarves are tied around students’ heads. They laid their hands on young women a few times. But who would go to report them, and where, when everyone knows that authority has been granted to them from above,” says Luiza, a teacher from Grozny64. “If Kadyrov drives in a motorcade and sees a girl on the side of the road wearing a short skirt, he can roll down the car window and yell at her right from the cab,” says Madina, a Grozny resident65.

Polygamy, which is considered a norm in the tradition of Islam, has virtually been legalized in violation of Russia’s laws. “There are 25 million Muslims in Russia, and polygamy should be allowed in such regions as Chechnya. Those who consider us barbarians because of that are clearly barbarians themselves since this is a normal, pure and proper attitude toward women,” Kadyrov says66.

In the spring of 2015, a marriage that took place in Chechnya between the 47-year-old Nazhud Guchigov, the Nozhai-Yurt district police chief, and the 17-year-old Luiza Goylabiyeva caused a big stir. According to the journalist Yelena Milashina, the teenager was forced to wed the man. Goylabiyeva’s family had been put under pressure. Furthermore, during his conversation with Milashina, Guchigov admitted that he had another wife, which means that this new marriage was violating the laws of the Russian Federation. Ramzan Kadyrov, however, declared that he had personally allowed Guchigov to marry the 17-year-old girl67.

In November 2015, on Kadyrov’s orders, the Chechen interior minister instructed his employees to organize prayer recitation on the official level for law-enforcement officials, and to give weekly reports to the Interior Ministry headquarters about the number of recited prayers. The telephoned telegram signed by Interior Minister Alkhanov was put in the disposal of the author of the present report.

The Islamization of Chechnya also affects medical care on the territory of the republic. In 2009, Ramzan Kadyrov opened a Center for Islamic Medicine in Grozny that specializes in performing “djinn” exorcisms68. According to Kadyrov, the center annually treats around 60,000 “patients” and helps to rid them of ailments using “nontraditional methods, by reading the Holy Quran”69.

The virtual official self-identification with the terrorists responsible for the Charlie Hebdo shooting in Paris came as an important symbol of the radical Islamization of Chechnya under Ramzan Kadyrov. On January 7, 2015, radical Islamists attacked the offices of the satirical newspaper, killing 12 people in revenge for publishing cartoons of Prophet Muhammad. “I consider my personal enemies all those who support the right of Charlie Hebdo and other publications to insult the religious feelings of Muslims,” Kadyrov commented on the terrorist attack69.

Ten days later, he organized a protest rally in Chechnya involving thousands of people against the publication of Muhammad caricatures, thus in effect supporting the terrorists’ demands while the world was mourning the victims of the shooting in France.

However, according to many experts, the Islamization of Chechnya only exhibits outward signs, while Kadyrov’s regime in many respects contradicts Islam.

“The main incongruity consists in Kadyrov’s personality cult,” believes Novaya Gazeta correspondent Yelena Milashina. According to her, Friday prayers in Chechen mosques begin and end with praising Kadyrov — not the Prophet. This is a grave violation of Islamic principles.
Homework
Funds that are being allocated to Chechnya for the purpose of social support of the population are also worth mentioning. For example, Chechnya is the country’s biggest recipient of federal funds under maternity certificates. According to Russia’s Pension Fund, from July 1, 2009, to September 1, 2013, around 32 billion rubles were transferred to the republic to cover maternity capitals. The population growth in the region over this period amounted to some 86,000 people. In comparison, the residents of Moscow, where population growth over the same period reached several hundred thousand people, received only 15 billion rubles under maternity certificates from 2009 to 2013. In fact, only a part of this enormous amount of money reaches the republic’s residents.

The analysis of Chechnya’s financial situation, however, shows that the origins of the funds that are flowing into the republic are far from divine. For all the years that Kadyrov has been heading the region, allocations from the federal center have accounted for more than 80 percent of Chechnya’s budget. From 2001 to 2014, more than 464 billion rubles were allocated to Chechnya in the form of grants, subsidies and donations. Since 2004, the gratuitous grants have been amounting to around 59 billion rubles per year. In 2007, when President Putin appointed Kadyrov as president of Chechnya, the republic’s share in the total amount of transfers to Russia’s regions reached its highest point.

It is worth noting that these numbers include neither the federal funds that are being spent in Chechnya directly — for the construction of government buildings, for example — nor the expenses of state-controlled companies that operate on the territory of Chechnya and invest money in the region’s economy.

The share of federal subsidies in the budget of Chechnya

Grants from the federal budget, billion rubles

The share of non-repayable contributions in the republic’s total income

Source: figures released by the Federal Treasury.
CHAPTER 3

The social sphere that is accumulating enormous allocations from the federal budget has become a key source of the illegal acquisition of wealth for Chechnya's top officials.

Funds that the republic receives from Moscow are not being spared. For instance, Russian Finance Minister Anton Siluanov has called Chechnya a champion of prodigality. Thus, he noted that the fleet of office cars of Chechen officials accounts for about half of the office car fleet of the entire North Caucasus. Furthermore, in Chechnya, civil servants' business expenses are twice as high as anywhere else in Russia.

"IF YOU GIVE MONEY WITHOUT SUPERVISION TO PEOPLE WHO HAVE WEAPONS, THIS IS CALLED A TRIBUTE — NOT FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE"

As for Kadyrov, he believes that the republic is not getting enough money. Thus, in an interview with the "Russian News Service" he declared that "tens of billions of rubles are not being released from the federal budget" to his region. "We are concerned. We have debts. We took loans. We did everything we could," Kadyrov emphasized.

Meanwhile, oversight over funds allocated to Chechnya is being carried out only formally. Chechnya is at the very top of the list of Russia's most corrupt regions. Even Kremlin officials admit that a considerable part of the funds are being stolen. Thus, in 2010, then-President Dmitry Medvedev said: "Federal funds often do not reach people. We know where they disappear. It is obvious— they are being stolen." 86

"The Ministry of Justice understands very well that the Kadyrov Foundation essentially serves as [Ramzan's] personal portfolio. In fact, the foundation is above the law," believes Georgy Alburov, an expert at the Anti-Corruption Foundation.

Through business structures or people close to its founders, the foundation controls all major real estate properties in Chechnya. For example, the foundation de facto controls the Arena City company that operates a hotel of the same name in Grozny, where show business stars and Ramzan Kadyrov's guests of honor usually stay. The foundation also owns a 50 percent stake in the company Kolizey, through which Kadyrov controls a major sports complex of the same name in downtown Grozny that is known for expensive mixers with international celebrities. It is through Kolizey and companies associated with it that the commercial channel is channeled before returning to the Kadyrov Foundation. 87

"THE AKHMAD KADYROV FOUNDATION IS ABOVE THE LAW AND ESSENTIALLY SERVES AS RAMZAN’S PERSONAL WALLET"

In addition to funds flowing into Chechnya from the federal budget, enormous financial resources are being accumulated in the Akhmad Kadyrov Foundation. Technically, this organization is headed by Ramzan Kadyrov's mother, which allows the head of Chechnya to control the organization.

The principal trait of the Akhmad Kadyrov Foundation is its lack of transparency. The most recent information about the Foundation that can be found in the open sources dates back to 2013. At the time, there was 1.45 billion rubles in the organization's accounts. Open sources, however, offer no information about the origins of these funds.

The database of the Russian Ministry of Justice has no reports relating to the activity of the foundation. In its response to a request made by Kommersant newspaper in 2015, Ministry of Justice officials said that the foundation publishes reports in the local media. 88 This is, however, a violation of the law. Registered nongovernmental organizations have to regularly account for the sources of their financing and expenses to the Ministry of Justice. The Akhmad Kadyrov Foundation is Russia's only nongovernmental organization that disregards this legal provision. Furthermore, officials ignore this violation.

"We are concerned. We have debts. We took loans. We did everything we could," Kadyrov emphasized.

According to the economist Mikhail Delyagin, in 2005, the Chechen government laid out unprecedented financial demands before Russia that “looked more like the Golden Horde’s claims on the conquered Russia.” 89 From his point of view, the Russian authorities still prefer “paying money to good Chechens to make bad Chechens jealous.” "Only if you give money without supervision to people who have weapons, this is called a tribute — not financial assistance," Delyagin emphasizes.

Kadyrov has repeatedly told journalists that he finds the slogan “Stop feeding Caucasus” the most offensive. Despite the enormous amounts of money that are being allocated to Chechnya year after year, this slogan does seem incorrect. Social stratification in the republic amounts to more than 40 percent, which is Russia’s highest number. 90 According to official statistics only, in Chechnya, more than 180,000 people live below the poverty line. The same cannot be said about Kadyrov. He enjoys a life of luxury. This is why the aforementioned slogan that Chechnya’s president finds so unpleasant should actually be changed to “Stop feeding Kadyrov.”
LIFE OF LUXURY

According to Ramzan Kadyrov’s 2015 income declaration, he earned 4.84 million rubles that year. The declaration also states that he owns a 3,500-square-meter plot of land and a 2,300-square-meter house. The Chechen president’s wife, Medni Kadyrova, declared an income of 3.37 million rubles and a 210-square-meter apartment. Kadyrov’s family also owns a 300-square-meter house. According to the declaration, the head of Chechnya and his family members do not own any cars.

However, Kadyrov’s ostentatiously luxurious lifestyle brings into question the veracity of his declaration of income.

“This luxurious lifestyle has been discussed by the Russian media on numerous occasions. Thus, in 2009, Vedomosti newspaper noticed that Kadyrov’s watch is a Bovet, model Fleurer Minute Repeater in 18K white gold. The retail price of this watch amounts to $300,000. In 2015, RBC newspaper published a picture of Kadyrov wearing a GrubelForsey watch, model Tourbillon 24 Seconds Contemporain, the price of which reaches $280,000.

In his comment on the publication, Kadyrov admitted that he owns a whole collection of expensive watches and other objects, the value of which considerably exceeds his official income. “The picture shows by no means the most expensive watch from my rare collection. From a young age, I have been collecting watches, cold weapons and other objects that once belonged to great people,” he declared.

Kadyrov’s car fleet would make any oligarch envious. In 2008, a video of Ramzan Kadyrov’s motorcade composed of around fifty cars was made public. The video shows up to ten BMWs, nine Porsche Cayennes, two Mercedes-Benz S-klasse, several Mercedes G-klasse, eight Lexuses LX 470, and more than a dozen Russian Volgas and Zhigulis. The approximate cost of the motorcade amounts to about €2 million. The maintenance cost of such a car fleet is estimated at €10,000 to €12,000 a day. However, this is probably just a part of an enormous car fleet belonging to the Chechen president. The cars that Kadyrov has at his disposal already a building of an incredible size with some private objects that once belonged to great people,” he declared.

According to Ramzan Kadyrov’s acquaintances, he even has a private zoo. “Yes, he has a zoo in his residence. Tigers, lions, pumas, panthers. Kadyrov likes predators very much. Very beautiful,” Igor Lebedenko, a football player for Terek Grozny, said after visiting the presidential residence. Another player for Terek Grozny, Antonio Ferreira, posted a picture with a puma in his arms that was taken during his visit to Kadyrov’s residence.

And State Duma Member Leonid Slutsky presented Kadyrov with yet another puma. Six people brought the cage with the animal into the banquet room during Kadyrov’s birthday party. “I know you have bears, lions, tigers, leopards, and now a puma will join your zoo,” the legislator said in his birthday speech.

Out of all his animals, Kadyrov has a particularly soft spot for horses. He owns stables with elite racers. As the politician himself admits, he owns eight “great stallions” costing from $300,000 to $2.5 million each. However, according to the Russian database of horse racing tracks, as of February 2016, Ramzan Kadyrov owns 102 registered racers, and each of them brings their owner profit. However, not one of these horses is mentioned in his declaration of income.

“FROM A YOUNG AGE, I HAVE BEEN COLLECTING WATCHES, COLD WEAPONS AND OTHER OBJECTS THAT ONCE BELONGED TO GREAT PEOPLE”

RAMZAN KADYROV

It is worth mentioning that the discrepancy between the official income and actual living standards is a typical phenomenon for Russian officials. Kadyrov’s example, however, cannot be compared with any governor or minister. No other representative of the Russian authorities allows himself to make such an ostentatious display of his luxurious lifestyle and to publicly throw money about. Neither the law-enforcement bodies nor secret services nor the Accounts Chamber of the Russian Federation ask Kadyrov awkward questions about the sources of his wealth. Everyone understands that it is Russia’s president himself who allows Kadyrov to behave in this manner.

Commenting on the 2009 declaration of income of the Chechen leader, Sergei Stepashin, Chairman of the Accounts Chamber of the Russian Federation, plainly admitted: “Kadyrov owns the entire republic. So do not worry about him.”
CHAPTER 4

PRIVATE ARMY

COMBAT INFANTRY

Chechnya's president was being rather deceitful. Thousands of armed combatants gathered on the stadium represented Kadyrov's personal combat infantry loyal first of all to him — not the federal authorities. Only in Chechnya did the Kremlin authorize the formation of local armed units controlled de facto only by the head of the republic himself. Kadyrov's battalions are the country's only ethnic-based fighting forces, although Russian law does not contain such a provision.

Combatants' loyalty to Kadyrov can be explained first of all by the biographies of many of them. The core of Chechnya's law-enforcement structures consists of former separatists who were granted amnesty by the decision of the republic's head. Furthermore, he authorized them to carry weapons again, but this time under his control. Thus, former rebels who fought against the Russian army owe to Kadyrov not only their jobs and wages, but also their lives and freedom.

According to experts, the total number of the Kadyrovites nears 30,000 people. A considerable number of them are officers of the Russian Interior Ministry or servicemen of the Interior Ministry's Internal Troops. In reality, armed units operating on the territory of Chechnya are loyal only to Chechnya's president — they are not controlled by the federal authorities.

“In all Russian regions, Interior Ministry officers and servicemen pledge allegiance to the law, while in Chechnya they pledge allegiance to Kadyrov personally.”

“In late December 2014, in Grozny, Ramzan Kadyrov carried out an inspection of armed troops under his control. Around 20,000 fully equipped and armed combatants were gathered on the city stadium. After performing a sort of a victory lap in front of his soldiers, Kadyrov made a speech in which he referred to himself and to those present as Putin’s combat infantry.
Kadyrov also pays considerable attention to the training of new soldiers for his army. In Chechnya, new combatants are recruited very young. For example, a project called Young Fortress is being implemented in the republic, which is in fact a training camp for young combatants. Adolescents from disadvantaged families live in barracks and spend their days learning how to fight and kill. In 2009, a documentary about the Young Fortress camp was broadcast on Grozny TV. The footage shows 12-year-old children praying together, chanting “Allahu Akbar,” marching on the drill square and shooting military weapons under the supervision of Kadyrov himself. Adolescents are being raised in the traditions of Islam and in loyalty to Chechnya’s president.

**COMBAT EFFICIENCY**

The regional ethnic-based army that was formed in Chechnya is perhaps the most combat-efficient military force in today’s Russia.

Kadyrov’s SWAT team plays an important role in its structure. Daniil Martynov, an experienced officer of the Russian secret services, is responsible for the training of SWAT operatives. In 2013, after leaving the FSB’s Alpha fast-response team, Martynov was appointed as an assistant to the head of Chechnya. Martynov’s former colleagues see him switching jobs as treason. They are seriously concerned that Kadyrov, whom the Russian officer is training will again use weapons against Russian soldiers, as it happened in the 1990s and in the early 2000s.

The Russian authorities also find this cooperation alarming. Thus, in 2013, a State Duma member from United Russia, Alexei Zhuravlyov, sent a request to the Federal Security Service demanding that the legality of the fact that a former Alpha officer is responsible for the training of Kadyrov’s combatants be checked. “Exercises of Chechen commandos under Martynov’s supervision look strange. These guys certainly do not look like they follow the regulations of Russia’s armed forces. Can such special groups be legally formed in any subject of the Russian Federation or is it only Chechnya’s privilege? I consulted with specialists, they are all perplexed,” the legislator said.

Meanwhile, Martynov’s work is paying off, and the “Chechen SWAT team” has reached a new level of professionalism. For example, in April 2015, Chechen combatants won the special forces championship in Jordan. Forty-three teams from all around the world participated in this championship. Combatants from this battalion participated, for example, in the fighting for the Donetsk airport and the town of Illovaysk. According to commanders, among combatants of the Death Battalion “90 percent are former separatists” who had fought against the Russian army but joined Ramzan Kadyrov’s law-enforcement structures after having been amnestied. The identity of one commander of the Death Battalion was established. Bolotkanov Apti Denisolhanovich is a former commander of the 3rd patrol squadron of the South Battalion of the Internal Troops of the Russian Interior Ministry (4157th military unit, motorized infantry division — the village of Vedeno, the Chechen Republic). He holds the rank of major in Russia’s Interior Ministry, and in 2008, by Ramzan Kadyrov’s decree, was awarded the Medal of Merit for the Chechen Republic.

On December 10, 2014, a video showing the Death Battalion’s movement on the territory of the Donbass was made public. One of the commanders of the battalion, nicknamed Stinger, says that the unit has “around 300 fighters in the Donets region” with at least 10 years of experience. According to him, up to 70 percent of combatants are former special forces operatives, and most of them hold government awards. “We are soldiers of the Russian Army and Russian secret services, most of us are war veterans,” the Death Battalion commander emphasizes.

**THUGS**

In recent years, Kadyrov’s combatants have become active in Moscow. However, in Chechnya their main objective consists in protecting the regime established by their boss, whereas the rest of Russia is considered by them as a potential trophy.

The first serious losses among Chechen combatants fighting alongside the separatists were reported on May 26, the same day that armed units of the so-called Donetsk People’s Republic (DPR) attacked the city airport controlled by Ukrainian forces. Two trucks transporting combatants were destroyed as a result of the hostilities. The doctor Denis Kloss confirmed the information about the participation of Chechens in these hostilities. “I was in the second truck with injured Chechens. A bomb got under our truck and turned it over, the front wheels got torn away. Then shooting started. We began stopping cars on the road, loaded the injured and sent them to hospitals,” he said. DPR Premier Alexander Borodai declared that 33 Russians had been identified among those killed on May 26. Borodai emphasized that among DPR combatants there are many ethnic Chechens “ready to defend their Russian brothers.”

On August 29, 2014, a video recorded by a Chechen combatant on the Russian-Ukrainian border was made public. The footage shows a dialogue between two combatants speaking Chechen in front of a column of tanks and other armored vehicles. “This is our column, one cannot see either its beginning or its end, and we have gotten ready for invasion. Allahu akbar!” the combatant said to the camera. “There are Chechens here. Those tankers here are Chechens.” “We are going to war to leave the khokhly [a derogatory term for Ukrainians] in tatters. Inshallah!” says a driver mechanic in sunglasses looking out of the tank hatch.

On November 19, 2014, documentary evidence emerged relating to the formation of a Chechen Death Battalion in the Donbass composed of veterans of Ramzan Kadyrov’s law-enforcement structures. Marina Akhmedova, special correspondent for the Russki Reporter journal, published conversations with battalion commanders that took place on the territory of its base camp in the Donets region. Combatants from this battalion participated, for example, in the fighting for the Donetsk airport and the town of Illovaysk. According to commanders, among Kadyrov's law-enforcement structures
Organized crime groups formed by Chechen thugs are operating in Russian regions. Some crime bosses enjoy Kadyrov's direct support and public protection. For instance, in 2011, Khadzimurat Gakayev, a crime boss known in the criminal world as Murat Bohlsi (Murat the Big), was arrested in Moscow. Gakayev's organized criminal group specialized in extortions and kidnappings, and Murat Bohlsi was accused of attempting an illegal takeover of a building belonging to the Russian Academy of Science in Moscow. The criminal case file contained a video depicting Gakayev armed with a gun hitting an entrepreneur, who was renting the building from the Academy, on the face.

Ramzan Kadyrov immediately came to the defense of the arrested crime boss. He said that Murat Bohlsi was the son of a owner and owned a legal business. "In fact, he was provoked," Chechyna's president explained. Yet another person close to Kadyrov, Ramzan Tstislavayev, the "Chechen president's official representative," also managed to escape criminal liability. The Moscow police suspected him of extorting a large amount of money from the wife of an arrested businessman. Andrei Novikov. According to investigators, Tstislavayev promised to provide assistance in the businessman's release if his wife paid him $500,000. In November 2014, operatives of the criminal investigation department planned a special operation to catch Tstislavayev red-handed. The police半天 when he was receiving money in the Zotolote Kolto hotel, but were pushed back by Tstislavayev's armed bodyguards who had received training in Kadyrov's law-enforcement structures. Tstislavayev left the hotel and flew back to Chechyna the same day. Earlier, this individual had been known for representing Kadyrov's interests on the Ukrainian territory. Thus, in the spring of 2014, on the orders of Chechyna's head, Tstislavayev was involved in freeing LifeNews "reporters," representing Kadyrov's interests on the Ukrainian territory.

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However, in addition to protecting businessmen and politicians close to Kadyrov, the "Chechen department" of the FSB in Moscow also provided strong-arm assistance to crime bosses. Thus, in June 2012, Moscow police operatives were carrying out an operation to apprehend Adam Tataranov, a crime boss nicknamed Bad Boy, on suspicion of involvement in a series of assaults and robberies. His car was stopped on the Kutuzovsky Prospect. However, soon after the suspect had made a telephone call, several Chechen natives appeared on the spot and blocked the policemen. REN TV journalists captured on video an athletic-looking individual of North Caucasian appearance wearing a gun holsters on his belt. Later, in an interview with Novaya Gazeta, Rustam Agayev admitted that Kurbaban was his associate.

In 2014, "Kadyrov's FSB operatives" became involved in yet another criminal case of extortion. A group of armed combatants dressed in black uniforms led by Agayev took over an office belonging to the wife of a member of the Russian Federation Council, Mikhail Kapura. After introducing himself as an FSB operative, Agayev demanded that the politician pay him $2 million. Kapura's assistants called the police, and all the combatants were arrested.

In 2015, Agayev and his colleagues were at last convicted. The court confirmed his guilt in extorting $2 million "for personal profit with mercenary motives." Agayev was convicted to 11 years in a tough security penitentiary; four of his fellow countrymen received sentences ranging from 7.5 to 10 years.

conversations in pretrial detention, where they gave orders to intimidate witnesses. Alexander Bastrykin, chairman of the Investigative Committee of the Russian Federation, took this case under his personal supervision. Yet this did not help. High-ranking protectors of the Kadyrovites intervened, and they were all released. The criminal investigation was soon closed, and investigator Chingshi Berikov, who stubbornly refused to close it, was fired. As a result, several officers from the FSB central staff refused to report for work in protest at the protection of the suspects in this case. The indignant FSB officers told Novaya Gazeta that "an assistant to the FSB director came in and conveyed an order from the very top: do not touch Kadyrov's entourage.

Commenting on this case, Ramzan Kadyrov's press secretary said that the head of Chechyna does not even have bodyguards. However, he refrained from commenting on the fact that mission orders for the protection of Kadyrov himself and his family members were confiscated from the accused combatants during their arrest.

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In the years since Ramzan Kadyrov came to power in Chechnya, he has built around himself a consolidated network that controls considerable financial, military and administrative resources. Kadyrov calls people close to him his brothers. Many criminal organizations are characterized by family-like close ties. It is no coincidence that in Italy, the word “mafia” is associated with the notion of family.

CHAPTER 5

KADYROV’S FRIENDS

FAMILY TIES

In the infancy of mankind, the first communities were based on blood ties. In the modern world, appointing one’s relatives to positions of authority provokes a feeling of distrust toward the manager and suspicions of corrupt practices. However, this is not the case in Chechnya. Ramzan Kadyrov has no scruples about appointing his relatives to top posts. This is, in fact, an important characteristic of his policy. The head of the republic relies on his nephews, sisters, cousins.

Thus, Islam Kadyrov, Ramzan Kadyrov’s nephew, is the Chechen leader’s chief of staff. Kadyrov trusts him and tries to strengthen his position in the republic. Thanks to the support of his high-ranking uncle, Islam Kadyrov’s political influence has been growing consistently, and his role in the head of the republic’s close circle has become increasingly important. His duties come down to the control over Chechnya’s shadow economy. Islam Kadyrov’s status virtually puts him in charge of the heads of districts and makes him a sort of inspector whose responsibility it is to make sure that local financial flows do not miss the Akhmad Kadyrov Foundation that has long become the head of the republic’s personal pocket.

Kadyrov’s cousin, Abubakar Edelgeriyev, heads the Chechen government. The head of the republic believes Edelgeriyev has potential, and has repeatedly named him as his potential successor during his meetings with Chechen politicians. However, he has never publicly talked about this possibility.

Kadyrov’s sisters are responsible of the republic’s social sphere. Zulay Kadyrova occupies the post of deputy head of the administrative department of the head of the republic. Zargan Kadyrova oversees Chechnya’s preschool education. “The social sphere has become a bottomless source of corruption. The local authorities overestimate Chechnya’s population by around a third. Consequently, ‘dead souls’ are receiving payments, pensions, and benefits from the budget. In reality, this money ends up in the pockets of officials or get transferred to the accounts of the Kadyrov Foundation,” explains Novaya Gazeta correspondent Yelena Milashina.

Yet another relative of Kadyrov, Khasan Taymaskhanov, also enjoys considerable influence in Chechnya. An official assistant to the head of the republic, he oversees courts, tax authorities and the local justice area, including personnel appointments in this sector. Taymaskhanov’s clan is very close to Kadyrov. His relatives head the Ministry of Industry and Justice, the Federal Drug Control Service and one of the republic’s major universities. Furthermore, Bekkhan Taymaskhanov, the head of Chechnya’s representative office in Moscow, oversees the cash flow from Chechen businessmen residing in Russia’s capital into the Kadyrov Foundation.
BUSINESSMEN AND KILLERS

As previously noted, Kadyrov’s key financial instrument, in addition to Chechnya’s budget, is the Akhmad Kadyrov Foundation. This structure has multiple sources of money inflow. Two Chechen businessmen, Ruslan Baisarov and Umar Dzhabrailov, are among the Foundation’s important contributors.

Thanks to his political influence, Kadyrov makes it possible for his friends to receive gigantic profits. For instance, on Kadyrov’s initiative, enormous amounts of money were allocated for the construction of a mountain ski resort in Chechnya. For these purposes, the state-controlled corporation Vneshekonombank allocated 10.2 billion rubles to a small company, OOO Veduchi, with an authorized capital of 10,000 rubles. The company’s owner, Ruslan Baisarov, became the main beneficiary of the project 136. Moreover, the entrepreneur received additional benefits from the state in the form of fiscal privileges and budget funds to cover the construction of general utilities 136.

The head of Chechnya also used his political influence to help Baisarov solve his personal problems. Thus, in 2009, a scandal broke out when the businessman tried to take his money made on the illegal sale of oil products to Ramzan Kadyrov 138.

Kadyrov has just as diligently been protecting Umar Dzhabrailov’s interests. They used to be very close. They have been repeatedly seen together at high society events and parties in Moscow clubs 138. In 2006, Dzhabrailov publicly, “on behalf of the people,” called on Chechen President Alu Alkhanov to concede his post to Ramzan Kadyrov 139. In recent years, their relationship has somehow cooled down, but the close connection between them has remained as strong as before.

Dzhabrailov represented Chechnya in the Russian Federation Council for five years, which guaranteed him immunity from criminal prosecution. Furthermore, the head of Chechnya provided his friend with armed bodyguards from law-enforcement structures under his control, such as the Chechen directorate of the FSB 139.

In Dzhabrailov’s case, protection from law and physical threats was a valuable favor. He made a lot of enemies during his years as businessman and attracted the attention of law-enforcement bodies on a number of occasions. For example, during an assassination attempt on Moscow’s deputy mayor, Josif Ordzhonikidze, his bodyguards killed one of the assailants who turned out to be Umar Dzhabrailov’s brother, Salavat Dzhabrailov. Moreover, investigators believed that it was probably Umar Dzhabrailov who had ordered the hit 140. The businessman was also involved in another criminal case. In 2014, five of his bodyguards from among Kadyrov’s law-enforcement officers received prison sentences for extortion from Senator Mikhail Kapura. Dzhabrailov’s place of residence was searched in the contest for a small company, OOO Veduchi, with an authorized capital of 10,000 rubles. The company’s owner, Ruslan Baisarov, was put on Interpol’s wanted list for masterminding the murder of Sulim Yamadayev in Dubai 141. The name of Delimkhanov is also connected to the assassination of Boris Nemtsov. His killer, Zaur Dadayev, who was detained by investigators, turned out to be the deputy commander of Chechnya’s Sever (North) Battalion led by Delimkhanov’s brother, Alibek 142.

Entrepreneurs pay generously for Kadyrov’s friendship and good graces. In addition to transferring large sums of money into the accounts of the Kadyrov Foundation, they lavish the head of the republic with gifts. Thus, for Ramzan’s 30th birthday, Umar Dzhabrailov and Ruslan Baisarov presented him with a Ferrari Testarossa costing €450,000 143.

Furthermore, Baisarov is a major sponsor of the football club Terek, which is one of Kadyrov’s pet projects 144.

POLITICIANS AND BUTCHERS

Adam Delimkhanov, a member of the State Duma from United Russia and Kadyrov’s cousin, is also his right hand man. According to Kadyrov, this man is his “closest friend, more than a brother.” He also sees him as his potential successor in the position of the head of the Chechen republic 145.

During the First Chechen War, Delimkhanov fought alongside the separatists and was close to the notorious terrorist Salman Raduyev, working as his personal driver 146. When the Second Chechen War broke out, Delimkhanov joined the federal forces and headed the Chechen Interior Ministry’s so-called “oil regiment” that was responsible for defending pipelines on the territory of the republic. According to observers, with the help of combatants under his control Delimkhanov monopolized the right to install illegal pipeline junctions, thus pushing away all outsiders 147. Furthermore, Delimkhanov allegedly personally bought money made on the illegal sale of oil products to Ramzan Kadyrov 148.

Kadyrov was the one who encouraged the former rebel’s political career by first appointing him to the republic’s government, and then securing him a good place in the United Russia party list during the parliamentary elections. The relationship between Kadyrov and his cousin has been truly close and probably sealed with someone else’s blood. According to several sources, in Kadyrov’s close circle it is Delimkhanov who is responsible for all the dirty work relating to the physical elimination of Kadyrov’s enemies. Delimkhanov was suspected of involvement in the Moscow assassination of FSB Lieutenant-Colonel Movladi Baisarov, commander of the “Gorets” special division. “According to my sources, Adam Delimkhanov personally oversaw the special operation,” notes Mikhail Markelov, a member of the State Duma Committee on Security 149. Delimkhanov was put on Interpol’s wanted list for masterminding the murder of Sulim Yamadayev in Dubai 150. The name of Delimkhanov is also connected to the assassination of Boris Nemtsov. His killer, Zaur Dadayev, who was detained by investigators, turned out to be the deputy commander of Chechnya’s Sever (North) Battalion led by Delimkhanov’s brother, Alibek 151. According to Isa Yamadayev, who, unlike his brothers, survived the assassination attempt by the Kadyrovites, Delimkhanov’s notorious nickname in Chechnya is the Butcher 152.

Foreign secret services are also well acquainted with Delimkhanov’s name. In the United States, he is suspected of a connection with the international crime syndicate Bratski Krug (the Brothers’ Circle) 153. This mafia structure includes major crime organizations operating in post-Soviet, European, Middle Eastern and Latin American countries.
Delimkhanov is one of Chechnya’s richest men. As Kadyrov’s potential successor, he tries to keep up with his boss’s lifestyle. Thus, he occupies the 313th position on the list of Russian billionaires, with his wealth estimated at no less than 9 billion rubles.

Delimkhanov built an enormous palace for his brother and himself in his home village of Dzhalka. “There are a few buildings of stately proportions and a few streets in the center of the village, the reconstruction of which was paid for by Delimkhanov himself. This is an absolutely feudal story about a prince who made it possible for himself to arrive at his residence in style,” says the journalist Ivan Sukhov after visiting Chechnya.

Delimkhanov also shows a liking for extravagant luxury. In 2011, he had a fight in the State Duma with a colleague from the United Russia caucus, Alexey Zhuravlev. Having suspected the latter of a dislike toward Kadyrov, the Chechen legislator smashed his face in and threatened to kill him. According to witnesses, during the fight, a golden gun fell out of Delimkhanov’s pocket. Soon afterwards, it became known that the gun was Kadyrov’s gift, which Delimkhanov never parts with, even in the parliament building. All people close to the head of Chechnya own golden guns given to them as gifts. This is a distinctive symbol of Kadyrov’s close circle. It is also worth mentioning that after the attack, Zhuravlev ceased all criticism of Kadyrov and recalled his parliamentary requests that had annoyed top Chechen officials.

Magomed Daudov, also known as Lord, is yet another official close to Kadyrov who enjoys considerable influence in Chechnya. He is believed to have eliminated the organizer of the May 9, 2004 terrorist attack that caused the death of Akhmad Kadyrov, thus winning the favor of Chechnya’s current leader. Daudov holds the Hero of Russia title.

Chechnya is fairly clearly divided into districts of influence among people from Kadyrov’s close circle. Magomed Daudov’s domain is his home district of Shali. He is the one who appoints people to top administrative and law-enforcement jobs here. Any attempt at interfering with his sphere of influence provokes an extremely aggressive reaction from Daudov. The confrontation between Daudov and Sergei Bobrov, the head of the Investigative Committee in Chechnya, appointed by Moscow, serves as a very good example.

Bobrov was sent to Chechnya in 2013. He began by dispersing the Chechen directorate of the Investigative Committee by firing 30 local investigators for official misconduct. The reformed agency began to actively investigate systematic abductions and tortures that had long become commonplace in the republic. Thus, in August 2013, a criminal case was initiated against Chechen policemen who had tortured Umalat Boltiev with electricity to force him to sign a confession. Digayev, the deputy district police chief of Shali, was detained in connection with this case.
After that, investigators began to experience massive pressure from Kadyrov’s law-enforcement officials. For instance, an audiotape of the conversation between Ruslan Imeriyev, chief of the Shali police department, and investigator Rashid Ramzayev, who had authorized the arrest of the former’s subordinate officer, was posted on the Internet. The policeman threatened the investigator with rape, the video of which would be made public if he did not close the case. Soon after that, a meeting took place between General Bobrov and Magomed Daudov, during which Kadyrov’s henchman repeated the threats in a milder form. As a result, the criminal case was closed and Bobrov resigned from the post of the head of the Investigative Committee in Chechnya.

However, this was not the first time that Daudov’s name was mentioned in connection with stories of a criminal nature relating to abductions and tortures. One of the most publicized cases in Chechnya connected with the Lord. “During Putin’s two presidential terms, he [Zolotov] moved from colonel to colonel-general. He entered Putin’s closest, narrowest circle,” notes historian Boris Volodarsky, who specializes in the history of secret services. Thanks to Zolotov, the head of Chechnya has a direct contact with the Russian president. It is on the general’s initiative that Putin met with Kadyrov in the Kremlin on the day of his father’s assassination. This meeting had in many ways predetermined Kadyrov’s political rise that followed.

General Viktor Zolotov remains one of Kadyrov’s most influential friends in Moscow. The head of the Russian president’s security service from 2000 to 2013, Zolotov enjoys Vladimir Putin’s trust. He later headed the Interior Ministry’s internal troops and, in 2015, he was awarded the rank of general of the Russian army. “General Viktor Zolotov has in many ways predetermined Kadyrov’s political rise that followed. Thanks to Zolotov, the head of Chechnya has a direct contact with the Russian president. It is on the general’s initiative that Putin met with Kadyrov in the Kremlin on the day of his father’s assassination. This meeting had in many ways predetermined Kadyrov’s political rise that followed.”

Kadyrov’s economic affairs in which, according to the document, he was assisted by the current Chechen ombudsman, consisted in procuring funds for terrorist activity. For example, in 1997, the Russian secret services caught Nukhazhiyev carrying out illegal financial operations in the town of Ukhta. Just like many former rebels and terrorists holding posts and receiving salary in Kadyrov’s administration, the Chechen ombudsman prefers not to remember his past. Unlike Salman Raduyev, Nukhazhiyev’s current protector has no problems with the Russian law-enforcement bodies.
On his Kremlin friend’s advice, Kadyrov has been gradually establishing the vertical of power in the republic similar to Putin’s, but using tougher methods given the specific nature of the Caucasus. Surkov recommended that Kadyrov publicly swear fealty to Putin in the most flattering words and as often as possible. The official understood very well the importance of such public displays of loyalty in modern Russia. Surkov, who enjoyed considerable influence in the corridors of federal power, has been defending Chechnya’s political and economic interests before the country’s leadership. Kadyrov called Surkov the most respected Chechen, and in 2010 awarded him with the title of “Honorary Citizen of the Chechen Republic.”

According to Alexei Venediktov, editor-in-chief of Ekho Moskvory radio, it is Surkov who backs up Kadyrov in the latter’s confrontation with federal law-enforcement authorities. Putin is being made to believe that only Surkov can solve the current conflict, which increases his political influence as an intermediary between Chechnya and Moscow officials.

“In my understanding, the key actor is not Kadyrov but the person behind him who is bringing the conflict into the public space to reach his own objectives. This could be Vladislav Surkov, who wants to show Putin that he can resolve the “Kadyrov vs. Federation” conflict. It seems to me that Kadyrov’s latest statements sound as a Moscow project, I feel the hand of a Moscow guy behind it,” Venediktov says.

After Surkov was dismissed from his post of deputy Kremlin chief of staff, he began running into trouble with the law. The Russian Investigative Committee initiated a criminal case over embezzlement in the Skolkovo Foundation. Surkov could have become a key defendant in this case. Thus, in June 2015, State Duma Member Ilya Ponomaryov, who had been put on the international wanted list for complicity in embezzlement, declared that investigators wanted him to testify against Surkov.

“Yes, I was openly told: say that Surkov is guilty, and we will leave you alone, say that he paid you,” Ponomaryov claims.

It was then Kadyrov’s turn to show support for his Moscow protector, who had fallen out of favor. As soon as investigators mentioned Surkov’s name in connection with a criminal case, he went straight to Grozny. The head of Chechnya welcomed his guest in informal surroundings, openly called him his brother and head of Chechnya maximum authority. It was Surkov who became the ideologist of the unconventional relationship model between Chechnya and the federal center.
ASSASSINATION OF THE YAMADAYEV BROTHERS

During the First Chechen War, the brothers Ruslan and Sulim Yamadayev fought alongside the separatists. However, on the eve of the Second Chechen War, they switched sides to join the federal forces together with Akhmad Kadyrov. In 2001 and 2002, Ruslan Yamadayev was the military commandant of Chechnya. In 2003, he was elected to the State Duma from the United Russia party. In 2004, he received the Hero of Russia award. Sulim Yamadayev formed Chechnya’s Vostok Battalion belonging to the GRU (Chief Intelligence Directorate) that fought alongside Russian law-enforcement forces against the “Wahhabis.” In 2005, he was promoted to the rank of colonel and awarded with the Hero of Russia Star.

People who criticize Ramzan Kadyrov, and whom Chechnya’s president publicly refers to as his enemies, systematically get killed. Furthermore, individuals involved in the investigations are usually, in one way or another, connected with Kadyrov.

As Ramzan Kadyrov’s position was strengthening, his frustration grew with regard to the Yamadayev brothers, who were maintaining their independence and an armed resource uncontrolled by the head of the republic. During the active phase of the struggle for power in Chechnya between Kadyrov and Alu Alkhanov, the Yamadayev brothers fully supported the latter.

In April 2008, the conflict between the Yamadayevs and Ramzan Kadyrov reached an acute stage. A road conflict on the Kavkaz federal highway prompted the confrontation. Vehicles transporting Sulim Yamadayev’s security personnel from the Vostok Battalion failed to yield the right of way to Kadyrov’s presidential motorcade, which led to a collision. The incident resulted in a shoot-out. On the same day, on Kadyrov’s orders, law-enforcement officers loyal to him blocked the main base of the Vostok Battalion in Gudermes. The “Yamadayevites” were ordered to leave the Battalion and come under Kadyrov’s command.

In August, Kadyrov pressured the Russian defense minister into dismissing Sulim Yamadayev from the army, and in November, the general staff of the Russian Armed Forces took the decision to disband the Vostok Battalion. The Zapad Battalion of the GRU that was also maintaining its independence from Kadyrov was disbanded as well.

In August 2008, the Chechen directorate of the Russian Investigative Committee controlled by Kadyrov initiated a criminal case against Sulim Yamadayev and placed him on the federal wanted list. The head of the republic publicly called Yamadayev a criminal involved in grave offenses, such as kidnappings.

One month later, his brother, Ruslan Yamadayev, who was known as the mastermind behind the opposition to Kadyrov, was shot dead in Moscow. On September 24, 2008, he was returning from the presidential administration, where he had had a meeting with Deputy Kremlin Chief-of-Staff Vladislav Surkov. During the meeting, the problem of lawlessness in Chechnya was being discussed.

According to Kommersant newspaper, the Kremlin saw Ruslan Yamadayev as a potential candidate for the presidency of Chechnya. Yamadayev was driving back from the presidential administration in his car together with former Chechnya military commandant General Sergey Kizyun, who had also participated in the consultations. When the car stopped at a red light on the Smolenskaya Naberezhnaya, an unidentified attacker walked up and fired a pistol around 20 times. Yamadayev died on the spot as a result of the received wounds. General Kizyun was taken to a hospital with serious injuries.
CHAPTER 6 KADYROV’S ENEMIES

According to Isa Yamadayev, a brother of the deceased, Chechen President Ramzan Kadyrov was behind this crime, and State Duma Member Adam Delimkhanov, who “manages executions and kidnappings there,” was the organizer of the assassination.[184]

Fearing for his life, Sulim Yamadayev left Russia after his brother’s murder, and settled in Dubai. Soon after that, both Sulim and Isa Yamadayev found themselves at killers’ gunpoint.

On March 28, 2009, an assassination attempt was made on Sulim Yamadayev’s life. A UAE police officer testified that he had been “killed on the spot by a pistol shot in the back of the head in the presence of his two bodyguards.”[185]

Two people were convicted as a result of the murder investigation in the UAE. One of them was an Iranian, Makhdi Lorinya, Ramzan Kadyrov’s former horseman.[186] The chief of Dubai police, Dhabi Khalfan Tamim, named Adam Delimkhanov as the organizer of the assassination, and emphasized that he possessed the “irrefutable proof of his guilt.”[187] Delimkhanov was soon placed on the Interpol’s international wanted list.[188]

In July 2009, an attempt was made on the life of the third of the Yamadayev brothers, Isa. However, this time the assassination attempt failed: the Russian secret services new ahead of time about the planned murder, and managed to neutralize the assassin.[189]

ASSASSINATION OF ANNA POLITKOVSKAYA

“You have come between Chechens. You are an enemy. You are worse than Basayev,” Ramzan Kadyrov said to Novaya Gazeta journalist Anna Politkovskaya in June 2004.[190]

Politkovskaya actually had all the reasons to be on the list of Kadyrov’s enemies, since she created a lot of problems for him. The journalist specialized on Chechnya. She regularly wrote about the detachments of armed Kadyrovites involved in kidnappings, murders, and tortures that “have long equaled the teeth surrounded by bodyguards” and mentioned the massacre and the investigation of kidnappings in which he was involved. The journalist emphasized that her objective consisted in making sure that a criminal case was opened against Kadyrov, and that he was arrested.[191]

Two days before her assassination, on the day of Kadyrov’s 30th birthday, Politkovskaya gave an interview for Radio Liberty. She called Kadyrov a “coward armed to the teeth surrounded by bodyguards” and mentioned the investigation of kidnappings in which he was involved. The journalist emphasized that her objective consisted in making sure that a criminal case was opened against Kadyrov, and that he was arrested.[192]

Her colleagues from Novaya Gazeta gave more details about Politkovskaya’s last investigation. Soon after her assassination, the newspaper published an article and the transcripts of videos found on her computer. The footage showed scenes of torture and the killing of two people. According to journalists, the carnage was carried out by officers of one of Chechnya’s law-enforcement bodies controlled by Kadyrov.[193]

In November 2015, the senior investigator, Major-General Movladi Baisarov, commander of the Grozets Battalion and Akhmad Kadyrov’s bodyguard, became an important witness in the Anna Politkovskaya murder case. In one of his last interviews, he declared his willingness to testify in this case. “When I was with Akhmad Kadyrov, what she wrote was not always convenient for us. But everything she said was true,” Baisarov said. However, Baisarov did not have time to meet with investigators—he was put on the wanted list by law-enforcement authorities loyal to Ramzan Kadyrov and killed in Moscow during his arrest.[194]

In the end, investigators managed to bring to justice six suspects, each of whom received a prison sentence in 2012 and 2014. The court held that a Chechen crime boss, Lom-Ali Gaitukayev, was the organizer of the assassination. He received the order to murder Politkovskaya from an unknown mastermind and enlisted his nephews, the Makhmudov brothers (one of whom actually pulled the trigger,) to execute the contract killing, as well as two policemen who provided field support. Gaitukayev, however, refused to name those who had ordered the reprisal against the journalist.[195]

Officially, the search for the mastermind of Anna Politkovskaya’s murder is still underway. A separate criminal case against the person or persons who had ordered her killing was opened. In reality, however, law-enforcement officials have stopped looking for the mastermind a long time ago. In November 2015, the senior investigator, Major-General Petros Garibyan, who was in charge of the investigation into Politkovskaya’s murder, retired and was replaced by an officer of the Russian Investigative Committee of an inferior rank. “Today, the investigation team has basically ceased to exist. No investigating actions are being carried out, and the criminal case has been as good as put on hold,” says Novaya Gazeta press secretary Nadezhda Prusenkova.

Ramzan Kadyrov has never even been interrogated in connection with the Politkovskaya murder case.
I ASKED HIM: “WHO ARE YOU?” HE PRODUCED AN ID CARD OF A LIEUTENANT-COLONEL OF THE FSB. THIS WAS RAMZAN KADYROV. I CANNOT SAY THAT HE FRIGHTENED ME MUCH BUT I DID NOT SEE IN ORDER TO FOLLOW CHECHEN TRADITIONS, THE PRESIDENTIAL POST SHOULD BE ABOLISHED, AND A PARLIAMENT SHOULD BE FORMED, FOLLOWED BY A GOVERNMENT, thus reaching a certain compromise between different groups. WHEN I LEFT THE AUDITORIUM, A MAN WITH PALE EYES APPROACHED ME and said that I SHOULD BE KILLED for making such statements. I ASKED HIM: “WHO ARE YOU?” HE PRODUCED AN ID CARD OF A LIEUTENANT-COLONEL OF THE FSB. THIS WAS RAMZAN KADYROV. I CANNOT SAY THAT HE FRIGHTENED ME MUCH BUT I DID NOT SEE IN HIS EYES THAT HE WAS JOKING — IN HIS EYES I SAW HATRED

“THOSE WHO CRITICIZE PUTIN ARE SAVAGES, MY PERSONAL ENEMIES. AS LONG AS PUTIN SUPPORTS ME, I CAN DO ANYTHING. ALLAHU AKBAR!”

Ramzan Kadyrov

There exists a record of a life threat made to Nemtsov personally by Kadyrov. In 2007, the politician wrote about it in his book Confessions of a Rebel. It is worth noting that Akhmad Kadyrov too did not take his son’s words as a joke at the time. “At the end of the Congress the elder Kadyrov assigned Nemtsov armed bodyguards, who accompanied the Moscow politician until he left Chechnya,” said the journalist Alexander Byklin, who was accompanying Nemtsov on his trip.

Nemtsov held Putin personally responsible for “Kadyrov’s impunity.” “I cannot understand what Putin expects when he arms 20,000 Kadyrovites. Putin diligently finances Chechnya by sending there trains loaded with money. The republic receives a minimum of 60 billion rubles a year in grants. Only Allah knows how much money is being siphoned off through different programs, such as Northern Caucasus Resorts,” Nemtsov wrote in November 2014, two months before his killing.

Kadyrov’s reaction to such criticism, addressed to both him and President Putin, was more than frustration. “Those who criticize Putin are savages, my personal enemies. As long as Putin supports me, I can do anything, Allahu akbar!” he said in an interview for Newsweek magazine.

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“THE TRAIL OF THE MASTERMIND OF THE KILLING LEADS TO GROZNY. THE KEY SUSPECTS ARE PEOPLE CLOSE TO THE DELIMKHANOVS AND TO KADYROV”

“OPPOSITION LEADER BORIS NEMTSOV SHOT DEAD BY THE KREMLIN WALLS”

Photo: AP Photo, Yevgeny Feldman/Novaya Gazeta, Georgy Malets

OPPOSITION LEADER BORIS NEMTSOV SHOT DEAD BY THE KREMLIN WALLS

Photo: AP Photo, Sergey Fomenko/Nemtsova Gallery, Group M.A.M

Vadim Prokhorov, a lawyer for Nemtsov’s family, has repeatedly demanded that investigators interrogate the Delimkhanov brothers and Chechnya’s President Ramzan Kadyrov. “It is clear that the trail of the mastermind of the killing leads to Grozny,” Prokhorov says.

“The lawyer’s request was not met — clearly for political reasons. The attempt at having Chechnya’s president interrogated provoked frustration in the Kremlin and resulted in pressure being applied on Nemtsov’s family. In July 2015, Zhanna Nemtsova, the daughter of the murdered Russian opposition leader, declared that she was being prompted to decline the services of her attorney, Prokhorov, because of his position with regard to Kadyrov. It soon became known that this demand was communicated to Nemtsova by RusNano State Corporation CEO Anatoly Chubais.

Zhanna Nemtsova refused to replace her lawyer, who had been defending her father’s interests for many years. However, out of concern for her personal safety, she was forced to emigrate to Germany.

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INDEPENDENCE AT THE EXPENSE OF OTHERS

The republic has its own ideology that is basically obligatory and offers no alternatives. This ideology blends together local nationalism, Kadyrov’s personality cult, and quasi-Islamism. The inculcation of such ideas contradicts the fundamental law of the Russian Federation and paralyzes the constitutional provisions on democracy and the secular character of the Russian state in Chechnya. The Kremlin, however, chooses not to notice this.

The regional army and other law-enforcement structures created in Chechnya are basically independent of the federal authorities. All armed units that Kadyrov could not bring under his command were either abolished or forced out of the republic. Kadyrov is implementing his own foreign policy on the world stage, in parallel to the one carried out by the Russian Foreign Ministry. For example, in Germany, France, Denmark, Austria, Belgium, and Poland, Chechnya’s independent representative offices are operating on an equal basis with Russian embassies. Kadyrov autonomously works with the leaders of Arab countries, including the UAE, Saudi Arabia, and Bahrain.

According to Russian law, Russia’s president has the right to remove the head of the Chechen Republic from office. In reality, however, it seems to be impossible to carry out such a decision. With the connivance of the government in Moscow, Kadyrov consolidated a great deal of power in his hands.

Since Kadyrov came to power, Chechnya, while formally remaining part of the Russian Federation, has over the years acquired numerous signs of a sovereign state. The region has turned into a separate quasi-Islamic state with its own ideology, law-enforcement bodies, legal system and even its own policy different from the Kremlin’s one.

THREAT TO NATIONAL SECURITY
CHAPTER 7

THREAT TO NATIONAL SECURITY

The federal government as good as lost the Second Chechen War. A pact with Kadyrov was made under the guise of victory, and the money that is flowing into Chechnya today can be seen as indemnities that are being paid for Russia losing the war,” believes Sergey Mitrokhin, a member of the Yabloko party’s Political Committee).

“SHOOT TO KILL”

In April 2015, Ramzan Kadyrov made a statement that can be seen as a declaration of Chechnya’s independence. Speaking before representatives of local law-enforcement bodies, he ordered to “shoot to kill” law-enforcement officers from other regions should they operate on the territory of the republic without permission from the local authorities. This statement was provoked by an operation carried out in Grozny by Stavropol policemen, during which a Chechen, who had previously been put on the federal wanted list, was killed while trying to resist arrest by shooting back.

Kadyrov expressed his indignation at the fact that he had not been informed about the operation in Grozny ahead of time. “I did not know. Nothing of the sort will happen on our territory. Those who think otherwise are wrong. We paid a heavy price for peace and order. We should be reckoned with. That is enough. We were being humiliated, insulted. We did not adopt the Constitution for that,” Kadyrov declared.

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“IF OFFICIALLY STATE THAT IF [ARMED PEOPLE] TURN UP ON YOUR TERRITORY WITHOUT YOU KNOWING ABOUT THIS — BE THEY MUSCOVITES OR STAVROPOL NATIVES — SHOOT TO KILL”

Despite Kadyrov’s indignation, carrying out armed operations on the territories of Russian regions is a routine practice for the country’s law-enforcement bodies and secret services. For example, in June 2013, FSB operatives detained Makhachkala Mayor Said Amirov on suspicion of masterminding a murder. In March 2015, Moscow law-enforcement officers arrested Sakhalin Governor Alexander Khokhlovshin, who was charged with corruption. In September 2015, police arrested the governor of the Komi Republic. According to the investigation, he turned out to be a leader of a criminal organization. All three abovementioned officials were brought to Moscow and were put in pretrial detention.

“The federal government as good as lost the Second Chechen War. A pact with Kadyrov was made under the guise of victory, and the money that is flowing into Chechnya today can be seen as indemnities that are being paid for Russia losing the war,” believes Sergey Mitrokhin, a member of the Yabloko party’s Political Committee.

“THE FEDERAL CENTER DEPENDS ON KADYROV. THIS IS AN ‘EMPIRE [TURNED] INSIDE OUT’ WHEN IT IS NOT THE METROPOLITAN COUNTRY THAT DICATES ITS INTERESTS BUT, ON THE CONTRARY, A COLONY THAT HOLDS ITS PARENT COUNTRY BY THE THROAT AND WHEEDLES AS MUCH MONEY OUT OF IT AS IT NEEDS”

“Kadyrov began talking about some prerogatives of the republic... He has been demonstrating his growing authority and, from this position of strength, he is already prepared to make demands to the federal center,” the writer Zakhar Prilepin, who had served as a squad leader in the riot police force (OMON) in the 1990s and had participated in armed hostilities on the territory of Chechnya, said in 2007.

“Chechnya has become an independent state but for one exception: the money is Russian. Kadyrov was willing to take responsibility for the problems, but in return he demanded and received immense powers. Consequently, the federal center now depends on Kadyrov. This is an ‘empire [turned] inside out,’ when it is not the metropolitan country that dictates its interests but, on the contrary, a colony that holds its parent country by the throat and wheedles as much money out of it as it needs,” political analyst Dmitry Oreshkin explains the current situation in the republic.

Despite its formal status of a Russian region, Chechnya is considerably different from other subjects of the Russian Federation. Having abandoned the armed struggle for independence, Kadyrov virtually received it as a result of a political agreement with Putin.

Kadyrov obtained from Putin almost everything that separatist leaders, Dzhokhar Dudayev and Aslan Maskhadov, had striven for in the 1990s as a result of a deal, the outcome of which Russian society is yet to realize and evaluate. The only thing Kadyrov did not get is formal acknowledgment of Chechnya’s sovereignty. However, it is rather in Kadyrov’s interests for Chechnya to remain part of the Russian Federation. While continuing to strengthen the republic’s armed forces and his own authority in the region, he receives generous grants from the federal budget.

Kadyrov annually wheedles out funds comparable with [those needed for] the construction of a hydropower station, such as the Bureisk hydropower plant. Every year we give away one such Bureisk hydropower plant to Kadyrov to maintain the semblance of order. Moreover, we call it constitutional order, although everyone understands that not one Russian citizen who comes to Chechnya can count on his constitutional rights to be respected. He can only count on either the support or the displeasure of Kadyrov. Everything is decided by personal arbitrary rule. Otherwise, Kadyrov will just cut loose and chart his own separatist course, he will appropriate 2 million tons of oil that is being pumped out of his land, and, backed up by the Islamic world, will declare himself independent,” Oreshkin says.

Photo: AP Photo, Dmitry Azarov/Kommersant

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CHAPTER 7
THREAT TO NATIONAL SECURITY

“THE VERY EXISTENCE OF SUCH A CHECHNYA AND SUCH A KADYROV BIDS Defendants to the Current System. He Seems to Feel Cramped Within One Region, and He Obviously Aspires to the Leadership Over at Least the Entire Caucasus”

Throughout increasing his political and military capital, the head of Chechnya basically turned from a regional leader into a figure capable of speaking to Putin on equal terms, and of disregarding the authority of any governmental body in Russia except for the president.

Under the present political circumstances, it is practically impossible to either change or even limit Kadyrov’s regime. In fact, enormous financial possibilities and an autonomous armed resource make the head of Chechnya an independent figure possessing powerful maneuvering capabilities. In the case of a political crisis on the territory of Russia, Kadyrov can use his resources to struggle for power on the federal level, or else declare Chechnya’s independence and, seizing some of the neighboring territories, secede from Russia.

But why does Kadyrov get away with everything? By conferring special powers on the territory of the republic upon Kadyrov, Vladimir Putin as good as made himself and the entire Russian society hostages of this man. Seeking to end the war in the North Caucasus, Russia’s head of state found a solution that led to the formation of a regional political regime within the country that is basically dictating its terms to the federal center. Furthermore, both Kadyrov’s demands and his tone are becoming increasingly aggressive with each passing year. In fact, Putin’s solution to the Caucasian problem comes down to allowing the responsibility for the confrontation between separatists and radical Islamists in Chechnya on Chechens themselves, with Kadyrov at their head. The role of the federal government is limited to providing resource support for the political regime in the republic.

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It is obvious that the very existence of such a Chechnya and such a Kadyrov bids defiance to the current system. He seems to feel cramped within one region, and he obviously aspires to the leadership over at least the entire Caucasus,” believes Irina Starodubrovskaia, a regional studies expert at the Gaidar Institute for Economic Policy.

Andrey Yevfantshev, a political analyst specializing in Caucasian studies, admits that Chechnya has become basically independent as a result of the Kremlin’s policy. “Within Chechnya, Chechen ways and rules are being respected,” he says. “They do not betray their own people. There have been incidents when Chechnya’s representatives committed crimes on the territories of other Russian regions and then fled to Chechnya, they have always been hard to locate. Regional law-enforcement officials never assist but obstruct. Chechen authorities do not turn them over. Local law-enforcement officials never assist but obstruct. Chechen authorities do not turn them over.”

The head of Chechnya has once again avoided criminal liability: The Prosecutor-General’s Office of the Russian Federation confined itself to a polite request addressed to Kadyrov to “solve his problems within legal boundaries” and to refrain from threatening representatives of the state prosecution and the judicial authorities. Vladimir Putin, on the contrary, expressed his solidarity with his protege. One month after the incident, the Russian president introduced to Parliament a bill that forbids checking quotes from the Quran for extremism.

“If any other mere mortal not enjoying this kind of support pronounced such words, FSB (security) operatives would already be swarming into his place of residence,” the lawyer Alexander Ostrovsky commented on Kadyrov’s statement.

Guaranteed Impunity

It is worth noting that even in the early stages of his political career, Kadyrov was already behaving provocatively with regard to the federal authorities and secret services. For instance, in May 2007, after FSB officers refused to let Kadyrov’s numerous bodyguards enter the building of the Chechen directorate of the Federal Security Service, all entrances to the building were welded. The blockade was lifted only after the then-director of the FSB, Nikolay Patrushev, personally intervened. Such is the Chechen president’s political style: Impudence, disregard for the law, and complete confidence in his own impunity.

Kadyrov obtained the de facto right to be above Russian law. In the eyes of many of his colleagues, this is the most important achievement of Putin’s tenure. It is the formal recognition of disregarding the authority of any governmental body in Russia except for the president.

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In fact, by this statement Chechyna’s president put himself above Russian law, making it clear that no criminal case against him has any chance of reaching the court.

However, this statement had no consequences for Kadyrov. President Putin chose to disregard the speech made by the Chechen leader. His press secretary, Dmitri Peskov, refused to give any comments. Moreover, Russia’s Interior Ministry took an excusatory attitude and noted that police officers who made Kadyrov angry had after all informed their Chechen colleagues about the upcoming operation.

Kadyrov’s statement has never resulted in an investigation. The Interior Ministry confined itself to a careful phrase about the inadmissibility of calls to shoot police officers coming from the republic’s government.

“This statement by Kadyrov looks like this: Russia should continue to support Chechnya, while they are doing whatever they want over there,” says the lawyer Alexander Ostrovsky. “Basically, assuming supreme power in the Chechen Republic, Kadyrov forgets that this region is a part of Russia,” the lawyer Oleg Khabsabrikanmanov agrees.

According to him, such public statements pose a threat to the Russian Federation as a unified state. It is worth mentioning that Kadyrov addresses his threats not only to law-enforcement officials, but also to Russian judges and prosecutors.

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FEEDING ISIS

Kadyrov usually justifies his actions that contradict the law by the necessity to stand up against terrorists. Some of his initiatives sound more than extravagant. For instance, after the November 2015 terror attacks in Paris by ISIS militants, he suggested tying terror suspects to unmanned aircraft and dropping them on the heads of their fellow militants. “There is no need for any court hearings,” explained the head of Chechnya.

Kadyrov has been consistently creating an image of an unrelenting and tough fighter against terrorism. His region, however, remains an important supplier of militants for international terrorist organizations. At first, Kadyrov claimed that information about Chechens participating in the fighting on the territory of Syria was false and fabricated. However, it soon became impossible to deny the obvious, and Kadyrov admitted that more than 500 native Chechens joined radical Islamists in Syria. By the end of 2015, criminal cases were initiated in Russia against 311 residents of Chechnya who went to fight alongside ISIS militants.

Terrorists have established a throughgoing channel used to send the recruited Islamic militants from Chechnya to Middle Eastern territories controlled by ISIS. Usually, future “jihad warriors” reach the Syrian border through Turkey and Azerbaijan, where they are met by ISIS functionaries who then send them further to special training camps. “Many Chechens go to Azerbaijan, this is a well established shuttle business. They use different excuses to go to Baku, from there they reach Turkey, and then get directly into Syria. Young people are being lured there mainly by the idea that a jihad is underway in that country and an appropriate fatwa had been issued by prominent Islamic theologians, and thus the participation in the war on the territory of Syria is a direct responsibility of every devout Muslim,” explain the representatives of the republic’s Interior Ministry.

In 2013, in the north of Syria, militants from Chechnya and neighboring Caucasian republics formed a separate military unit, Al-Muhajireen. Abu Abdurahman, an experienced warlord and a native Chechen, headed the unit. The unit quickly grew due to an active recruitment of young militants in the Russian Caucasus, and soon became one the most combat-efficient group of Islamic terrorists.

The Italian journalist Domenico Quirico thus describes Chechen militants, whom he met at their encampment in the Syrian city of Aleppo: “Chechens were the first of the foreign militants to come to Syria with their black Islamist flags. These young people are from Grozny. They are ruthless, they kill without rage, in cold blood, just because they know how to do that. They call both Syrians and Russians their enemies.”
Chechnya, where, according to its government, terrorism has been defeated, is providing mass personnel inflow into the ranks of ISIS militants. On the one hand, groups of radical Islamists are being reinforced by veterans of the armed hostilities in the North Caucasus, who in the 1990s answered the call of the elder Kadyrov for a jihad against Russia. These militants become high-profile ISIS figures and occupy top positions in the organization’s armed forces. On the other hand, there is a mass inflow of young Chechens into Syria—those who grew up after Ramzan Kadyrov came to power in the republic.

The specific character of Kadyrov’s political regime and his commitment to the Islamization of the republic, however peculiar its rendering that often contradicts the traditional norms of Islam, serves as a key reason why young Chechens show an inclination to support Middle Eastern terrorists. However, the idea of prioritizing Islamic traditions over the principles of a secular state that is being enforced by Kadyrov bears fruit. It is important to mention that the head of Chechnya not only advocates for Eastern terrorists. However, the idea of prioritizing Islamic traditions over the principles of a secular state that is being enforced by Kadyrov bears fruit. It is important to mention that the head of Chechnya not only advocates for traditional norms of Islam, serves as a key reason why young Chechens show an inclination to support Middle Eastern terrorists. However, the idea of prioritizing Islamic traditions over the principles of a secular state that is being enforced by Kadyrov bears fruit. It is important to mention that the head of Chechnya not only advocates for traditional norms of Islam, serves as a key reason why young Chechens show an inclination to support Middle Eastern terrorists. However, the idea of prioritizing Islamic traditions over the principles of a secular state that is being enforced by Kadyrov bears fruit. It is important to mention that the head of Chechnya not only advocates for traditional norms of Islam, serves as a key reason why young Chechens show an inclination to support Middle Eastern terrorists. However, the idea of prioritizing Islamic traditions over the principles of a secular state that is being enforced by Kadyrov bears fruit.

Such a course chosen by Kadyrov obviously encourages the formation of a young generation of Chechens inclined to support radical Islamic movements. The more passionate and impressionable residents of the republic move beyond words to deeds, and pick up arms to fight against “infidels” in the Middle East. This trend has become a real problem for Chechnya. Even the children of Kadyrov’s immediate subordinates join the ranks of terrorists. For example, in 2013, it became known that the daughter of Asu Dudurkayev, head of the Chechen directorate of the Federal Migration Service, joined the ranks of Islamic terrorists on the territory of Syria.

“Chechens often go to live in ISIS—not only fight alongside it. They flee from Kadyrov himself. The road to Europe is closed for such people, and they are forced to seek refuge in Syria,” says Novaya Gazeta journalist Yelena Milashina.

“Kadyrov gave the green light for radical Islamists to leave Chechnya. This is how they end up in the ranks of terrorists in the Middle East,” believes Yuli Nisnevich, professor at the Higher School of Economics. “This is his conscientious political decision. The head of Chechnya is getting rid of radicals within the republic who could cause him problems. What will happen when they start coming back to Russia is a different matter.”

Russian secret services are also concerned that after receiving combat experience in Syria, Islamists from the Caucasus will come back home to concentrate on organizing terrorist attacks in Russia. “The recruitment of mercenaries does exist. (Several hundreds) of our people left the territory of our country to go there. They will return and this, of course, constitutes a big threat,” says FSB Deputy Director Sergey Smirnov.

In 2013, it became known that the daughter of Asu Dudurkayev, head of the Chechen directorate of the Federal Migration Service, joined the ranks of Islamic terrorists on the territory of Syria. Asu Dudurkayev is a former head of the directorate of the Federal Migration Service. Dzhokhar Tsarnayev confessed that the motive behind his attacks organized by radical Islamists outside Russia. In Kadyrov’s case, however, nothing is ever certain. Sometimes he expresses support for terrorists convicted in the West, and even shows solidarity with the motives of Muslim militants.

The majority of Russian politicians condemn terrorist attacks organized by radical Islamists outside Russia. In Kadyrov’s case, however, nothing is ever certain. Sometimes he expresses support for terrorists convicted in the West, and even shows solidarity with the motives of Muslim militants. On April 15, 2013, a large-scale bombing took place in Boston, USA. Attackers detonated two handmade devices during the Boston Marathon, killing three (including a three-year-old child) and injuring 280 people. Police quickly picked up the trail of the suspected organizer of the bombing, who turned out to be Chechen brothers Tamerlan and Dzhokhar Tsarnaev. During the arrest operation, Tamerlan was shot dead, and Dzhokhar was captured. During the interrogation, Dzhokhar “confessed that the motive behind his brother’s and his actions was an effort to ‘defend Islam’”.

The investigation identified Tamerlan Tsarnaev, who had been killed in the shootout with the police, as the mastermind of the terrorist attack. He moved to the United States with his parents, but continued to travel to Russia. The last time he visited Chechnya and Dagestan was in 2012, a few months before the bombing. According to the US secret services, while in the North Caucasus, he had been in contact with Islamic extremists. Tsarnaev worked with militants William Plotnikov and Mahmod Mansur Nidal, both of whom were killed shortly thereafter in a raid by Russian forces. The Federal Security Service also knew about the connection between Tsarnaev and radical Islamists: the US authorities declared that the Russian secret services possessed detailed information about the terrorist’s intentions, but refused to share it with their US colleagues. Tsarnaev probably planned the Boston bombings during his visit to the North Caucasus. After spending a little more than six months in Russia, he returned to the United States. The investigation of the terrorist attack put yet another native Chechen, Ibragim Todashev, a friend of the Tsarnaev brothers, on the FBI’s radar. He moved to the United States in 2008 in the context of an exchange program, and decided to settle in Boston. His father, Abdulbaki Todashev, is connected with Kadyrov’s close circle; he worked in the Chechen government and, more recently, in the Grozny administration. After the Boston bombings, Todashev bought a plane ticket and tried to fly to Chechnya. FBI operatives, however, prevented him from leaving and came to his place of residence to conduct an official interrogation, during which Todashev attacked an FBI agent and injured him. In response, the law-enforcement officer drew his service gun. The attacker was killed on the spot. According to the US Attorney’s Office, the FBI agent’s actions were justified.

Two years later, Dzhokhar Tsarnaev, the only Boston terrorist left alive, was sentenced to death by a jury. After the verdict was read, Chechen President Ramzan Kadyrov publicly came to the defense of the convicted terrorist and expressed a doubt that the Tsarnaev brothers had had anything to do with the organization of the Boston bombings.

From Kadyrov’s point of view, the US secret services could have planned the bombings themselves, since it is allegedly impossible to carry out a terrorist attack without them knowing about it. “The US secret services, accused of being involved in the Boston tragedy, had to find a victim. Tsarnaev was handed to them as a victim,” said the head of Chechnya.
On January 7, 2015, a terrorist attack was carried out at the headquarters of the Charlie Hebdo newspaper in Paris. The Kouachi brothers, radical Islamists, stormed the newspaper’s offices armed with machine guns and, with shouts of “Allahu akbar!”, opened fire on employees. Twelve people were killed as a result of the attack. The terrorist attack was provoked by Charlie Hebdo’s publication of a cartoon depicting the Prophet Mohammed. 258

The French tragedy brought together an enormous number of people against religious violence. On January 11, around 2 million people gathered in downtown Paris for a unity march to commemorate the murdered journalists. Besides French President François Hollande, official representatives from dozens of countries, including the leaders of Belgium, Great Britain, Germany, Israel, Spain, Italy, Mali, the Palestinian Authority, and Poland participated in the march. Russia was represented at the Paris march by Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov. 259 “We are all Charlie” became the main slogan of the marchers.

However, on January 19, many thousands of people attended a rally in Grozny organized in retaliation to the Paris march. Ramzan Kadyrov personally supervised preparations for the event. The rally was directed at expressing protest against the publication of Muhammad caricatures and demonstrating solidarity with the demands of the terrorists who had killed the French journalists.

In his speech before the demonstrators, Kadyrov basically justified the actions of the Kouachi brothers. “If needed, we are ready to die to stop anyone who thinks that you can irresponsibly defile the name of the prophet (may peace be upon him). This should be understood by all those who unscrupulously ignore the opinion of hundreds of millions of Muslims,” said the head of Chechnya. United Russia member Zakri Mamilov continued Kadyrov’s thought by declaring from the stage that the shooting at the offices of Charlie Hebdo in Paris was “not a terrorist attack, but God’s punishment” 260.

While people in Paris carried placards reading “We are all Charlie,” in Grozny one of the rally’s slogans read “We are all Kouachi!” 261.

Ramzan Kadyrov’s aggressive rhetoric verging on the justification of terrorist methods of “defending Islam” has become a context for the widespread emergence of jihadists from Chechnya throughout Europe. Thus, in February 2015, a group of Chechens suspected of being involved in terrorist activities was arrested on the outskirts of Toulouse. 262 In May, Polish police detained three natives of Chechnya for organizing a terrorist cell in Eastern Europe. In the summer, several Chechens were arrested on the territory of Belgium and charged with recruiting militants for Islamic terrorist organizations. 263

“We will gradually surround Europe and the West, we will fight, this is going to be interesting. We will form tribes and we will go for it!” Kadyrov speaks ironically. “You have no time to be afraid, if you make time for it, that’s it—you as good as lost. First act, then be afraid. The main thing is to win and to do everything for that” 264.

However, Europeans, just as Russians, can hardly appreciate such jokes: since 2015, the threat coming from Islamic terrorists has considerably increased. In the fall, the world was shaken by new large-scale terrorist attacks. A Russian A321 airliner was brought down in Egypt killing 224 people, and a new terrorist attack took place in Paris, causing the death of 130 people. ISIS has claimed responsibility for both attacks.
During my work on this report, I publicly offered Kadyrov to meet and discuss its contents. The head of Chechnya has repeatedly declared that he is always ready to talk to anyone, including investigators, opponents and critics. In early October 2015, he offered to meet with Zhamala Nemtsova, the daughter of the slain politician, who has been asking that investigators interrogate Kadyrov in connection with his possible involvement in her father’s murder. Kadyrov declared that he was ready to meet with Zhamala in Grozny, have tea with her and answer all her questions. In December 2015, I sent a letter addressed to Ramzan Kadyrov suggesting he meet with me instead of her. Despite the fact that this letter was widely publicized in the media, Kadyrov chose to ignore it. No reply ever came.

The following is the text of my letter.

**“MAN TO MAN”**

**ELOQUENT SILENCE**

My offer to meet with Kadyrov was certainly noticed in Chechnya. For several days, the state-controlled Grozny TV channel aired news reports accompanied by commentaries by experts loyal to Kadyrov, who repeatedly stated that it was nothing but a PR campaign, and the head of the republic should not react to it. “This whole show is just for the sake of free PR! May God keep you safe, Ramzan, from these shaitans, and with great respect for you!” (sic) declared one of the “experts,” a biker known as “The Surgeon” 266.

Why did Kadyrov avoid the meeting?

It is easy to demonstrate one’s manliness when surrounded by hundreds of bodyguards. It is also easy to send a killer to shoot one’s opponent in the back. It is easy to scoff at the daughter of a politician murdered by one’s militants, inviting her over to one’s residence for tea. It is much harder to prove one’s manliness in practice. It appears that Kadyrov is ready to meet with a young girl, but when he is invited for a man-to-man talk, he prefers to hide behind his loyal experts and state employees with banners.

My letter to Kadyrov provoked a real hysteria among Chechen officials. First, Kadyrov himself referred to his opponents as enemies of the people. “[Members of] the non-systemic opposition are people of whom nobody has ever heard before. They oppose themselves to Putin. They hold nothing sacred. These people should be treated as enemies of the people, as traitors,” declared the head of Chechnya 267.

His idea was later developed by key figures in Chechen politics, who proceeded to issue direct threats. Chechen Parliament Speaker Magomed Daudov threatened the opposition with “watchdogs whose claws are itching.” State Duma Member Adam Delimkhanov put together a “list of enemies” and promised to deal with Kadyrov’s critics both by “lawful and unlawful means.”

The rally against the opposition and in support of Kadyrov that took place in Grozny on January 22, 2016, became the apotheosis of this aggressive rhetoric. People joined this demonstration “voluntarily” after receiving government-stamped official requests demanding their presence at the rally. The day of the rally was officially declared a public holiday.

In the context of slogans, threats and insults addressed to the opposition, my questions remained unanswered. I do believe, however, that sooner or later he will have to answer them during his interrogations at the Russian Investigative Committee.
1. How many people did you personally kill?
2. What orders did your father and you receive from Basayev? Umarov. Would you please comment on these pictures, and personally—not to the Russian state. What do you need these combatants publicly demonstrate their loyalty to you on the Grozny stadium in a peculiar display of power.
3. Do you feel remorse for having fought against Russia?
4. When Akhmad Kadyrov died as a result of a terrorist attack, you worked as head of his security service. Where were you at the time of the murder? Why did your subordinate security guards let the terrorist act happen? Does it suggest a lack of professionalism or treason?
5. At various times, you have put forward several versions with regard to the mastermind of Akhmad Kadyrov’s murder. For example, you talked about the involvement in this crime of both the separatist Shamil Basayev and Hero of Russia Sulim Yamadayev. Who did kill your father?
6. A considerable number of current Chechen combatants are thugs who had fought against Russia and were later granted amnesty through your personal involvement. Why did you not provide them with civilian jobs? Why did you legalize former rebels and armed them under your command?
7. Today, Chechnya is the only subject of the Russian Federation that has its own army. In December 2014, you gathered more than 20,000 armed combatants on the Grozny stadium in a peculiar display of power. These combatants publicly demonstrate their loyalty to you personally—not to the Russian state. What do you need your own army for?
8. In 2015, you ordered your subordinates to shoot to kill at Russian law-enforcement officials operating in the republic without your authorization. Are you aware that your statement constitutes a rude violation of Russian law and brings your right to lead the republic into question?
9. Do you realize that your policy of noncompliance with the Constitution and violation of Russian laws is a direct path to Chechnya’s secession from Russia? Is this your goal? Are you aware of the consequences such a policy will have for your people and you personally? Are you not concerned about the consequences?
10. You do not conceal the fact that you are living a life of luxury. You often demonstrate your collections of expensive watches, luxury cars, an enormous residence, and a private zoo. All this is clearly inconsistent with your income declaration. How do you earn your living? What are the actual sources of your income?
11. Today, around 30 million people in Russia live below the poverty line. You are a state employee living on the taxpayer’s dime. Do you not find it immoral to demonstrate your luxurious lifestyle that is clearly inconsistent with your official income?
12. What are actual sources of income of the Akhmad Kadyrov Foundation? Can you confirm the fact that every Chechen resident has to transfer money into the accounts of this Foundation?
13. Your policy in Chechnya is characterized by the opposition of the norms of Islam to Russian laws. Are you aware of the fact that, according to the Constitution, our country—and Chechnya as its integral part—is a secular state? In governing Chechnya, do you give priority to sharia norms or Russian law?
14. You often emphasize your own religiousness and your commitment to Islam. However, Islam forbids the glorification of any person. The Qur’an says: “Do not walk proudly on the earth. You cannot cleave the earth, nor can you rival the mountains in height.” How does your personality cult that is being promoted in Chechnya correspond to the norms of Islam? Don’t you regard it as a sin of pride?
15. You publicly admitted that Chechnya has become an important ISIS donor: hundreds of young Chechens have joined the ranks of terrorists in the Middle East. Do you feel responsible for this? Do you realize that your policy of opposing Islam to Russian laws in Chechnya creates an ideologic platform for ISIS recruiters?
16. According to Austrian prosecutors, you were probably the mastermind behind the assassination of your former bodyguard, Umar Israilov, who had officially been granted political asylum in Russia. It has been proven that you know the convicted killer, Ruslan Edilov, personally: Pictures showing the two of you together were found on his cell phone. Were you involved in the assassination of Isailov? It not, why did you ignore the subpoena to the Austrian court in 2010, where you could have proven your innocence?
17. In 2009, an assassination attempt on the life of Isa Yamadayev failed. According to the testimony of Khvazha Yusupov, who was arrested and later convicted in connection with this case, you personally hired him to kill Isa Yamadayev. Furthermore, during the interrogation, Yusupov stated that in a conversation with him, you admitted to your involvement in the murders of Sulim and Ruslan Yamadayev. Were you really involved in these crimes? If not, how can you explain Yusupov’s testimony?
18. Zaur Dadayev, deputy commander of Chechnya’s Sever Battalion, was arrested in connection with the assassination of Boris Nemtsov. His comrade-in-arms, Ruslan Mukhadinov, is on the wanted list. Investigators have repeatedly tried to interrogate yet another deputy commander of the Sever Battalion, Ruslan Geremeyev. How can you explain the involvement of your officers in the murder of Boris Nemtsov? Were they acting on their own initiative or following your will?
19. Do you know anything about the involvement of Adam and Aibekelakhmanov in Boris Nemtsov’s murder? What about Vladimir Surkov’s involvement? And Viktor Zolotov’s?
20. How can you explain the fact that people who come up against you and whom you call your enemies are being murdered one after another?