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THE NORTH-EASTERN CAUCASUS

Dagestan, Chechnya and Ingushetia

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Introduction

To a large extent the notion of the 'north-eastern Caucasus' is a by-product of the disintegration in 1991 of the Soviet Union into fifteen union republics, leading to the emergence of the 'South Caucasus' embracing the three newly independent states of Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia and the 'North Caucasus' which has remained within Russia. Due to the geographical and cultural differences between the eastern and western parts of the Caucasus the 'North Caucasus' became subdivided into the north-eastern Caucasus, roughly corresponding to Dagestan, Chechnya and Ingushetia, and the north-western Caucasus, embracing Karachaevo-Balkaria, Karachaevo-Cherkessia and Adygea (see Chapter 14), while Russia's autonomy of North Ossetia-Alania found itself in the 'central Caucasus'. At the politico-administrative level, the 'North Caucasus' became split between two Russian federal *okrug*s (districts) – the North Caucasus District and the Southern District. The former consists of the autonomous republics of Dagestan, Chechnya, Ingushetia, Karachaevo-Cherkessia, Karachaevo-Balkaria, North Ossetia-Alania, as well as the adjacent Stavropol' *krai* (province), while the latter includes the autonomous republics of Adygea, Kalmykia and Crimea (since 2014), alongside Krasnodar *krai*, the Astrakhan, Volgograd and Rostov *oblasts* (regions) and the Crimean city of Sevastopol' (since 2014). The political map of the contemporary Caucasus was further complicated by the emergence of the de facto states of Nagorny Karabakh, Abkhazia and South Ossetia (see Chapter 16).

Historically, the Caucasus' external borders and its internal political, cultural, religious and ethnic delimitation have been in continuous flux shaped by the complex and fluent inter-relationship between the various Caucasian polities and communities and their engagement with major regional powers, including Sasanian Iran, the Arab Caliphate, Byzantium, the Khazar Khaganate, and the Seljuk, Mongol, Ottoman, Safavid and Russian empires (see Chapter 6). Consequently, various parts of the Caucasus reflect the distinctive outcomes of the fusion between Caucasian, on the one side, and Iranian, Arab, Armenian, Greek, Turkic and Slavic ethno-cultural and religious influences, on the other. Due to the region's political and ethno-cultural complexities there exist many historical and perceptual discrepancies between particular toponyms and ethnonyms, while some modern Caucasian polities

do not geographically correspond to their 'historical' habitat. Having said that, it could be argued that in a broader historical and cultural sense most of the present-day north-eastern Caucasus belongs to the wider Iran-centred cultural space, which also includes most of present-day Azerbaijan, Armenia and eastern Georgia (Vacca 2017: 11). Within it, southern Dagestan as well as most of modern Azerbaijan and Armenia have been formatively influenced by their inclusion in Caucasian Albania (Arran), just as Darband (Derbent), northern Azerbaijan and eastern Georgia have been by their early Islamisation and inclusion into the Umayyad and Abbasid Caliphates. In the case of Armenia and the central and western parts of Georgia, these influences were paralleled by their early Christianisation and the ensuing rapprochement of their respective polities with Byzantium, Rome and the European crusader states (Forsyth 2013: 111–16).

By comparison, the modern north-western Caucasus exhibits greater ethno-cultural and religious affinities with the Anatolia-centred Turkic cultural space, although from the eleventh century the Turkic linguistic and ethnic component has also been present within the borders of modern Azerbaijan. During the imperial Russian period the Caucasus' ethno-cultural and political contours were modified in the course of the Caucasus War (1817–65), leading to the mass expulsion of Circassians, Chechens and some other north Caucasians to the Ottoman Empire and their replacement with Armenian, Russian, Slavic and Cossack settlers (see Chapter 7). Much of the twentieth century witnessed the comprehensive Sovietisation of the Caucasus (see Chapter 9), its politico-administrative delimitation resulting in the emergence of the present-day autonomous republic of Dagestan and the joint autonomy of Checheno-Ingushetia (till 1991), as well as the mass deportations of Chechens and Ingush (alongside Balkars, Karachais and Meskhetian Turks) to Central Asia during the Second World War. After the end of the USSR, these historical specifics of the north-eastern Caucasus have continued to influence its distinctive ethno-political and religious trajectories.

Our discussion considers the main historical factors which contributed to the 'making' of the modern north-eastern Caucasus before proceeding to analyse the ethno-political and religious dynamic in Dagestan, Chechnya and Ingushetia. It argues that the Dagestanis' lengthy and deeper Islamisation, as well as the Vainakhs/Vai Nakhs' (Chechens and Ingush) Islamisation in the context of the nineteenth-century Caucasus War against the Russians, have accounted for a stronger Islamic dimension in the post-Soviet political and societal transformation of Dagestan, Chechnya and Ingushetia compared to other parts of the Muslim Caucasus.

Historical legacies

The north-eastern Caucasus is unique in its ethnic and linguistic diversity. From ancient times it has been inhabited by many dozens of eastern Caucasian peoples, including Avars, Andis, Dargins, Laks, Lezgins (Lezghins), Tabasarans, Rutuls, Tsakhurs and Chechens, who speak mutually incomprehensible languages belonging to the Nakh and Nakh-Dagestani branch of the Caucasian languages (see Chapter 3). Among the region's other ancient inhabitants are Persians, Alans, Kurds, Tats and Mountain Jews who speak various languages of the Iranian branch of the Indo-European language family. From at least the eleventh century the region was inhabited by various Turkic peoples who contributed to the 'making' of the present-day Kumyks (Kumuks), Nogais and Azeris. From the seventeenth century, and especially during the nineteenth century, the north-eastern Caucasus acquired its Cossack, Russian and other Slavic population. Throughout history, a grassroots political and economic interaction between various inhabitants of the region was ensured by various *linguae francae* – Farsi, Arabic, Kumyk, Nogai, Azeri and Russian.

From early times Darband,¹ which is situated in southern Dagestan, attracted major Near Eastern and Middle Eastern empires, which viewed it as the northern gateway to Eurasia. Until the seventh century CE Darband had been within the sphere of control of a sequence of Iranian empires, including Sasanian Iran (224–651 CE). As discussed in Chapters 5 and 6, in the 640s the Arabs conquered Darband, which they called *Bab al-Abwab*, with Darband's central gate named *Bab al-Jihad* ('Gate of Jihad'). By the late seventh century southern Dagestan, alongside adjacent areas in the southern Caucasus, had been included in a *wilayah* ('province') of the Damascus-centred Umayyad Caliphate (661–744). Of particular significance was Dagestan's considerable ethnic Arabisation as a result of family alliances between Arab *ghazis* ('Islamic warriors') and local rulers and the influx of Arab settlers.² Since then and until the nineteenth century Arabic was one of Dagestan's *linguae francae*. Even in the twentieth century, despite seventy years of Sovietisation, most Dagestani Muslim 'clergy' and many representatives of its intelligentsia have retained their fluency in Arabic.

Another marker of Dagestan's Arab legacy is the proliferation in it of a stricter Shafi'i *madhhab* (school of Sunni jurisprudence) which is dominant in eastern Egypt, Jordan and Palestine. (By comparison, the majority of Sunni Muslims in the north-western Caucasus and the rest of Muslim Eurasia belong to the more flexible Hanafi *madhhab*). Through many centuries Dagestan was the regional centre of Islam and Arab Islamic culture and its '*alims* (*ulama*') were involved in the codification of the Shafi'i *madhhab*.³ In the nineteenth century, Dagestan's Avar Muslim leaders, including the legendary Imam Shamil, mobilised both Dagestani and Chechen Naqshbandi Sufis (Islamic mystics) for an anti-Russian *ghazawat* (Islamised resistance) which turned into the Caucasus War (see Chapter 7). Between 1826 and 1859 Imam Shamil, who followed the teaching of the late seventeenth-century pro-Salafi '*alim* Muhammad ibn Musa al-Kuduki, headed the *shari'ah*-based imamate created in the mountain areas of modern Dagestan and Chechnya (Zelkina 2000). Significantly, Imam Shamil made Arabic the official language of the imamate and launched a campaign against '*adats* (customary norms) and Sufi practices which were deemed *shirk* ('polytheism') (Yandarov 1975: 127).⁴

The comprehensive Islamisation of Dagestan occurred in several stages. Initially, Islam spread from *Bab al-Abwab* to adjacent areas in the north. From there it continued to proliferate northwards and by the sixteenth century most Dagestanis had become Muslims. The Islamisation of lowland Chechnya and Ingushetia, which also occurred along Shafi'i lines, began only in the late sixteenth century. In the case of the Chechens, it intensified in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in the course of their active involvement in the aforementioned *ghazawat*. In the late eighteenth century the Chechen sheikh Mansur (Ushurma) headed the first anti-Russian military campaign which became the precursor of the Caucasus War. The Russian defeat of the *ghazawat*, which was associated with the Naqshbandi *tariqah* (*tariqat*, 'brotherhood') triggered a sizable emigration (*hijrah*) of Chechens and other Naqshbandi *ghazis* to the Ottoman Empire in search of the Caliph's protection. Many of them settled in present-day Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Jordan and Syria; and over a century later some of their descendants would return to their ancestral lands under the banner of jihad. At the same time, the tsarist suppression of the Naqshbandiyya was conducive to the spread among the Chechens and Ingush of the more inward-oriented Qadiri *wird* ('branch') of Kunta-hajjee (1796–1867). Kunta-hajjee, who was an ethnic Chechen, advocated non-violence and the peaceful co-existence of Caucasians and Russians within the Russian state. Subsequently, Chechen and Ingush followers of Kunta-hajjee became known as *dhikrists* due to the centrality of the loud *dhikr* ('recollection of Allah') in their Sufi practices. Unlike ethnic Caucasians, Dagestan's Kumyks, Nogais and

other Turkic peoples, who resided in Dagestan from the eleventh century, were Islamised along Hanafi lines under the influence of the Genghizids and the Crimean Tatars, who conducted regular inroads into northern and central Dagestan from the fourteenth century (Bakikhanov 1991:69).

The relatively slow pace of Islamisation of Dagestan (as well as other parts of the north-eastern Caucasus) was due to its difficult mountainous terrain, the resilience of its *'adats* and the variety of Eastern Christian, Judaist, Zoroastrian and pagan beliefs among its ethnically and linguistically diverse population. In general, Islam advanced quicker among the plain-dwellers compared to the highlanders whose *'adats* were much stronger. Unlike the Muslims of the north-western Caucasus, many Dagestanis, alongside Chechens and Ingush, embraced Sufism (see Chapter 5). Another important factor which slowed down the advance of Islam was the social and political fragmentation of Dagestan and other parts of the north-eastern Caucasus, which presented a conglomerate of well-established polities (kingdoms, emirates, khanates and other principalities) and semi-independent communes which after Islamisation were referred to as *jama'ahs* ('communities'). *jama'ahs* were headed by councils of elders representing constituent clans – *tukhums*. Political stability in Dagestan was determined by the complicated balance of power between various polities and *jama'ahs* (Ware and Kisriev 2001: 109). In the medieval period, the former included the kingdom of Sarir, the emirate of Darband, the Kumyk-dominated *shamkhalat* of Tarki, the Lak-dominated *shamkhalat* of Kazi-Kumukh, the Kaitag *Usmiyat*, the Avar *Nutsiyat* the Tabasaran *Maisumiyat* and Nogai principality (see Chapter 6). Between the ninth and sixteenth centuries southern Dagestan was effectively part of the state of Shirvanshahs, which was centred on modern Azerbaijan (Daniialov 1996: 137, 178; Forsyth 2013: 166–67).

Historically, in contrast, the Vainakhs lacked polities and were organised in *taips* (communities), which were territory-based among the Chechens and clan-based among the Ingush (Nataev 2013). There were over a hundred *taips* which differed in terms of their size and their economic and political influence. Particularly influential among the Chechens were the *taips* of Benoi, Ts'enntoroi, Gendergenoi and Ch'antiy, while among the Ingush the *taips* of Evloi, Ozdoev, Khamkhoi, Kokurkhoi, Leimoi and Barkinkhoi (Dakhkilgov 1991) were especially prominent. The *taips* were united in larger units – *tukhums*. Parallel to *taip* affiliation most Chechens and Ingush belong to various *wirds* of Qadiri and Naqshbandi *tariqahs* (Mamakaev 1973: 100; Akaev 2010: 64). In the aftermath of the Caucasus War St. Petersburg succeeded in establishing collaborative links with some *taips* which resided on the plains, while most mountain *taips* remained hostile to Russian rule. A similar division was reproduced during the First Chechen War (1994–96), the driving force of which was the highlanders' *taips*.

The Republic of Dagestan

The Republic of Dagestan (RD), or simply Dagestan, is the largest and the most populous and ethnically diverse autonomy.⁵ Unlike other politico-administrative entities within the historical Caucasus, it does not include ethnonym(s) in its name. Instead, it is named after the toponym 'Dagestan' which derives from the combination of the Turkic word *dag* ('mountain') and the Iranian word *stan* ('locality'). The name 'Dagestan' in relation to most of contemporary Dagestan has been in use since the disintegration of the historical Caucasian Albania in the tenth century CE (Ibrahimov 2006: 11). Dagestan is populated by various peoples belonging to several dozen different ethnic groups, none of which has a decisive majority. Among the largest groups are: Avars (together with Andis and Arches, 29 per cent); Dargins (together with Kaitags and Kubachis, 17 per cent); Kumyks

(14.8 per cent); Lezgins (13.2 per cent); Laks (5.5 per cent); Azeris (4.5 per cent); Tabasarans (4 per cent); Slavs (Cossacks, Russians, Ukrainians, Belorussians, 3.6 per cent); Akkin Chechens (3.2 per cent); Nogais (1.4 per cent); Aguls (1 per cent); Rutuls (1 per cent) and Tsakhurs (0.3 per cent) (*Perepis' Naseleniia* 2010). RD's territory roughly corresponds to that of the Dagestan Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic (DASSR) established by the Bolsheviks in 1921. In 1957 DASSR's territory was enlarged as a result of the transfer of the Kizliar and Tarum *raions* from Stavropol' *krai* to Dagestan. In 2010–13, following the contentious border delimitation between Dagestan and Azerbaijan, some territories in Magaramkent and Dokuzpar districts of Dagestan were transferred to Azerbaijan.⁶

During the Soviet period, Dagestan, like the rest of the Caucasus, was integrated within the wider Soviet political, economic and educational structures. In the 1930s–50s, the predominantly rural country was subjected to enclave industrialisation to meet the needs of the military-industrial complex. At societal level, however, Sovietisation was incomplete as many Dagestanis, including members of the Communist Party and Soviet elite, retained partial allegiance to their traditional clan, ethnic and Islamic networks. '*Adats* and *shari'ah*, though removed from the public sphere, preserved important regulatory functions in the private sphere. At the same time, Soviet social and ethnic engineering significantly altered traditional social and political institutions as well as ethnic territorial distribution, and aggravated relations between some ethnic groups. In particular, in 1943–44, the Akkin Chechens were deported from the Aukhov *raion* of Dagestan to Central Asia and their land and property transferred to Laks and other neighbouring peoples. The Aukhov *raion* was renamed the Novolak *raion*. Inevitably, the return of Akkin Chechens to their homeland in 1957 generated tensions in their relations with the Laks. The relations between Dagestan's mountain peoples (Avars and Dargins) and lowlanders (Kumyks, Cossacks, Russians), were also strained as a result of Moscow's persistent drive towards the resettlement of 'unruly' highlanders on the Caspian lowlands. Another destabilising factor was the Kremlin's policy of 'consolidation' of dozens of ethnic groups into several larger nationalities.⁷ The fragile ethno-political equilibrium was also affected by the increased immigration into Dagestan of Russians and other Slavs who by the late 1950s constituted around 20 per cent of the Dagestan population and acquired dominance among professionals and industrial workers. This also led to the substantial Russification of indigenous Dagestanis and the elevation of Russian to the position of the main lingua franca (Yemelianova 2003: 94–5).

On a positive note, the Soviet system brought considerable benefits to Dagestanis, as well as to many other Caucasians, which included comprehensive free housing, education, health care and social welfare. Under Soviet economic centralisation Dagestan enjoyed substantial investment and financial subsidies from the centre resulting in radical improvement in Dagestanis' living standards. For this reason, the majority of Dagestanis, like the bulk of Central Asians,⁸ were wary of the Gorbachevian perestroika and were devastated by the Kremlin's dismantling of the Soviet system and the subsequent break-up of the USSR. It is symptomatic that the Dagestani elite hung on to key elements of the Soviet system till 1995, much longer than anywhere in Russia, while the Communist Party remained the most popular party in Dagestan right through to the late 1990s (Ware and Kisriev 2001: 118).

The ethno-national conundrum

In Dagestan, the decline of the communist and internationalist ideologies which occurred in the late 1980s was accompanied by the resurgence of clan- and ethnicity-based primordial politicised solidarity of both an integrist and separatist nature. At the forefront of the former

was the Dagestani Lezgin movement *Sadval* ('Unity') which began campaigning for Dagestani Lezgins' reunification with Azerbaijan's Lezgins, from whom they had been separated since 1922, and the creation of **Lezgistan**. *Sadval's* aspirations were echoed by Azerbaijan's Lezgins who formed a similar movement.⁹ Another integrist project was promoted by Dagestan's Nogais who, together with the Nogais of Karachaevo-Cherkessia and Stavropol' *krai*, created an inter-regional movement *Birlik* ('Unity') which sought the 'restoration' of their historical polity – the Nogai Horde (see Chapter 14).

Within Dagestan, the Kumyks, Avars, Dargins and Laks began campaigning for the creation of their separate ethnic entities. Kumyk national activists formed the popular movement *Tenglik* ('Equality'), which pressed for the restoration of Kumyk 'historical' rights to the plains of the Caspian valley which had been populated by Avars and Dargins. In November 1991 they declared the establishment of – the stillborn – 'Republic of Kumykistan'. The Kumyks' territorial ambitions were opposed by the Avars, Dargins and Laks who formed the Avar Popular Front of Imam Shamil, the Dargin national movement *Zadesh* ('Unity') and the Lak national movement *Kazi-Kumukh*, respectively. In the early 1990s the Kumyk-Avar tensions reached their peak with thousands of armed Avars and Kumyks confronting each other on several occasions (Gammer 2014: 41). The Lak nationalists under the leadership of the Khachilaev clan became engaged in open confrontation with Kumyk and Akkin Chechen activists who sought to reclaim their pre-1944 territories in northern Dagestan (Yemelianova 1999: 132–33).

By 1994, as a result of the combined efforts by ex-Soviet Dagestani politicians and traditional authorities, ethno-national activism which had peaked in 1991–93 subsided and relative political stability was restored. A 'calming' factor was also the national upsurge in neighbouring Chechnya, with which Dagestan had precarious relations due to the Chechens' numerical dominance in the North Caucasus. The 1994 constitution of Dagestan formalised the new ethno-political realities by endorsing the political dominance of the Dargins and Avars, followed by the Kumyks and Lezgins. The constitution established a uniquely Dagestani collective executive body – the State Council – which represented fourteen titular¹⁰ ethnic groups and asserted the principle of ethnic proportionality at all levels of the political system (Ware and Kisriev 2010: 62–3). In 2006, within President Putin's programme of recentralisation and realignment, the State Council was abolished and replaced by the presidential system.¹¹

The rise of Islam

Since the late 1980s Dagestan has turned into the regional centre of the 'Islamic revival' which has occurred along both Sufi and Salafi lines. Under the Gorbachevian perestroika Dagestan witnessed intensive Islamic construction, the proliferation of Islamic press, television, radio and internet resources of both pro-government and opposition orientation,¹² the advance of Islamic education, a sharp increase in the number of *hajjees* (pilgrims) to Mecca and Medina and of pilgrims to local Sufi *ziyarat*s (*mazars*, sacred places), and the emergence of over a dozen Islamic, Islamo-cultural and Islamic-political organisations and parties. By 1991 the number of mosques had risen from 27 to 514; *madrasahs* (secondary Islamic schools) from none to four; *maktabs* (primary Islamic schools) from none to 42 and the number of *hajjees* from four (1989) to 1,200. By the mid-2000s there were already 1,786 mosques (1,768 Sunni and 20 Shi'a mosques), 17 Islamic universities, institutes and colleges, 132 *madrasahs* and 278 *maktabs*.¹³ The annual number of Dagestani *hajjees* reached 120,000 out of a total of 150,000 ex-Soviet *hajjees*, while the number of active *ziyarat*s, which

attracted scores of pilgrims from all over Dagestan, exceeded 200 (Khanbabaev 2010: 90). A corollary was the significant Islamisation of the public sphere, especially in rural areas. In some places the sale of alcohol was banned, large sports stadiums were utilised for religious festivals and ceremonies, and women's head-scarves and men's skullcaps became widely worn. Between 1985 and 2005, Islamic self-identification among Dagestanis rose from just over 20 per cent to over 90 per cent, although only around 20 per cent of the latter were practising Muslims (Makarov and Mukhametshin 2003: 133; Khanbabaev 2010: 92)

Islamic religious and political activism has developed predominantly within the parameters of 'traditional Islam'¹⁴ of both Sunni and Shi'a orientation. The majority of Islamic traditionalists, who are referred to as *tariqatists* (members of Sufi *tariqahs*), belong to the *tariqahs* of Naqshbandiyya, Shadhiliyya and Qadiriyya which are subdivided into around fifty *wirds*. *Tariqahs* and *wirds* have rigid structures underpinned by the absolute authority of a sheikh over his *murids* ('disciples'). By the mid-2000s there were around two dozen living sheikhs,¹⁵ two thirds of whom belonged to the Naqshbandi *tariqah*. The two most influential Avar sheikhs, Sayid-afandi Atsaev (Chirkey, d.2012) and Magomed Kurbanov (b.1944), simultaneously taught along the lines of the Naqshbandi and Shadhili *tariqahs*. On average, an individual sheikh has between three and five thousands *murids*, while the number of followers of Sayid-afandi Atsaev exceeds 10,000. Some Sufis are affiliated to more than one *tariqah*. In terms of their ethnic make-up the Naqshbandis include Avars, Dargins, Kumyks, Lezginis, Laks, Tabasarans, Rutuls, Aguls and Azeris. The Shadhiliyya is dominated by Avars while also including a large number of Kumyks and Dargins. The Qadiris are predominantly Akkin Chechens and Andis (Kisriev 2007; Khanbabaev 2010:94).

The advance of *tariqatists*, who constitute a majority in Dagestan, has been due to the durability of Sufi traditions, the strong mobilising capacity of *tariqahs*, and the backing of some sheikhs by government officials and newly enriched economic elites who were often their undisclosed *murids*. *Tariqatists* have been in favour of the preservation of the existing religious and social institutions and practices intertwined with *'adats*. Since 1994, the Avar *tariqatists* from the *wird* of Sheikh Sayid Atsaev¹⁶ have effectively controlled the Dagestani muftiate – the Spiritual Board of Muslims of Dagestan which was established in the wake of the disintegration in 1989 of the Soviet-era Spiritual Board of Muslims of the North Caucasus.¹⁷ Since then, Dagestan's muftis Saiyd Muhammad Abubakarov (d. 1998) and Ahmad-hajjee Abdullaev (since 1998) have advocated the gradual re-Islamisation of Dagestani society via the partial 'shari'atisation' of the legal system, the development of Islamic education, the introduction of Islam-related subjects, including the Arabic language, in the state school curricula, the creation of Islamic nursery schools and the promotion of the Islamic dress code and dietary norms (Makarov 2000: 15). Politically, the muftiate has been largely allied with the government in their joint opposition to Islamic fundamentalists, who have been associated with 'untraditional Islam'. However, this collaboration has often been offset by their differing visions of the social and political role of Islam in Dagestan.¹⁸

Since the late 1980s Dagestan has also witnessed the rise of Islamic fundamentalism, locally termed 'Wahhabism', which was rooted in the Dagestani Salafi tradition. The first educational Salafi group was created in the late 1970s by Bagauddin Kebedov (Bagauddin Dagestani, b. 1942) and his brother Abbas Kebedov (b. 1953) in the village of Pervomaik in the Khasaviurt *raion*. Gradually the group evolved into an Islamic *jama'at* with an underground *madrasah* and a number of branches in Khasaviurt, Kyzylurt, Gunib and Tsumada *raions* of Dagestan. The *jama'at* received a boost in 1984 when it became headed by the widely respected Islamic scholar Akhmad-qadi Akhtaev (1940–98) who in 1990 was also elected leader of the Dagestani branch of the USSR Islamic Revival Party.¹⁹ Initially, the

jama'at's members, who were young people under the age of 30, were focused on the study of Arabic, the *Qur'an*, *hadith* (the account of Prophet Muhammad's sayings), *fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence) and other fundamentals of Islam. In the late 1980s, alongside the *jama'at*, there emerged a number of Islamic organisations such as the Islamic Democratic Party, the Dagestani branches of the Union of Russia's Muslims, the all-Russian Islamic Movement *Nur* ('Light') and the Islamic Party of Dagestan, which were primarily concerned with Dagestani Muslims' greater participation within the existing political system.

In the early 1990s Dagestani Islamic fundamentalists, who had become increasingly politicised, split into moderates and radicals. The moderates, led by Akhmad-*qadi* Akhtaev, sought collaboration with the *tariqatists* towards the peaceful re-Islamisation of Dagestan through education. They opposed the use of *takfir* (excommunication) in relation to Sufis and other non-Salafi Muslims and of jihad in relation to Russia. By contrast, the Islamic radicals, who were headed by Bagauddin Kebedov, transformed into semi-militarised groups of *mujahideen* ('Islamic warriors') who were prepared to apply the concept of *takfir* to *tariqatists* and other religious opponents, the concept of *shirk* towards the Dagestani authorities and the concept of military jihad towards Russia. From the mid-1990s Bagauddin Kebedov's followers relocated to Kyzyl'urt where they combined the study of a simplified version of Salafism²⁰ with military training in order to wage an anti-Russian jihad, seeking the armed reunification of Dagestan and Chechnya into an Islamic state modelled on Saudi Arabia. At the end of 1997, following a failed attack against Russian troops in Buinaksk, Bagauddin and his associates conducted *hijrah* to Urus-Martan in Chechnya where they merged with Chechen jihadists. In the summer of 1998 those radical Islamists who remained in Dagestan attempted to create a *shari'ah*-based enclave in the Karamakhi zone in Buinaksk *raion* (Khanbabaev 2010: 97–100). In August–September 1999, they joined the Chechen and Dagestani Islamists who invaded Dagestan from the territory of Chechnya with the aim of creating an Islamic state encompassing Dagestan and Chechnya. The invasion failed, due to the mass mobilisation of Dagestanis against it. As the late deputy mufti Akhmad Tagaev explained the mobilisation to the author: 'In the nineteenth century Dagestanis had been included by force into Russia. Now, having enjoyed the benefits of Sovietisation, they would apply even greater force against their separation from Russia.'²¹ Since the early 2000s Dagestani Islamists, variously estimated as numbering between 20,000 and 50,000,²² have become dispersed, and their activities are now aligned with global jihadist patterns (see Chapters 17 and 18).

The Chechen Republic

The Chechen Republic, or simply Chechnya ('Noxçiyçö', in Chechen), is the most known in the West because of its two recent wars with Russia, which challenged the latter's very existence as a major multinational Eurasian state.²³ The Chechens' endonym is 'Noxçiy', while 'Chechen' is an exonym which most likely derives from the Kabardian 'Shashan' (Jaimoukha 2008: 12). From the early twentieth century Chechens and Ingush have also used the joint endonym 'Vainakhs', which relates to their Nakh ethno-linguistic origins (see Chapter 3). During the Soviet period Chechnya's administrative-political status and borders underwent several major changes. In 1936, Chechnya became part of the Checheno-Ingush Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic (ChIASSR) within the RSFSR. In 1944, following the Chechen and Ingush deportations, the ChIASSR was disbanded and its territory was divided between Georgia, Dagestan, North Ossetia, Stavropol' *krai* and the newly established Grozny *oblast'* of the RSFSR. In 1957, the

ChIASSR was restored, with the exception of Prigorodnyi *raion* which remained in North Ossetia (see Chapter 15). Since 1991 Chechnya and Ingushetia have existed as separate autonomies within the Russian Federation. Present-day Chechnya is situated in the very east of the North Caucasus, bordering Russia's Ingushetia, North Ossetia-Alania and Stavropol' *krai* in the north, and Russia's Dagestan and independent Georgia in the south. Chechnya, alongside Armenia and Ingushetia, is among the most ethnically homogeneous polities in the Caucasus: the Chechens constitute over 95 per cent of the 1.3 million population.²⁴ Chechens are the largest ethnic group in the North Caucasus, which is an important factor in the region's ethno-political dynamic.

Chechen nationalism

In 1988–91, in the context of the USSR-wide 'parade of sovereignties', Chechen nationalists under the leadership of General Dzhokhar Dudaev (in office 1991–96) adopted the most radical stance by unleashing a war of independence against Russia. There were a number of reasons for this. Historically, war against Russia played a pivotal role in the consolidation of various proto-Chechen peoples into the Chechen nation and in their Islamisation. Another major collective Chechen grievance against Moscow relates to their collective deportation in 1944 to Central Asia. These two themes became central to Chechen national mobilisation. Yet another important, and perhaps decisive, factor was the charismatic personality and the political and military skills of General Dudaev, while a contributing factor was the Kremlin's refusal to negotiate with the Dudaev leadership the proposal to upgrade the ChIASSR's status to a 'union' republic. Consequently, in November 1990, Dudaev, who became the leader of the National Congress of the Chechen People (NCChP), confronted the pro-Moscow ChIASSR leadership under Doku Zavgaev (b. 1940) by convening the First National Chechen Congress, which proclaimed Chechnya's independence from Ingushetia. In July 1991 the Second Chechen National Congress established the Chechen Republic of Ichkeria²⁵ (ChRI) and in September 1991 Chechnya declared its independence from the USSR. In November 1991 Dudaev, the newly elected Chechen President, completed the 'Chechen National Revolution' by dissolving the NCChP and adopting the 'Declaration of Sovereignty of the Chechen Republic'.

Between 1991 and 1994, Ichkeria, which covered the territory of most of Chechnya,²⁶ functioned as a de facto independent national state of Chechens. During this period the Dudaev leadership, with the collusion of the Russian government of President Boris Yeltsin (in office 1991–99), amassed large quantities of Soviet heavy and light arms which it would later use against the Russian federal forces. The mishandled Russian invasion of Chechnya in December 1994²⁷ sparked the Chechen mass mobilisation which turned into a large-scale war. At the heart of the Chechen resistance were the representatives of the highlanders' *taips* – Yal'khoi (Dudaev's *taip*), Ma'l'khi, Albakov and Merzhoev – as well as members of the Qadiri *wirds* of Kunta-*hajjee*, Chimmirza, Vis-*hajjee*, Ali Mitaev and Imam Tashu-*hajjee*, which formed armed detachments bearing the *wirds*' names (Vatchagaev 2014: 31). In contrast, many Chechens from the plains' *taips* and from the Naqshbandi *wirds* aligned themselves with the pro-Russian Chechen leaders (Akaev 2010: 68). These *taip* and *wird* divisions turned the war of independence into what was also a civil war (see Chapter 15). At the same time the first Russo-Chechen War paved the way for the subsequent Islamisation of the Chechen struggle, prompted by the attempt by the secular-minded Dudaev and his *mufi* Magomed Husain-*hajjee* Alsabekov²⁸ to attract international Islamic financial and political backing by linking the Chechen resistance to the nineteenth century Caucasian *ghazawat*, tactically termed as jihad, against the Russians (see Chapter 18).

Chechen Islamism

Unlike the first war, the second Russo-Chechen War, which began in August 1999, attracted a notable number of foreign jihadists, including Fathi al-Shishani, Abu Omar al-Saif (1968–2005)²⁹ and Amir ibn al-Khattab (1969–2002).³⁰ Under the leadership of Zelimkhan Yandarbiev (in office 1996–97), who became the Chechen president after Dudaev's death in April 1996, and Movladi Udugov (b. 1962), the Minister of Information of Ichkeria,³¹ Salafi Islam was made the state religion, while 'traditional' Chechen Sufi Islam was rendered *bid'ah* ('unlawful innovation'). Following al-Saif's instructions the Ichkeria Criminal Code was re-organised along the same principles as the *shari'ah* criminal codes in Sudan. 'Traditional' Chechen clerics were marginalised, while some were physically eliminated. Chechen *ziyarat*s, which were central to the Chechen Sufi tradition, were pronounced *shirk*, while the application of the 'non-Chechen' practices of *takfir* and of female suicide bombers – known as 'black widows' – against *kafir* ('non-believer') and *murtad* ('apostate') targets was officially endorsed. In 1999 Ichkeria's then president Aslan Maskhadov (in office 1997–2005) introduced full *shari'ah* rule and established a Supreme Islamic government – the *Shurah* (Akaev 2010: 73).

The institutional 'Salafisation' of Ichkeria went side by side with its transformation into an economic and legal black hole fraught with money-laundering, black-marketsteering, oil smuggling, gangsterism, hostage-taking and other forms of terrorism and violent crime (Malashenko 1998: 182; Tishkov 1999: 18; Akaev 2010: 71). During its brief existence Ichkeria accommodated a number of jihadist training camps which were run by foreign and Chechen jihadists with international experience going back to the 'Afghan jihad' of 1979–89.³² These camps included both consciously radical Salafis, foreign 'students' and Islamised criminals from Chechnya and wider Muslim Eurasia who had fled prosecution at home (Sagramoso and Yemelianova 2010: 134–36). As with the 'Afghan jihad' the 'Chechen jihad' was indirectly funded by Saudi Arabia, the global custodian of Wahhabism, as well as some other Muslim countries. Similarly, Islamic Ichkeria was sustained by its integration into the region's black and grey economy and finance, as well as by providing 'transferable' jihadist skills to volunteers across the world.³³

Chechnya under the Kadyrovs

In May 2000, the Islamic state of Ichkeria fell under the joint military offensive by Russian federal troops and pro-*tariqatist* Chechen fighters. Surviving Islamists and Islamised militants either switched to low level insurgency or dispersed across the region and wider Russia, undertook *hijrah* to Turkey, acquired asylum in the West,³⁴ or joined global jihadist projects, including the so-called Islamic State or ISIS (see Chapter 17). Since July 2000 Chechnya has been ruled by the pro-Kremlin Kadyrov clan. Its first representative was Mufti Akhmad Kadyrov (1951–2004), who in August 1999 changed sides in favour of Moscow and in October 2003 became President of Chechnya. An important factor in Kadyrov's political switch was the ascendance in Moscow of a new strong leader, Vladimir Putin (b. 1952). While in office, Akhmad Kadyrov disavowed the Salafist political, legal and religious reforms of his predecessors. Instead he initiated the transformation of his *wird* of *Kunta-hajjee* into the main pillar of national consolidation of Chechens, who had been deeply traumatised and fractured by a decade of devastating warfare and blood feuds.³⁵

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Akhmad Kadyrov's religious policy has been continued by his son, Ramzan Kadyrov (b. 1976), who became Chechnya's president in 2007. During Ramzan's presidency the institutionalisation of the *Kunta-hajjee wurd* has been accompanied by the integration of Chechen *'adats* and *shari'ah* norms into the republic's political and legal system. A corollary has been the creeping Islamisation of nominally secular institutions and structures; for example, each district administration acquired a *qadi* ('Islamic judge') who became involved in the political and legal process. Polygamy has been tacitly encouraged and justified by both Islamic tradition and a severe gender imbalance due to the two successive wars, while Chechen women have been required to adhere to Islamic norms of morality and Islamic dress (see Chapter 25). The sale and consumption of alcohol have been restricted and, in some parts of Chechnya, completely phased out. Casinos, orphanages and old peoples' homes were closed as being incompatible with Chechen Islamic culture. Kadyrov's re-traditionalisation of Chechnya along Sufi Qadiri lines has been conducted in line with the Kremlin's discourse on all-Russia spirituality, social conservatism, family-centred 'traditional' values which is framed as opposition to the perceived US-spearheaded universalism, individualism and cultural and moral degradation.

The Republic of Ingushetia

The Republic of Ingushetia, or Ingushetia ('Ghalghaj Moxk', in Ingush), is the smallest of Russia's autonomies in the Caucasus, which was created by Chechen secessionism in 1991.³⁶ The name 'Ingush', which has been widely used since the eighteenth century, is an exonym deriving from the Russian spelling of 'Angusht', the historical habitat of the Ingush. Ingush's endonym is 'Ghalghaj'. Unlike Chechnya, Ingushetia had already become part of the Russian Empire in the 1770s. During the nineteenth-century Caucasus War the Ingush were split: some *taips* supported the anti-Russian *ghazawat*, while the majority of Ingush *taips* sided with Russia. In 1934, in the context of Soviet national delimitation, Ingushetia was co-joined with Chechnya and remained in this position until 1991. The present-day Republic of Ingushetia borders Chechnya in the east, North Ossetia-Alania in the west and Georgia in the south.

Although politically separated from Chechnya since 1991 Ingushetia has been profoundly affected by what was going on there. In particular, Ingushetia's economic viability and societal cohesion has been undermined by the presence on its territory of nearly 300,000 Chechen refugees, almost doubling Ingushetia's pre-1994 population (Sagramoso 2012: 581). Ingushetia has also been involved in a border dispute with Chechnya over the oil-rich parts of Sunzha and Malgobek *raions*, which the Ingush regard as their historical habitat. In September 2018, the then head of Ingushetia, Yunus-Bek Yevkurov (b.1963) and Chechnya's leader, Ramzan Kadyrov, finally signed a Border Treaty which left these territories within Chechnya. The Treaty has been rejected by most Ingush, who perceived it as Yevkurov's humiliating capitulation in the face of a bullish Grozny and Moscow, and an act of national betrayal. In June 2019 Yevkurov, who lost all credibility and public trust, was forced to resign,³⁷ replaced by Mahmud-Ali Kalimarov (b.1959).

Additionally, in the west, Ingushetia has been in a border dispute with North Ossetia-Alania. In 1992, the two autonomies were engaged in an armed conflict over the Ingush-populated Prigorodnyi *raion*, which since 1944 has been within the politico-administrative borders of North Ossetia. Among the implications of this conflict was the arrival in Ingushetia of over 50,000 Ingush refugees from North Ossetia-Alania. The conflict has remained dormant although Yevkurov de facto accepted North Ossetia's jurisdiction over the Prigorodnyi *raion* (see Chapter 15).

In spite of Ingushetia's precarious neighbourhood it has largely avoided major political cataclysms and armed conflicts, albeit with a few exceptions. Thus, alongside the Ossetian–Ingush conflict in 1992, in 2005–6 Ingushetia experienced an upsurge of Islamist violence against its law enforcement officials, Russian troops and local authorities. Its perpetrators were members of the Ingush *jama'ah* (Ghalghaj *jama'ah*) which was founded in 2000 by Il'ias Gorch'khanov (1967–2005). The violence was triggered by the brutal 'mop-up' operations against genuine and alleged Islamists hiding in Chechen refugee camps and private homes, which were initiated by then president and FSB General Murat Zyazikov (b. 1957). The crack-down on Islamists was accompanied by gross human rights violations, including arbitrary arrests, mistreatment of prisoners and the 'disappearance' of suspected rebels (Sagramoso 2012: 581–82). As elsewhere in the region, Ingushetia has witnessed a series of high-profile political assassinations, including that of human rights lawyer Magomed Evloev in 2008. In 2009 President Yevkurov narrowly escaped an assassination attack. Nevertheless, Ingushetia has on the whole been relatively politically stable, at least partly because of its different history of relations with Russia and the stronger position among the Ingush of 'traditional' Sufi Islam of the Qadiri *wird* of Kunta-*hajjee*. Another reason has been the conciliatory and restrained stance of the first Ingush president, the Soviet Afghan war veteran, Ruslan Aushev (in office 1993–2002) and to some extent of his successor, Murat Zyazikov (in office 2002–8) who managed to steer Ingushetia away from war-torn Chechnya. Yet another crucial factor has been the political influence of Ingush *taips* and the Ingush elders in particular, who, being guided by ancient *'adats* (see Chapter 5), have played a central role in keeping the peace in Ingushetia. *Taip* support has also been essential for the political credibility of Ingush leaders; the lack of such support in the case of Yevkurov³⁸ was among the causes of his political downfall in 2019.

Conclusion

In the last three decades the north-eastern Caucasus has been the most volatile and problematic region of Russia. It has been the arena of two devastating Chechen wars and of high-intensity criminalised and Islamised violence against members of the law enforcement agencies, army, politicians, businessmen, human rights activists and representatives of both 'traditional' and 'untraditional' Islam. Since the collapse of the centralised Soviet economy and social welfare system the region has been fraught with dire economic and social conditions, high youth unemployment and a lack of political and economic opportunities for the majority of its population. Moscow's governance of the region has been frustrated by the gross alienation of the local populace from the hugely corrupt and self-serving clan- and other narrow networks-based ruling regimes, which formed during a reiteration of Russia's 'Times of Troubles' under President Boris Yeltsin. Furthermore, the region has witnessed an advancing societal re-Islamisation, as well as the rise of Islamised youth radicalism and jihadism. To some extent the scale of the challenges confronting Moscow in the region has been reminiscent of those faced by St. Petersburg in the nineteenth century. Moscow has attempted to deal with these challenges in different ways and with ambivalent results.

In 1999, under Vladimir Putin's leadership, Moscow opted for a predominantly military solution to the region's problems. This approach yielded some positive results for the federal centre, albeit at the cost of considerable human rights violations. Thus, Chechnya was re-integrated into Russia, Islamist networks in the form of local *jama'ahs* and the Caucasus Emirate were disrupted, the Sochi Winter Olympic Games of 2014 went off without a hitch and the bulk of the local jihadists moved out of the region to join the so-called

Islamic State or other global jihad fronts outside Russia's borders. However, tackling the region's social-economic and political problems has proved to be a more difficult task. For example, Moscow's strategy of breaking up the existing corrupt clan-based regimes by replacing locally elected presidents/heads by appointees from the federal military, FSB and political apparatus has backfired, as it led to the detachment of most current local leaders from the local clan and *taip* base. The most striking examples have been the presidencies of Yevkurov (in office 2009–19) in Ingushetia and Ramzan Abdulatipov (in office 2013–17) and Vladimir Vasil'ev (in office since 2018) in Dagestan. A corollary has been the shift in popular anger and resentment against economic and social hardships from locally elected politicians to the Kremlin. In the case of Kadyrov's Chechnya, Moscow has been forced to reconcile itself to the republic's growing societal and cultural deviation from the Russian heartland in exchange for Ramzan Kadyrov's political loyalty.

At the same time the mass exodus of Russians and other Slavs from the region has rendered it more 'Caucasian' and 'Islamic' in ethnic, cultural and religious ways, which in the long run might be detrimental to Russia's integrity as a multi-ethnic and poly-confessional state. On the other hand, the sizable seasonal as well as permanent labour migration of north-eastern Caucasians, alongside other Caucasians, to Moscow, St. Petersburg and other major Russian financial and economic hubs has been enhancing the sense of all-Russian (*Rossiiskii*, rather than *Russkii*) identity. This trend has also been supported by growing immigration to the north-eastern Caucasus of Uzbeks, Kyrgyz and other Muslim peoples from Central Asia, as their presence in the region strengthened the Russian language as the region's only workable lingua franca. Overall, as in the past, Moscow has to perform a sophisticated balancing act – military, political and cultural – in order to ensure its effective governance over this troublesome region.

Notes

- 1 The name 'Darband' derives from the Persian words *dar* ('gate') and *band* ('red barrier') which described the citadel built by Sasanians in the fifth century CE.
- 2 It is estimated that over 24,000 Arabs from Greater Syria were settled in Dagestan (Abdullayev 1993: 91).
- 3 Among these were, for example, 'alims Suleiman al-Gumiki, *hajjee* Umar al-Gumiki and Ali *hajjee* al-Gumiki who lived in Kumukh in the sixteenth century (Abdullayev 1993: 106).
- 4 The solid presence of a Salafi tradition in Islamic scholarship in Dagestan in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries is often overlooked in academic writing on various historical manifestations of jihad. See, for example, Devji (2005: 21).
- 5 RD is situated in the North Caucasus mountains and borders the Caspian Sea in the east. It occupies territory of around 50,300 sq.km. Its population is over 2.9 million (*Perepis*' Naseleniia 2010).
- 6 *Rossia snova otdala chast' svoei territorii Azerbaidzhanu. Voennyi Obozrevatel'*. 13 June 2013. Available at < <http://waronline.info/geostrategiya/rossiya-snova-otdala-chast-svoey-territorii-azerbaydzhanu.html> > (accessed 9 July 2019).
- 7 For example, the Andis, Didois, Godoberins, Bagulars, Chamalins, Tindins, Akhvaks, Karatins and Botlikhs were registered as Avars; Kaitags and Kubachis as Dargins; southern Terkmens as Azeris and northern Terkmens as Kumyks (Yemelianova 2003: 114).
- 8 On elite and popular attitudes to perestroika and the end of the USSR in Central Asia, see Yemelianova (2019).
- 9 The Lezgistan project was strongly opposed by Baku, which viewed it in the same light as Karabakh's separatism.
- 10 In accordance with the Bolshevik state-building project, which combined territorial and ethno-national principles, only a few ethnic groups were designated as 'titular' and their names were included in titles of newly formed administrative-political units.
- 11 From 2010 the title of 'president' was replaced by 'the head' (*glava*).

- 12 Among pro-government Islamic newspapers were, for example, *Al-Salam* (Peace), the *Islamskie Novosti* ('Islamic News'), the *Nur al-Islam* ('Light of Islam'), *Musul'manskaia Gazeta* ('Muslim Newspaper'), the *Islamskii Vestnik* ('Islamic Herald'), *Islamskaia Molodezh* ('Muslim Youth'), journals *Islam* and *Islamskaia Tsivilizatsiia* ('Islam and Islamic Civilization'). Until 1999, the opposition Islamic newspapers *Put' Islama* ('Path of Islam'), *Al-Mujahid* ('A Fighter for Islam'), *Al-Raiyat al-Islamiyya* ('Banner of Islam'), *Jihad* and *Khalifa* ('Caliphate') (Khanbabaev 2010: 92).
- 13 On average, around 14,000 people aged between 12 and 23 became involved in various forms of Islamic education. Until the mid-1990s, a considerable number of young Dagestanis received Islamic education abroad – in Saudi Arabia, the Gulf, Egypt, Syria, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Turkey and Malaysia. Among the implications of the rising demand for Islamic education was a growing deficit of qualified *mudarrises* ('Islamic teachers') and adequate textbooks. The teaching staff of *madrasahs* and other Islamic educational institutions consisted of foreigners and Dagestani graduates of both local and foreign Islamic universities, as well as self-trained *mudarrises*, while teaching materials were dominated by Saudi and other foreign Islamic imports. Only a handful of Islamic educational institutions based their curricula on works by the renowned late nineteenth and early twentieth century Dagestani 'alims of both Sufi and Salafi tradition, including Mirza-Ali al-Akhyt, Hasan al-Qadari and Abu Sufyan Akaev (Khanbabaev 2010: 90–91).
- 14 Across post-Soviet Muslim Eurasia the term 'traditional Islam' is widely applied to local beliefs and practices which often combine Islam, 'adats and other non-Islamic components.
- 15 Akkin Chechens and some other Dagestanis follow the teaching of the deceased sheikhs Kunta-hajjee Kishiev, Vis-hajjee Zangiev, Ali-Gadzhi Akushinskii and Amay (Kisriev 2007).
- 16 In 2012 sheikh Sayid-afandi Atsaev was assassinated. He was succeeded by sheikh Abdul Dzhilil-afandi.
- 17 Between 1989 and 1994 Dagestan had three de facto 'ethnic' muftiates controlled by Avar, Dargin and Kumyk *tarikatists*, respectively.
- 18 For a fuller discussion of the collisions between the Dagestani government and muftiate, see (Makarov 2000; Bilalov 2003; Makarov and Mukhametshin 2003: 140–49).
- 19 The Islamic Revival Party of the USSR was created in June 1990 in Astrakhan by Salafi-oriented intellectuals from Dagestan, Tajikistan, Azerbaijan and other Muslim-majority parts of the Soviet Union.
- 20 Most Islamic textbooks were authored by Bagauddin Kebedov and Magomed Tagaev. They were produced by the publishing house *Santlada* established by Bagauddin in the village of Pervomaisk in the Khasaviurt *raion*.
- 21 Author's interview with Akhmad Tagaev (d. 2009), 23 May 2003, Moscow.
- 22 There are significant discrepancies in the estimated number of Islamists in Dagestan. For example, according to the official data of 2004, there were around 2,000 'Wahhabis', while other sources suggested that their number exceeded 100,000 (Khanbabaev 2004: 130).
- 23 See, for example, (Gall and de Waal 1997, 1998; Lieven 1999; Politkovskaya 2001; Sakwa 2001; Seely 2001; Evangelista 2002; Smith 1998; Gammer 2006; Russell 2007; Hughes 2008; Vatchagaev 2019).
- 24 Chechnya occupies a territory of around 16,165 sq. km. According to official statistics its population is over 1.3 million. However, this figure is debatable in the light of a considerable loss of population as a result of the recent wars and emigration. Chechnya's ethnic homogeneity is a relatively recent phenomenon which is also related to recent wars. For comparison, in 1970, Chechens constituted under 55 per cent, Russians over 35 per cent and Ingush around 10 per cent of the total population of Checheno-Ingushetia. At present, Russians make up just under 2 per cent and Kumyks around 1 per cent of Chechnya's population, which also includes smaller Avar, Nogai, Ingush, Ukrainian and Armenian communities (*Perepis' SSSR* 1970, *Perepis' Naselemniia* 2010).
- 25 The name 'Ichkeria' derives from 'Nokhchiimokh' in Chechen. It refers to the historic habitat of the nine largest Chechen *tukhums* (rural communes).
- 26 Chechnya's Nadterechnyi and Urus-Martan *raions* remained under the control of the Moscow-backed Provisional Council of Chechnya (PCCh) under the leadership of Umar Avturkhanov.
- 27 On the incompetence of the Russian military under Defence Minister General Grachev and the dismal state of the Russian troops engaged in Chechnya in 1994–96, see Schaefer and Doohovskiy 2013.
- 28 Subsequently, Magomed Alsabekov, who originated from Kazakhstan, returned to Almaty where he currently holds the post of deputy mufti of Kazakhstan.

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- 29 Abu Omar al-Saif (Muhammad ibn 'Abdullah ibn Saif al-Buainain) was an Arab, who was born in Saudi Arabia.
 - 30 Amir Ibn al-Khattab (Samir Salih Al-Suweilem) was an ethnic Chechen, who was born in Saudi Arabia and grew up in Jordan.
 - 31 Others of Ichkeria's ideologists include Bagauddin Kebedov, Isa Umarov, Islam Khalimov and Shamsuddin Batukayev.
 - 32 The main jihadist training camps were located in the Urus-Martan and Vedeno districts of Chechnya. Their staff was dominated by Arab jihadists who combined military instruction with Islamist indoctrination (Akaev 2010: 70).
 - 33 For a detailed discussion of the jihadist financial network in the region, see Witting (2009: 248–60).
 - 34 From 1997 to 2006 the main destinations of Chechen and other North Caucasian asylum seekers were Poland (28,906 applications); Germany (24,796); Austria (22,771); France (17,302); Belgium (15,110); the UK (9,675); the Czech Republic (9,034); Sweden (8,298); Norway (7,949) and Slovakia (7,305) (Schahbasi 2008: 15–16).
 - 35 The *ziyarat* of Khedi, the mother of Kunta-*hajjee*, acquired a particular prominence (Malashenko 2009: 114).
 - 36 The Republic of Ingushetia was proclaimed in June 1992. Its territory is around 3,000 sq. km and its population is over 0.4 million (Perepis' Naseleniia 2010).
 - 37 Upon his resignation, Yunus-Bek Yevkurov was appointed Deputy Defence Minister of the RF.
 - 38 Yunus-Bek Yevkurov belongs to a politically and numerically insignificant *taip* compared to his predecessors – Ruslan Aushev, Murat Zyazikov and his successor Mahmud-Ali Kalimatov – all of whom were or are affiliated to powerful *taips*.

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