

Chechnya

The Final Solution...



This war is taking place almost in our back garden.

We are recording the testimony of victims,
We have seen the photos of documentary films,
We read the reports of international humanitarian organisations,
and finally we have the bodies of victims
– some twisted from pain and brutally mutilated,
others clean but devoid of vital organs
which have been taken for transplantation.

The policy-makers of the free world full of rhetoric about human rights
are readily swapping the life and humanity of the Chechen nation
for Russia's energy resources.

But it is our western civilisation that is responsible
and will bear the consequences of their betrayal of human values,
their mute consent to a new holocaust.

Adam Borowski
Honorary Consul
Chechen Republic of Ichkeria

All nations shall have the right to self-determination. On the basis of that right they shall freely determine their political status and freely ensure their own economic, social and cultural development.

Article 1. International Pact of Civil and Political Rights



Chechen Republic of Ichkeria, is the name of a state in the Northern Caucasus, adopted after the collapse of the Soviet Union and the Chechen nation's declaration of independence. It covers an area of some 16,500 square kilometres and a population of about 600,000. Its capital is Grozny on the River Sunza. It borders on the Russian Federation and Georgia. Most of the inhabitants of Chechnya are Sunnite Muslims. Since 1999 Chechnya's territory has been occupied by Russian troops.



Ichkeria is the Turkish name for the central part of Chechnya. According to legend, that is where the 'pure' Chechen clans, of which there are probably several hundred, originated.









Nuokhchi is the way the Chechens refer to themselves. This is nation of Caucasian origin which traces its roots to the ancient Palaeo-Asiatic tribe. The ancestors of the Nuokhchi, known as the Hurites, from the 3rd century BC to the start of the Modern Era could boast an organised state and urban centres including Mitani, Alzi, Arrapha, Urartu and Nakchcheria. The descendants of the Hurites, related to

the Nuokhchi, also included the Ingussetians and Assyrians. A characteristic feature of that culture were houses in the shape of towers, round which entire settlements (known in Chechen as 'alu') were built. A common feature of the Chechens and their ancestors was the use of the prefix 'nakh' which forms part of the name of various localities. It comes from the name of the prophet Noe (Noah), and one of his sons, Japhet, according to legend was the progenitor of their nation.

The Chechen language belongs to the Nakhian languages constituting of subgroup of the Nakh-Dagestanian, or north-eastern branch of the great family of Caucasian languages. Linguists distinguish eight main dialects of the Chechen tongue as well as several local dialects.

The symbol of Chechnya and the Chechens is the wolf, specifically a she-wolf, a proud animal, free and brave, ready to attack even a much larger foe.

Chronology of the Russian–Chechen wars

- 1708 The first Cossack invasion of Chechnya ordered by Tsar Peter I.
- 1709 The first Russian defeat in the war against the Chechens.
- 1732-70 The systematic conquest of Chechnya, interrupted by a series of insurrections.
- 1780-91  Sheik Mansur Ushurma sets up the modern Chechen state.
- 1784 The Russians build a stronghold at Vladikavkaz as a base for further expansion into the Caucasus.
- 1818 General Yermolov launches the conquest of the northern Caucasus and Chechnya; the Russian Groznaya stronghold is built.
- 1821-26 Mullah Mahomet calls for a holy war against the Russians; a Chechen uprising under Buybulat Tamiyev erupts.
- 1832  Imam Shamil takes over the leadership of the insurrection.
- 1843-59 The nucleus of a state of Chechnya and Dagestan appears.
- 1859 Imam Shamil capitulates; Chechnya is incorporated into Russia.
- 1887 The conquest and pacification of Chechnya is concluded.
- 1913-16 A Chechen uprising is quashed by the army of General Denikin.
- 11 May 1918 r. Creation of the Mountainous Republic; declaration of complete independence of and secession from Russia.
- 1918-19 Guerrilla warfare against the white army of General Denikin.
- 1920 The Red Army occupies Chechnya; in August the first Chechen uprising against the Bolsheviks erupts.
- 21 January 1921 Chechnya becomes part of the Bolshevik Mountainous Autonomous Republic.
- 1924 The Chechen Autonomous Obvod is created within the Soviet Union.
- 1929-30 General Chechen uprising against collectivisation.
- 1940 Chechen insurrection under the leadership of Hasan Israilov.
- 23 February 1944 Chechens and Ingushetians are deported to Kazakhstan and Central Asia.
- The operation started at dawn (...) Soldiers armed with automatic weapons led by an officer or NCO gave people 10-15 minutes to pack their belongings, chased defenceless old people, children and women from their homes and dragged the sick out of their beds. (...) Mass atrocities occurred. Women, children, the elderly and men were shot dead, drowned in lakes and burnt or buried alive. (...) In the locality of Khaybakh alone, on 27 February some 700 people were murdered, including centenarians as well as newborn infants, able-bodied men, women and children. All told, nearly 400,000 Chechens and more than 91,000 Ingushetians were deported. More than 18 percent of the deportees died during transport or within the first 18 months in their places of forced resettlement.*
- 1957 The Chechen-Ingushetian Autonomous Socialist Republic is created. Chechens and Ingushetians may return to their country.
- 27 November 1990 Chechnya proclaims its sovereignty.
- 27 October 1991 In general elections, Djohar Dudayev is elected president. Voter turnout is 72%, and 90.1% voted for Dudayev. 
- 1 November 1991 President Djohar Dudayev declares Chechnya's independence.
- 26 May 1992 An agreement on troop withdrawal and the division of arsenals is signed with Russia.
- 7 July 1992 Russian troops leave Chechnya.
- 25 November 1994 Mercenaries recruited by Russian intelligence attempt to overthrow Djohar Dudayev.
- 11 December 1994 The Russian army intervenes in Chechnya.
- 1995-96 Guerrilla war.
- 21 April 1996 Djohar Dudayev is killed; the function of Chechnya's president is taken over by Vice-President Zelimkhan Yandarbiyev. 
- 6 August 1996 Chechen units capture Grozny.
- 31 August 1996 A peace agreement is signed in Khassav-Yurt; Russian troops leave Chechnya.
- 27 January 1997 Aslan Maskhadov wins the presidential election, and a Chechen parliament is elected simultaneously. 
- 12 May 1997 Aslan Maskhadov and Russian President Boris Yeltsin sign a peace agreement which does not define Chechnya's status.
- August 1999 Shamil Basayev and his units invade Dagestan and announce plans to spread the Muslim revolution to the entire Caucasus.
- October 1999 Russian troops re-enter Chechnya and a new Chechen-Russian war begins.
- 2000 Grozny is levelled to the ground; a partisan war begins.
- 11 September 2001 Osama bin Laden's attack on America; Russia sides with the US in the war on world terrorism and gets Chechen leaders recognised as terrorists.
- 2002 Aslan Maskhadov repeatedly appeals to the Russians for peace talks.
- October 2002 Terrorist attack on the theatre in Dubrovka, for which Shamil Basayev takes credit. An operation by Russian special services to free hostages leads to the death of 130 people. Aslan Maskhadov condemns the act of terror.
- 23 March 2003 Russian occupation forces carry out a 'constitutional referendum' in Chechnya.
- 5 October 2003 Russian occupation forces hold a presidential 'election'. The Kremlin's hand-picked candidate, pro-Russian politician Akhmed Kadyrov, becomes president.
- 9 May 2004 Akhmed Kadyrov dies in a bomb attack in Grozny.
- 29 August 2004 The Russian occupation forces hold a presidential 'election'. A pro-Russian politician hand-picked by the Kremlin becomes president.
- 1 September 2004 A multi-national command attack is launched on a school in Beslan (North Ossetia), for which Shamil Basayev takes credit. An operation by Russian special services to free hostages causes the death of 339 people including 156 children; some 700 people are injured. Aslan Maskhadov condemns the act of terror.
- 8 March 2005 Aslan Maskhadov, the president of the Chechen Republic of Ichkeria, is killed by Russian troops. Abdul-Khalim Sadulayev, the Chairman of Chechnya's Supreme Shariat Court, becomes the new president. 

- 17 June 2006 Abdul-Khalim Sadulayev is killed during a military confrontation with Russian troops. Dokku Umarov becomes the new president of Chechnya. 
- October 2007 Partisan warfare continues in Chechnya.



Chechen Republic of Ichkeria, April 2000. Destroyed settlements and villages in the valley of the River Argon as seen from a Russian helicopter.

Mainly the elderly, women and children perished in the bombed towns and villages.

28 November 1994 – Two weeks before the war began, 12 people, including nine children, were killed in a rocket attack on Argon.

December 1994 – In the vicinity of the settlement Novo Sharon rockets fired from helicopters destroyed a lorry filled with refugees as well as an ambulance.

3 January 1995 – A rocket and bomb attack on the town square of Shale, a hospital, department store and grain mills killed more than 300 and wounded many more.

14 January 1995 – 14 people were killed in a rocket attack on Chechen-Ail.

18 January 1995 – 16 died in a rocket attack on Urus-Martan.

December 1995 – The people of Gudermes were forced to flee their town under artillery fire, and vehicles marked with white flags transporting evacuated civilians as well as groups fleeing on foot were fire on from helicopters with machine guns and rockets.

20 August 1996 – 12 refugees from Grozny were gunned down from helicopters in the vicinity of Goyty.





Grozny, 1995

The civilian population became a frequent target of attacks for the Russian air force.

Civilians were either not forewarned of impending bombardment or talks were refused on the subject of their evacuation from the danger zone. Even when people were allowed to leave their settlements, the columns of refugees were bombed and fired upon.



7 October 1999 – The carpet bombing of the village of Elistanzhy killed 65 people and injured more than 100 others, many of whom later died in hospital. On the basis of the bomb craters left behind, 80 bombs were dropped on an area measuring 200 by 600 metres. Putin officially denied that Elistanzhy had been bombed and called the films of the victims' funeral a spectacle.

21 October 1999 – Rocket attack on Grozny's biggest outdoor market. Tactical earth-to-earth missiles struck several minutes past 5 PM at the busiest time of day. They were fitted with heavy-metal-shrapnel heads. Women predominated amongst the 180 killed. More than 200 suffered serious injuries.



Grozny, December 1994. One of the main streets of Chechnya's capital. In the course of two wars, the Chechen capital was completely destroyed by heavy Russian bombardment.



The Russian authorities claimed federal forces were waging a war against terrorists by destroying their bases, supply dumps and the terrorists themselves. The use of modern warfare techniques was to ensure precise attacks involving a minimum of civilian losses.

The reality was levelling of peaceful villages to the ground without any justification and the blind, random killing with cold fury of innocent people.

But a glance at the map of Chechnya suffices to show that the targets of rockets and bombs are distributed evenly over the entire country. It was as if the staff planning the operation wanted to mete out horror and death evenly and justly. No direction appears to have received preferential treatment and no part of the country was privileged. Death, blood and suffering were equally distributed to every region of the republic.



for: Władimir Kuznetsov / RZECZPOSPOLITA / MURTAZALIYEV, JABRAIL

Grozny, 1995



Grozny, April 2000



In February 2000, 12-year-old Jabrail Murtazaliyev was seriously wounded. "When I was walking with my grandmother along the road to Dubayurt, a missile exploded right next to us. The shrapnel struck me in the temple, elbow, foot and kidney. My grandmother fell to the ground next to me. I tried to drag grandmother over the snow. Then some man came along and helped. They took me to hospital." The shrapnel were still in place. The grandmother had died instantly, so the boy was dragging her dead body over the snow. His father had disappeared without a trace in February.



Grozny, 2000



The largest death toll was caused by indiscriminate aerial, rocket and artillery attacks as well as inadequate combat forces without proper concern for the safety of civilians as required by international and humanitarian norms. The people of Chechnya sustained losses due to bombardment and artillery shelling through the entire period of both conflicts. Beginning on 19 December 1994, air attacks on Grozny occurred daily, and most of the bombs and rockets struck quarters devoid of military objects. The Russian air force consistently attacked housing districts not only in Chechnya's capital but in all towns, villages and settlements, clearly aiming to annihilate their inhabitants.



Fot. Władimir Mazanow / FUNDACJA ANDRIEJA JAGIELSKIEGO

Grozny, 1995

[...] When they invaded Chechnya in 1999, the Russian commanders said they were acting to destroy Mujahedin units and bands of slave-traffickers. On Grozny they dumped an avalanche of the heaviest bombs, including depth charges used to destroy submarines. Such bombs penetrated roofs and exploded in cellars, where people had taken cover. Planes, tanks and artillery destroyed street after street. The Russian infantry marched into a totally devastated city, which had capitulated. Even so, as they marched down the streets Russian soldiers hurled grenades into cellars without checking whether those hiding there were civilians or guerrillas who had not managed to flee the siege. Three-fourths of the buildings in Grozny are beyond reconstruction. And nobody is rebuilding anything. [...]

Report in 'Gazeta Wyborcza' by correspondent Wojciech Jagielski



Fot. Władimir Mazanow / FUNDACJA ANDRIEJA JAGIELSKIEGO

Grozny, 1995



The Russians [...] slowly and methodically, quarter after quarter, street after street have been destroying the city by pounding it with aerial bombs, rockets, long-range artillery and tanks. The infantry would go into action only after the guerrilla redoubts had fallen silent. Before the Chechens surrendered their capital at the start of February, the Russians had been besieging and bombing it for nearly three months. As a result, they captured a city so utterly destroyed that it could be compared only to Warsaw, Dresden or Hiroshima reduced to rubble in World War Two.

As if horrified by what they had done, the Russians sealed off the conquered city like a ghetto. They encircled it with a dense ring of one hundred military check-points posts and forbade foreigners from entering. It was also closed to Chechens lacking documents proving they had been residents of what had once been the biggest, 500,000-strong city in the Caucasus.





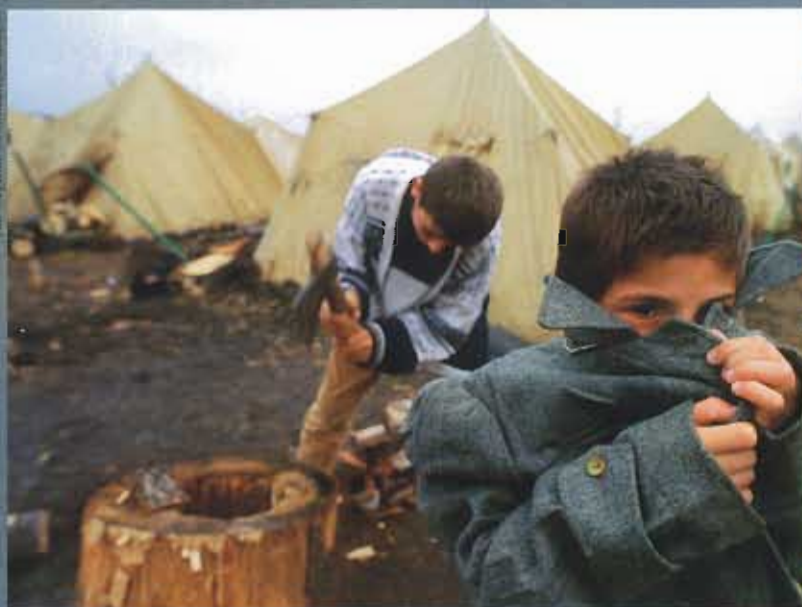
АГЕНТАС МАРКА

Grozny, 26 February 2000. The writing on the wall says: 'Peaceful people and children live here! Do not shoot!'



Фот. Уильям Маззини (УИЛЬЯМ МАЗЗИНИ, МАРИОНА МАРИОНОВА)

Grozny, April 2000



October 1999 – Refugee camp on the border with Ingushetia.



May 2000 – Chechen refugee camp set up in a train.



5 October 1999 – In the evening near the locality of Chervlonna, some 30 kilometres north of Grozny, Russian tanks opened fire on a convoy of Chechen refugees crossing the river Terek, even though the Russian authorities had assured them they could safely pass. One of the shells struck a motor coach in which 40 people were travelling. Twenty-eight were killed and nine were seriously wounded. Most of the victims were women and children.

[...] Refugees are leaving Chechnya through the only border crossing with Ingushetia that was open from time to time. That miniature republic has already absorbed 180,000 refugees. Tens of thousands of people are camping in tent towns along the border, and hundreds of thousands have fled their shelled and bombed villages to neighbouring localities. Their faith in a peaceful home has been shattered. They move from village to village in search of illusory safety. And they dread successive Russian air strikes directed against the densest human concentrations. [...]



Military operations triggered the mass, spontaneous flight of people from affected and threatened areas. Refugees streamed out of urban centres, notably Grozny, to rural areas and beyond Chechnya's borders, particularly to Ingushetia. According to humanitarian organisations, during the first Chechen war some 400,000 inhabitants of Chechnya were forced to change their place of residence. [...]

The wave of refugees again swelled in September 1999, when Russian aerial bombardment began. [...] As a result, more than 250,000 refugees ended up in Ingushetia, 170,000 of them for a longer period of time. That led to an extremely difficult situation which specialist organisations dubbed a humanitarian catastrophe.



Grozny, 12 October 1999, a mother and her son show the injuries they suffered during the bombing of the village of Elistanzhy.

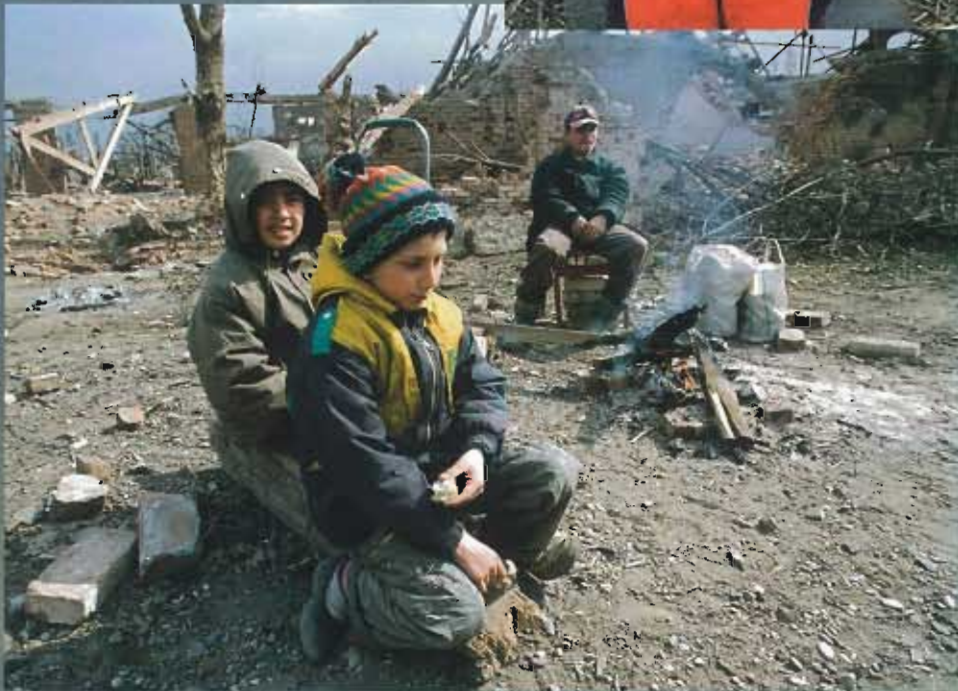
In the central hospital in Nazran [...] in the corridor lies 39-year-old Aminat. She was wounded on 16 November in the west Chechen locality of Alkhan-Yurt. Nura Zara who is taking care of her explained how it happened. The family had decided to evacuate their women and children to Ingusetia. Fifteen people including seven children crammed into a small Russian Fiat motor car driven by the two sisters' brother. There were nine motor vehicles in the refugee convoy. All of them displayed strips of white cloth and headed towards the border with Ingusetia. They had travelled no more than a kilometre, when two fighter planes began strafing them with machine-gun fire. Nobody was killed but seven of the car's passengers were wounded, including three children, she said. Following that first attack, everyone took cover in a roadside ditch. The planes swooped over them three more times. One of the rockets completely destroyed the car.

Report in 'Rzeczpospolita' by correspondent Piotr Jendroszyk





Grozny, 2001



Grozny, April 2000

Blonde-haired, blue-eyed Ania does not look like a typical Chechen girl. – We had been living in Grozny not far from the railway viaduct near the Bogatyr (Hero) shop. It was still winter, when the Russians entered our cellar. They tormented my mother and did what they pleased and then they shot her dead. I saw everything that went before but not the moment when they killed her. They had led her into another part of the cellar. We did not find her body. The house collapsed burying it beneath the rubble. I spent the entire war in Grozny in cellars with different women. [...]

In the winter of 1995, the father of a then nine-year-old girl named Byelkis had died in the war. Her mother in an advanced stage of pregnancy was raped and killed by Russian soldiers. When the girl told me about all that, she spoke with a soft, trembling voice, wringing her fingers and turning her head away. She was at a loss for words to describe everything that had occurred in her presence. – When the soldiers entered the cellar, my mum told me to hide under the bed. It was completely dark there. And then [...] they killed her. When I crawled out she was lying in the bed. I saw that her throat had been slit. [...]



I don't know why at the start of the 21st century Russia together with all of Europe and America are tolerating the torture of children here and now in a European ghetto which is hypocritically referred to as an 'anti-terrorist operation zone'.



for. 83292001. 10/10/2010 11:25:02 AM

June 2003. A children's home for orphans from Grozny whose parents had perished in the first and second Chechen war.



for. 83292001. 10/10/2010 11:25:02 AM



Nine-year-old Salman Musayev from the village of Raduzhnoye experienced what had been the fate of hundreds of Chechen children. He bent down to pick up a shimmering object resembling the lollipops children love. The lollipop turned out to be a bomb. It blew off two fingers from his left hand and three from the right. [...] Thirteen-year-old Janaris Mutaliyev and 14-year-old Islam Khabuyev were killed on 7 December 2003. They happened to wander into an area mined by the air force two years earlier. From that time it has caused the death of people and livestock. They number in the hundreds. In one hospital ward, 13-year old Ibragim Idalov is sitting on his bed. He is all skin and bones. His eyes are big and horribly sad. His legs are thin and tucked up. In the summer of 1996, the blast of air caused by an exploding bomb had thrown him to the ground. Soon thereafter he stopped walking and would not straighten out his legs. They could no longer support his weight. Ibragim requires specialist assistance. Such assistance does not exist in Chechnya. 'Will you help us?' Ibragim's father, Aslanbek, asks pleadingly.



I had lived in Grozny till the day my wife died. She was killed while bringing bread for the children hiding in the cellar. That was when I decided to take my six-year-old daughter and flee to Ingusetia. I made it to the border travelling at night in a big group of refugees. But at the border Russian helicopters opened fire on us civilian refugees. A bullet went through my arm in lodged in my daughter's abdomen. She died looking me in the eyes. I saw her agony but could do nothing about it.

Account of refugees in Poland

Whoever does not die on the screen, does not die at all. Chechnya's daily reality does not move us because we do not see it. People who are abducted from their homes, tortured, raped, murdered, or blown to bits with dynamite are not shown on television or talked about on radio, because Chechnya has been sealed off from the world.

[...] When they were mutilated and killed, those children surely cried out as loudly as the children at Beslan's school No. 1, but they were less fortunate. Their suffering was Chechnya's daily reality. The children of Beslan were more important – they suffered ceremoniously and officially as it were – before the eyes of a TV-watching world.

Report entitled 'Down with terror! Long live terror!' by Kurczab-Redlich in 'Rzeczpospolita' (September 2004)





Mothers lamenting their sons who died in defence of Grozny.

Mothers seeking their sons missing in action.



'Disappearances'

During their 'special operations' known as 'zachistki' (cleansing), Russian forces stopped hundreds of people at checkpoints or during random inspections. Their situation and whereabouts are unknown. The Council of Europe estimates that in the course of both wars some 18,000 people have 'disappeared' in Chechnya. To Amnesty International's requests for information on the 'disappearances' the Russian authorities reply that there are no official documents pertaining to the arrest or detention of any people by those names, hence those are 'concocted' cases. The Russian authorities deny or decline to give out information even in cases of 'disappearances' in which they had previously confirmed that a given individual had been arrested by Russian forces.

The Russian human-rights NGO Memorial which has been collecting information and monitoring the situation in Chechnya and neighbouring Ingusetia, estimates that only 10 percent of the people detained by Russian forces in Chechnya had been officially registered. The remaining 90 percent have been confined to military detention centres or other unofficial, secret detention sites, or have been the victims of illegal executions.

The disappearance of people in Chechnya has achieved such proportions that they can be regarded as a crime against humanity



Abuzar Saidseimov holds a photograph of his brother Waik (born in 1982) who 'disappeared' in 7 May 2001 in Tsatsan-Yurt.



Barlart Musayeva holds photographs of her sons, Karon (born in 1976) and Said-Aleg (born in 1973,) who 'disappeared' on 18 September 2000.



Baret Ilasova holds a photograph of Magomed Temurkayev (born in 1974) who 'went missing' on 18 September 2000 in Grozny.



Fatima Zakayeva holds a photograph of her brother Abdulah Zakayev who 'disappeared' on 10 March 2002 in the locality of Stare Atagi.



Laila Ibragimova holds a photograph of her son Zaur (born in 1975) and his friend Hasan Botayev (born in 1973) who 'vanished' without a trace in Grozny on 18 September 2000.



Luiza Uimakanova and Zarema hold a photograph of Luiza's nephew Said Rasayev (aged 31) who 'disappeared' on 6 March 2000 in the locality of Duba-Yurt.



Luiza Mugayeva holds a photograph of her cousin Adlan Baisarov (born in 1972) who 'went missing' on 10 March 2002 during a 'cleansing' operation at Stare Atagi.



Zura Ismailova holds a photograph of Rzyan Ismailov (born in 1974) who 'went missing' in Grozny on 18 September 2002.



Marcel Imakayeva holds a photograph of her son Said-Husein (born in 1974) who 'went missing' on 17 December 2000 somewhere between Stare Atagi and Nisse Atagi.



Tamara Taytumova holds a photograph of her son Yakub Yabralov (born in 1981) who 'went missing' on 15 December 2001 in the locality of Argun.



Azru holds a photograph of her son Asian (born in 1979) who 'disappeared' without a trace on 6 March 2002 in the locality of Stare Atagi.



Birla Saduiyeva together with her son holds a photograph of her husband Wakid Daudov (born in 1960) who 'went missing' on 15 December 2001 in the locality of Argun.



Mariam Kadyrova holds a photograph of her daughter Milana Fertiglyeva (born in 1980) and her daughter's friend Aset Yakiyev (born in 1956) who 'went missing' on 7 November 2001 in the locality of Sierzhen-Yurt.



Kava Madayeva holds a photograph of herself and her children and one of her husband Sharpudi Madayev (born in 1965) who 'went missing' on 15 December 2001 in the locality of Argun.



Shafudin Sambiyev holds a photograph of his son Amir Pokayev (born in 1982) who 'went missing' on 6 March 2002 in the locality of Stare Atagi.



Taisa Imakayeva holds two photographs of her husband Balavdi Imakayev (born in 1959) and his family who 'went missing' on 6 March 2000 in the locality of Duba-Yurt.



[...] In the cellars live 'podvalshchiki' (cellar-dwellers from the word 'podval' – cellar). Gurin is a plumber, his wife Larisa works as a hospital-ward attendant. Both are Russians from Grozny. He lights a candle because it is dark in the cellar. They have been living here for three years. They say it is safe because no shell can reach them. But it is cold and damp. 'In the streets it is hot, but I chop wood the whole day to keep warm,' he says. But in the cellars entranceway it becomes obvious that he has another way to stay warm. Lined up on the cellar shelves are sparkling-clean vodka bottles. 'I am now living like a bird without documents. (Russian) federal troops burnt my house down and took my documents. If I had been a Chechen they would have shot me long ago...

After a few moments of silence he starts to curse: 'Russia you bastard! Whom did those liberators liberate!'



Grozny, 2000

Nobody at present knows for sure what the current population of Grozny is. Some about 100,000. Here and there one can see signs of reconstruction. Windows have been replaced, little shops and stalls have emerged and people can be seen peering out of doorways. Sometimes motor cars are seen on the streets. There is a lot of greenery and a lot of ruins and amongst them mines and duds. After travelling a few minutes one passes bunkers, soldiers and armoured vehicles hidden behind fortifications. Occasionally sappers march past. They move at a weary pace in two files down the street followed by armoured vehicles. Here and there, usually in the vicinity of checkpoints, one can see an Orthodox cross fashioned from planks or sewer pipes. That is where Russian soldiers perished. Their bodies have long since been removed. Beneath the city's ruins the bones of inhabitants – Russians and Chechens – lie to this day. Russian bombs were not selective. [...]

From a report by correspondent Radosław Januszewski in the daily 'Rzeczpospolita'



For: Władimir Mazur / Pictography / Anzenberger & Gredlitz



In Grozny water is priceless. Bombs ripped apart its water mains and sewerage system already in 1995. State and private tank travel to springs in the distant suburb of Charnoreche and provide inhabitants with this treasure. But only irregularly. People wait, set down their buckets, pay one rouble per bucket and lug it up the steps of their block. Ten-year-old boys and girls lug the buckets of water.

[...] In Grozny there is 'Polish' water. Hospitals and refugee hostels wait for it. The Polish Humanitarian Action (in co-operation with UNICEF and the European Commission for Humanitarian Affairs) fill 179 huge, ten-tonne water tanks free of charge. They filter and distribute the water, in schools they set up toilets and in hospitals incinerators to incinerate medical waste.

Report by correspondent Krystyna Kurczab-Redlich fir the daily 'Rzeczpospolita'



www.foto.com



Grozny, April 2000



Russian soldiers detained me on a road in order to 'check my identity', although they did not even bother to look at my papers, 30-year-old Lom Ali reported in Grozny on 16 January 2004. I do not know where they took me. In a room without windows lined with acoustical panelling they hooked me up to an apparatus that resembled a telephone and switch on the electrical current. They demanded I admit to having two grenade-launchers, four automatic weapons, a pistol and eight F-1 grenades. I refused... Afterwards, Ali had his left hand pierced with a shashlik skewer, pinned to the wooden wall of the bath and kept that way for several hours. Two days later, when he refused to sign anything, the same hand was dealt with the same way. His ribs were crushed and his head was squeezed in a special device until his skull nearly cracked. Burning cigarettes were snuffed out on his skin, and he was unable to breathe with his head in a plastic bag... They wanted him to admit to blowing up a government building in Grozny in December 2002. A 15-year-old from Urus-Martan was also being tormented nearby, but for long, because he died. After half a year Lom Ali's family located him and bought him out.



www.media.milko.pl

The Russians had been stationed at the site of a present Chechen militia post, where an empty brick bunker now stands. Once, when they got drunk, they went berserk. I am looking at the pock-marked wall and perforated gate. They opened fire through openings in the opposite wall. Later they said there had been an attack...

From Rarosław Januszewski's report in the daily 'Rzeczpospolita'



www.media.milko.pl



Grozny, April 2000



[...] The post is a fortification with concrete slabs and sandbags all about. The barrels of automatic weapons protrude from between the sandbags. Coils of barbed wire all about. And everywhere the same notices: 'MOTORIST, STOP! SWITCH OFF YOUR ENGINE. OPEN YOUR BOOT, PREPARE YOUR DOCUMENTS AND THOSE OF YOUR VEHICLE. And next to that: 'WE SHOOT WITHOUT WARNING!' And they do shoot. Sometimes at one another. Last year in autumn the old team at the post Kavkaz I opened fire on those who came to replace them...

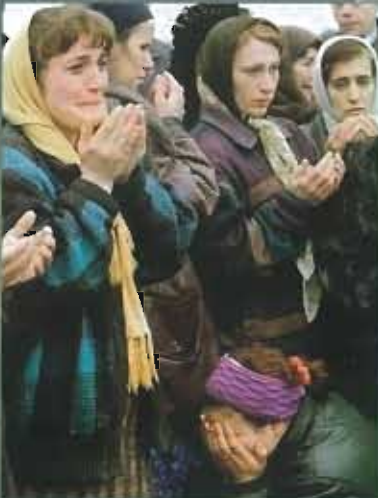
Report entitled 'Agony behind the iron curtain' by 'Rzeczpospolita' correspondent Krystyna Kurczab-Redlich



Prof. Waldemar Huraszko / FOTOGRAFIA ANDRZEJA SACHA / ONGA



[...] Alexei Romanov, commander of the 45th regiment [...] shows me the pits into which Chechens were thrown following round-ups and 'cleansing' operations. He solicitously gives me his hand to prevent me sliding down the mud into the six-metre ditch. The pit looks exactly the way it was described by the many who were forced to sit in it. Hanging down the side is a rope up which those called up for interrogation must clamber. Although the temperature is below freezing, an unpleasant odour can be smelt. such is the custom here: the Chechens must attend to their physiological needs where they stand, and they must stand in the same spot 24 hours a day. If they want, they may sit down. [...]



[...] In Chernokozovo the cries of mistreated people never ceased for even a minute. Tear gas was let into the cells. Prisoners had to stand with their arms upraised at for days at a time. According to Ruslan, women and even children were confined to the camp. 'There was a 10-year-old boy and his 12-year-old sister and also one 14-year-old girl,' Ruslan recalls. 'The guards raped them daily and quarrelled amongst themselves as to who would go first. They raped women and even men.' Arsen confirms the veracity of Ruslan's account. Several other witnesses who had gone through Chernokozovo say the same. Officially the Russian authorities deny it. They claim there have been no murders and no tormenting of arrested Chechens. 'The truth will come out anyway. Just let them dismantle their posts and allow people to travel freely,' Arsen says calmly. Time is on his side.

Report by correspondent Andrzej Zaucha in the weekly 'Polityka'

Rape is used not only as a tool of war; detained women are also subjected to that form of torture on the part of civilian law-enforcement officers.

From an Amnesty International report



In the spring of this year, a group of children were sitting round a bonfire on the bank of the River Assa. Two Russian military helicopters flew by overhead, doubled back and dropped a bomb. The dying down fire illuminating three corpses and several seriously injured children. A while later I looked into the eyes of one of the dead boy's mother. I also looked into the eyes of a mother who had buried three teenaged sons. Two of them had been abducted by soldiers and dumped at a roadside disembowelled. I saw children without eyes and hands, mutilated by exploding 'toys' dropped over Chechnya from Russian helicopters. I saw a little girl with a whole in her skull through which a pulsating membrane-shielded brain could be seen. I saw another girl completely paralysed by shrapnel that had lodged in her spine. I talked with a 15-year-old who had witnessed the disembowelment of two living Chechen boys whose intestines were thrown to dogs by drunken soldiers.



The liquidation of males, especially young ones, is the main objective of the 'anti-terrorist operation' in Chechnya. Abducted on a mass scale during 'cleansing' operations and wrested from the arms of their mothers, sisters and wives, they die in the dungeons of the Russian Interior Ministry, Federal Security Service, Military Intelligence and other special formations. Only those whose families succeed in determining which military unit had abducted them can survive, because relatives then know from whom their loved ones can be bought out. For roubles, for dollars, for weapons which usually have to be purchased from Russians themselves...

Report by correspondent Krystyna Kurczab-Redlich in the daily 'Dziennik Polski'





A hundred soldiers sat on tanks and armoured personnel carriers. Most were drunk. The convoy stopped in front of the Musayev home in which there were three men aged 27-26. When asked for money they replied they hadn't any, the soldiers gunned them down. In Brianskaya Street, a father and his two sons perished, In Zemlianskaya Street two brothers who were digging a grave for their mother who had been killed in a bombing. In Mesayeva Street, 75-year-old Akhmed Abulkhonov had offered some soldiers 300 roubles (\$11) to spare his life. They threw them back in his face and jeered. He returned with a \$100 note. 'You had dollars and wanted to bribe us with roubles,' shouted one of the Russians. Abulkhonov was beaten and shot dead. The soldiers dragged his daughter Lutsia into an APC and drove off to an unknown destination.

The soldiers later filled their APCs with whatever they could carry off. They torched some of the homesteads. On one of the houses they wrote: 'The 245th Regiments was here.'



2002, Russian Specnaz (special task force) descends on a Chechen village in search of concealed guerrillas.

2002, A Chechen detained by a Russian Specnaz member.



Zachistka – was the name of a 'special operation' conducted in Chechnya by Russian federal forces, Interior Ministry troops and special units such as OMON, Specnaz and Alfa. At different times of day or night a village is ringed by tanks, armoured vehicles and army lorries which includes a mobile torture chamber known as a 'filtration vehicle'. The mildest form of 'cleansing' is the looting of all possible possessions – from cars, refrigerators, television sets and irons to jewellery, linens, clothing and kitchenware. And, of course, money. After each 'special operation' dozens of people vanish without a trace.

[...] They came on 23 August at 5 in the morning, reports Zuhra from Enikaloy. There were some one hundred combat vehicles filled with soldiers. We dashed into the yard with our documents. God forbid if one of the 'feds' should get impatient, because you can get bludgeoned or shot dead on the spot or worse – taken away. Some 20 soldiers in masks and camouflage jackets, armed to the teeth, barged into the yard and house. As always dirty, unshaven, high on something and reeking of vodka. They swore a blue streak and shot under our feet. They tore my identity card out of my hand and began ripping it up. I managed to buy it out for 500 roubles, everything I had. Then they went over to our neighbours the Magomedovs. We heard shots and the piercing scream of 15-year-old Aminat, the sister of Akhmed and Aslanbek. 'Leave her alone!' one of the brothers shouted. 'You had better kill us!' Again shots rang out. Through the window we could see the partially undressed OMON commander lying on top of Aminat... [...]



22 or 23 February 2000 – Sixteen-year-old Adam Abubakarov 'went missing'. He was at his grandparents' in Shalin District where he was helping them dig in the vegetable garden and tidy up the cellar. On his way home to Ingusetia, Russian forces detained him at a military checkpoint in the town of Urus-Martan. Nothing more is known of his fate.

2 July 2001 – During a 'cleansing' operation in the town of Sernovotsk near the Ingusetian border hundreds of people were detained by Russian soldiers. Many of the detained individuals testified they had been tortured, several admitted the soldiers subjected them to electric shocks and set dogs on them. Most were released. [...] The fate and whereabouts of at least six of them remain unknown.

5 May 2003 – In the Viedeno region Russian soldiers detained Rizvan Yaragevich Appazov at a checkpoint. Appazov's brother had 'gone missing' in 2001, a year after being arrested by Russian soldiers while herding cattle. In spite of efforts by the family, nothing is known of his fate.

15 January 2004 – Several Russian soldiers detailed Eliza Gaitamirova near her home in Urus-Martan. Her fate is unknown, Eliza Gaitamirova's husband 'went missing' in 2001.

9 April 2004 – Villagers from Sherzhen-Yurt found in the Shali region in a ravine near their village the bodies of nine men. The corpses revealed gunshot wounds and torture. Eight of the murdered men had been detained by Russian federal troops during a 'cleansing' operation on 27 March in the village of Duba-Yurt some 25 kilometres from Sherzhen-Yurt.



During a 'zachistka' in the village of Tsatsan-Yurt carried out from 30 December 2001 to 3 January 2003, Russian soldiers brutally tortured and killed Idris Zakriyev (born in 1965) and Musa Izmailov (born in 1964). On 7 January 2002 villagers found at the edge of their village the remains of the blown-up bodies of at least three other men, of whom only Alkhazur Saidselimov (born in 1978) could be identified.



A 'zachistka' means murder, plunder and violence. Nobody is surprised any longer when soldiers of militia in broad daylight break into homes in which there is still something left to steal. People may go missing, They are abducted, and later their bodies showing signs of torture are found. I will mention only one of countless crimes: during a 'cleansing' operation in Stare Atagi a young man who was being treated in hospital was arrested. He had lost his entire family in a bombing and was seriously injured. In fact it was Russian soldiers who had driven him to hospital. Several months later, other soldiers accused him of being a guerrilla, because if he was wounded, he must have been a partisan. Later his body was found at the edge of the village. The Memorial Association demanded a clarification and we appealed to the prosecutor's office, to Vladimir Kalamonov, the Russian president's special representative in charge of protecting human rights and freedoms in Chechnya. The prosecutor has not replied so far either to us or to the members of the Duma who had raised the issue. The prosecutor has not even replied to Kalamonov!

Oleg Orlov, director of the Memorial Law Protection Centre Association,
interviewed by 'Rzeczpospolita' correspondent Jan Strzalka

Filtration camps, 'field' detention units of Russia's Interior Ministry in Chechnya in which there are always some 20,000 people in detention. During interrogation, detainees are tortured and murdered.



Mental torture: Make-believe executions, broadcasting the sounds of torture at night over the prison's public-address system, forced observation of fellow-prisoners being tortured, the derision of national and religious sentiments and personal dignity.

Physical torture: Torture through the use of electrical current applied to the genital organs, ears, nose, back of the head and armpits; the 'swallow', suspending the prisoner whose arms and

legs are tied together; forcing the prisoner to don a gas mask and blocking off its air intake until the prisoner loses consciousness; starving the prisoner for several days then wounding his tongue with metal pincers and forcing him with rubber batons to eat a hot, oversalted and extremely peppery mush; 'wolf fangs' – dental torture, during which the immobilised prisoner has a wooden stake forced between his teeth which are filed down to remove, as he is jokingly told, his fangs; 'round table' – manacled prisoners are seated round a table and their tongues or nailed to the table top; the rape of women and men.

The best known filtration camps are: the Central Filtration Camp in Khankale near Grozny, Chernokozovo in Urus-Martan and Gorogorsk.



During my month in Chechnya and neighbouring Ingushetia, I talked with many people who had survived such camps. I saw people without fingers and ears. I saw the scars left by electrified pincers... Those were difficult conversations. Not only because those humiliations were not willingly recalled and not only because no Chechen woman or man will ever admit to having been raped, but because it was extremely difficult to even get them to talk.

Krystyna Kurczab-Redlich



The best known and most infamous was filtration camp (SIZO interrogation-isolation unit) No. 2 in Chernokozovo, set up in the premises of a former maximum-rigour penal colony. The people brought there were first 'greeted' by a gauntlet of baton-wielding guards, beating prisoners till they lost consciousness and robbing them of all valuables, including their clothing. Then they were subjected to prolonged interrogation including beatings and torture. The rape of women and women was the order of the day. Tear gas was introduced into closed cells. In many cases prisoners were executed by firing squads.



At the filtration unit in the settlement of Assinovskaya, detainees are kept in pits dug in the ground or in lorries used for transporting prisoners and are subjected to exceptionally cruel interrogation; people were also kept in pits at the airport in Khankale.



On the morning of 5 February 2000, during a 'cleansing' operation at the Noviye Aldy settlement in Grozny's factory district, troops of the Russia's Defence Ministry and Interior Ministry committed the mass murder of some 100 inhabitants. The first information about the massacre came from the testimony of Chechens who had arrived in Ingusetia on 23 February. Towards the close of April, 30 bodies were exhumed and subsequently tested by forensic experts. A probe was launched, and those guilty of the massacre were described as 'armed individuals dressed in Russian field uniforms.'

That massacre, perpetrated by Russian units, was precisely documented by the organisations Human Rights Watch and Memorial.



In June 2002, a pit containing 50 mutilated bodies devoid of eyes, ears, limbs and genital organs was discovered in the residential area of the Russian military command in Khankala... Starting in February, mass graves were found outside Grozny, Tsatsan-Yurtat, Al-Khankala, Argun...

From a Human Rights Watch report



Russia's Specnaz, OMON and GRU avoid direct clashes with partisans but attack, torture and kill civilians, Not a day goes by that we did not find at least a dozen or so horribly mutilated corpses at the roadside or in a rubbish heap.

Imram Eztheyev, leader of the organisation 'Chechen-Russian Friendship'

1 August 2000 – Russian soldiers took 25-year-old Kazbek Vahayev from his home in Urus-Martan. On 21 August, his decapitated body was found in the village of Goyskoye. His body showed signs of torture.

21 May to 11 June 2002 - During a 'special operation', 22 people were killed in Chechen-Aule; most were aged 20 to 26, and two were 15.

9 September 2002 – The bodies of 15 naked men with nylon bags tied round their heads were found near Garagorsk on the border between Chechnya and Ingusetia.

16 November 2004 – The bodies of three

men aged 20-40 showing numerous signs of torture near were discovered by locals near the penal section of the Zapad base outside Grozny. The victims could not be identified.

20 November -- The bodies of 11 unidentified teenagers and young people aged 12-20 were found near the locality of Yalka in Gudermes district.

5 December 2004 – The bodies of three young men were discovered near the village of Pervomaisk. Marks on their bodies indicated they had been beaten and tortured before being put to death. One body showed empty eye sockets. Two bodies were identified as that of Grozny

residents Ibrahim Ozdamirov (born in 1983) and Aslambek Khazhalev (born in 1978), abducted on 4 September at 11 AM from a house in Nikitina Street in Grozny.

December 2005 – Ayshat Atakayev (aged 17) and Marsha Saburayeva (15) 'went missing' in the Gudermes region.

13 January 2006 – The body of Raisa Djudayeva showing signs of gunshot wounds was found in Grozny.

14 February 2006 – The teenaged brothers Adam and Umar Dautov 'went missing'. The last time they were seen was at Grozny's central market.



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A 'cleansing' operation began in the village of Samashki on the morning of 8 April 1995. Soldiers moved along the village's main streets and entered individual farmyards. Grenades were hurled into cellars even though it was a known fact that villagers were hiding there. Men regardless of age were separated from the women and stripped down to their underwear. Some were killed on the spot, others only after being tortured. Lorries carried away the household appliances the soldiers had stolen in the various homes. The houses were then torched. The bodies of the murder victims were also drenched with petrol and burnt.

Journalists arrived in Samashki on 13 April. What they saw was blood-curdling sights. The corpses of villagers lay in the streets and farmyards and in individual houses. Japanese journalist Hayashi Masaaki took a picture of a 19-year-old girl in an advanced stage of pregnancy who had been killed with a sharp stake driven into her generative organs.

The findings of a commission headed by Sergei Kovalev and the independent Memorial Law Protection Centre confirmed that 103 villagers had been killed by the Russian army during the pacification of Samashki. They were all listed by name and included 13 women and 90 men. The youngest was a 15-year-old boy, the oldest a man of 96.

This was a typical penal expedition against the civil population whose purpose was intimidation.



A film shot in Chechnya by a correspondent of Germany's N24 Television showed how Russian soldiers deal with Chechen fighters. One picture shows a corpse being dragged through the mud behind a vehicle. Another shot a group of Russian soldiers dumping the bodies of those they had murdered from a lorry into a mass grave. Still another picture shows soldiers filling in the grave with muddy soil. The film was shot on 22 February 2000.

Such was the fate of Chechens arrested after the end of war operations during the 'cleansing' of the captured area and subsequently shot. They were tortured during the interrogation conducted in the region of the village of Goyty. The film showed a close-up of the head of one of the murder victims whose ear had been cut off before his death.

The author said he shot the film openly and the military did not protest.



October 1999. Three Chechens murdered on Chechnya's border with Dagestan.

The internal organs of the prisoners of war and hostages murdered by the Russians at filtration camps are removed for transplantation purposes. At the camps, families buy out the bodies of loved ones devoid of organs or find them dumped in the vicinity. The corpses of assassination victims often have characteristic wounds and stitches.



Fig. Tamara Kufajeva

On 23 March 2001, the people of the village of Prigorodnye near Grozny discovered the bodies of four men in plastic bags, belonging to Russia's Extraordinary Affairs Ministry, dumped at the edge of the cemetery. The bodies were clean and showed stitches running down the centre of the rib cage. They had numbers fastened to their big toes. Among the murder victims Batsayev (in the above photo) was identified. He had been one of 30 people detained on 14 March 2001 during a 'zachistka' in Argun.



Fig. Tamara Kufajeva

If the number of killed and missing is compared to the republic's population, it may be stated that over the past decade Chechnya has relived half of the Second World War and the entire period of Stalinist terror.

Alexander Cherkasov, Memorial Law Protection Centre



The mutilated body of Ruslan Azuyev exhibiting signs of torture was found in the locality of Al-Khankala.



Argun, May 2002 - mutilated corpse dumped by the roadside. The body displayed signs of torture with electric current and burning: one eye had been gouged out.



Chechnya is one great concentration camp.

Yelena Bonner – Russian dissident, widow of Professor Andrei Sakharov

Alikhan Mazayev (born in 1979). Taken away during a 'cleansing' operation in Argun on 2 March 2002. his body was found on 4 March in the locality of Al-Khankala. His ear and torso exhibit signs of torture with electric current.





Argun, March 2002 - The body of a man exhibiting signs of torture dumped in a silo. The man (in the foreground) most likely had a metal band placed round his head and tightened with a crank. During such torture the eyes first flow out and then the skull cracks.

Those are not officers but a band of mentally disturbed individuals.

Anna Politkowska, commentator for Moscow's 'Novaya Gazeta' on the officers of Russian military units



14 April 2002, 5 AM. On an armoured vehicle moving down Grozny's Sovietskaya Street stood a young, dark-haired man whose arms and legs were tied and dripping with blood. The vehicle came to a halt and the man was pushed off and rolled up to a chain-link fence. The vehicle drove off and an explosion took place. The man was blown up. His head (pictured) landed in a neighbouring street 'This was difficult to photograph even though I had become used to it,' said a slight, greying Chechen woman, Tamara Kulayeva, bending over the photos. Most of the chroniclers of the already four-year-old 'anti-terrorist operation' have remained anonymous.

The body of a Chechen ripped apart by combat vehicles and dumped from a military helicopter over Grozny in June 2002.



Blowing people up was an innovation introduced by the Russian army in the spring of 2002. The technique was used most effectively on 3 July in Maskeir Yurt, where 21 men, women and children were tied with a fuse, dumped into a pit and blown up. That manner of annihilation makes it impossible to determine the number of victims. Since spring, in various corners of the republic dogs dig up fragments of human corpses almost daily.



The world of politicians recruited by a specialist from the KGB has gone mad. [...] The chief symptom of that malady is stamping decency into the mud. Not only because during the anniversary of the victory in World War Two the representative of the aggressor-state stood without a trace of remorse next to representatives of victim-states; not only because Poles, who had the fourth largest army in that war, and the Yugoslavs who had the largest partisan movement, had to endure a boycott of their contribution by the president of the Russian Federation; not only because the anniversary's moral patron hovering over the festivities, albeit not mentioned by Putin, was Joseph Stalin. But also because 'the heroes of peace-keeping forces in Afghanistan' and of 'the anti-terrorist operation in Chechnya', ceremoniously announced by the event's narrators, marched in full glory across Red Square.

Krystyna Kurczab-Redlich



You statesmen and policy-makers will try to create the impression that you know nothing about tiny Chechnya, a hostage of the Kremlin... By shaking Putin's hand you will indicate your approval of the of Buchenwald and Auschwitz-style ordeal being imposed by Chechnya's Russian occupation forces.

And your applause will be taken by the Muscovites as a sign of your delight at the murder of 45,000 Chechen children... All the more so we thank all people of goodwill, in Russia and beyond, for the moral support they have given us in defiance of the wishes of a handful of their hypocritical leaders.

President of the Chechen Republic of Ichkeria,
Abdul-Khalim Sadulayev

