
**TERRORISM AS A CONSEQUENCE OF HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS
IN THE FIRST RUSSO-CHECHEN WAR**

Marek Delong¹, Stanisław Topolewski²

¹*Rzeszów University of Technology, Poland*

²*University of Natural Sciences and Humanities in Siedlce, Poland*

E-mails: ¹m.delong@prz.edu.pl; ²stanislaw_topolewski@wp.pl

Received 18 March 2021; accepted 15 June 2021; published 30 June 2021

Abstract. The aim of the article is to present Chechen terrorism as a consequence of violations of basic human rights, including the crimes of genocide committed by the Russian Federation in the First Russo-Chechen War in 1994-1996. It has been argued that terrorism has become a dramatic way of drawing the international community's attention to the tragedy taking place in Chechnya. Over time, Chechen fighters were influenced by radical Muslim groups and used terrorist fighting methods. On the other hand, the Russians did not shy away from bombing entire villages they suspected of sheltering wanted fighters. All this led to an escalation of terrorism and radicalization of religious views among a large part of the society. Moreover, the lack of a decisive reaction from the West to the policy of exterminating the Chechen population by the Russian Federation has led to an increase in anti-Western sentiment, which had not been recorded in Chechnya before.

Keywords: terrorism; human rights; Russia; Chechnya

Reference to this paper should be made as follows: Delong, M., Topolewski, S. 2021. Terrorism as a consequence of human rights violations in the first Russo-Chechen war. *Journal of Security and Sustainability Issues*, 11, 423-434. <https://doi.org/10.47459/jssi.2021.11.38>

JEL Classifications: B29

Additional disciplines: political sciences and administration, law

1. Introduction

The history of the Caucasus was largely shaped by the Russian state, which appeared in this area in the 16th century, and in the 19th century it took complete control of the region as a result of fierce and long-lasting wars. The ethnic policy pursued by the USSR exacerbated the ethnic situation in the Caucasus, while the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 led to an explosion of previously suppressed national movements, separatist tendencies and ethnic conflicts, which led to the destabilization of the situation in this part of the Russian Federation (The North 2012). Chechens belong to one of the oldest nations in the Caucasus, inhabiting their lands continuously for over 1,500 years (Borucki 1999, 323). Together with the Ingush, with whom they are closely related, they form the Wajnach community (Grochmalski 2006, 9). Anthropologists believe that the Chechen community is descended from the Hurricane peoples. The ancestors of the Chechens are the Nakhas - the indigenous Caucasian population for several thousand years.

Muslims living in the North Caucasus are Sunnis. There are four currents (mazhaba) within Sunnism itself. In Chechnya, the Szafi movement dominates (Marszewski 2003, 87). Religion has always strongly emphasized the separateness of the local population from the rest of the Russian community, identified with the Christian civilization circle. It also has a political overtone, as the Muslim republic could not surrender to "unfaithful

Russia” (Falkowski 2004, 10). However, it should be remembered that Chechen Islam was not previously orthodox and radical, which was often accused of it by the international community (Kuleba 2007, 241).

The Chechens built a social structure based on democratic principles, without differentiating individuals according to their origin. All men over the age of 15 are equal (Górecki 2002, 66). Aslambek Abdul Hajiyev used to say: “Everyone is a general with us” (Kuleba 2007, 137). This nation was the only one of all the peoples of the Caucasus to have an aristocracy. When Russian soldiers kidnapped a Chechen, his relatives went from house to house and collected money for a ransom (Politkowska 2006). To this day, “bloody revenge” applies here, i.e. a family member is obliged to avenge the harm done to his family, either on the culprit or on his relatives.

The aim of the article is to present Chechen terrorism as a consequence of violating basic human rights, including the crimes of genocide committed by the Russian Federation in the First Russo-Chechen War in 1994-1996. It has been argued that terrorism has become a dramatic way of drawing the international community’s attention to the tragedy taking place in Chechnya. Over time, Chechen fighters were influenced by radical Muslim groups and used terrorist methods of fighting. On the other hand, the Russians did not shy away from bombing entire villages they suspected of sheltering wanted fighters. Since the outbreak of the first Chechen war in 1994, the Russian authorities have presented the war as a fight against bandits and Islamic fundamentalists (Cornell 2005, 251). All this led to an escalation of terrorism and radicalization of religious views among a large part of the society. Moreover, the lack of a decisive reaction from the West to the Russian policy of exterminating the Chechen population has led to an increase in anti-Western sentiments, which had not been recorded in Chechnya before. The following research methods were used in the article: case study, system analysis and the genetic-historical method. The publications of Mirosław Kuleba and Piotr Grochmalski turned out to be invaluable, as they were eyewitnesses of the events related to the Russo-Chechen war and with Shamil Basayev and Aslan Maskhadov.

2. The proclamation of independence and the operation in Grozny

Perestroika provoked a national revival in Chechnya. Numerous social organizations and political parties arose in favor of expanding autonomy within the USSR. In 1989, the most important association Bart (Unity) was created, striving for full sovereignty. In 1990, on the basis of the Bart organization, the Wajnachskaja Democratic Party was founded, led by Zelimchan Jandarbijew. Its goal was the independence of Chechnya. In November 1990, the General Congress of the Chechen People was convened. The participants of the congress elected a chairman, who was the general of the Soviet Air Force, a participant in the Afghanistan war, Dzhokhar Dudayev (Babczenko 2009, 5). On November 27, the Declaration on the proclamation of independence by the Chechen Republic was published, which was met with stiff opposition from Russia (Grochmalski 2006, 12).

On October 27, 1991, parliamentary and presidential elections were held. About 72% of those entitled to vote took part in them (Kuleba 1997, 10). Dudayev became the new president. On November 1, 1991, he announced the establishment of an independent, democratic and neutral Republic of Chechnya, whose constitution was adopted on March 12, 1992.

After many centuries of continuous fighting, the Chechens managed to take control of the economy and the political sphere, which made it possible to create the foundations of their own statehood. They also became involved in the Ingush-Ossetian and Georgian conflicts, supporting Georgian president Zviad Gamsakhurdia (Czubiński, Olszewski 1998, 609). Unfortunately, despite numerous efforts by Dudayev, no country in the world - with the exception of Georgia - officially recognized Chechnya’s independence, which made it still one of the subjects of the Russian Federation (Borucki 1999, 324).

Boris Yeltsin’s policy towards Chechnya was internally contradictory and inconsistent, as evidenced by the conclusion of a federal agreement on March 31, 1992, which Chechnya did not sign, but was mentioned in the constitution of the Russian Federation as one of its subjects (Koltsova 2000, 43). Unexpectedly, two months later, the Moscow authorities signed an unprecedented deal with Dudayev. On its basis, Russia undertook to

remove its army from Chechnya, which it did. Moreover, the Russians handed over most of the weapons of the retreating troops to the Chechens.

In the summer of 1994, Sergei Stepashin, head of the Federal Counterintelligence Service, informed the Russian president that he could overthrow Dudayev by carrying out a military operation in Grozny. Yeltsin gave his consent, so on November 25, 1994, Chechen units of the opposition, the pro-Russian Temporary Council, supported by disguised Russian soldiers equipped with tanks, helicopters and armored personnel carriers, stormed Grozny. Dudayev's army repulsed the attack and took about seventy Russian officers and soldiers prisoner. As a result of these events, on November 30, 1994 Yeltsin issued a top secret Decree No. 2137, on the basis of which preparations for military intervention were undertaken (Grochmalski 2000, 272).

The concept of the invasion provided for a simultaneous attack on Chechen lands from three sides with a force of nearly 40,000. Soldiers (Remnick 1997, 279). The data at the FSK's disposal estimated the size of the Chechen troops at 11,000 to 12,000. people. The entire operation was supposed to last only seven days, and its aim was to defeat Dudayev's troops and take control of the capital. On the morning of December 11, 1994, columns of Russian troops crossed the border line of Chechnya. Due to the inept attack, the invasion broke down on the very first day (for example, the mass desertion of Russian soldiers took place).

On December 28, Russian forces encircled Dudayev's select units in Grozny. It was expected that the capital would be seized within one day. Sergey Yushenkov, chairman of the State Duma Defense Committee, said that the decision to attack was made in Mozdok on December 31, 1994, during the birthday party of Russia's defense minister Pavel Grachov. The instant conquest of the city was to be a kind of gift from a member of the government to the president. Yushenkov said: "Drunken Player (...) he promised the Star of the Hero of Russia to the first to enter the presidential palace" (Czarnota, Moszumański 1995, 25).

The symbol of the struggle for Grozny is the defense of the presidential palace. The general staff of the Chechen armed forces was located in its basement. Less than 40 people defended it. Despite this, the Chechens fought off attacks by the Russians, who dropped thousands of missiles and bombs on the object for about three weeks. On January 18, the chief of staff, Aslan Maskhadov, decided to leave the building. Despite the encirclement, the Chechens managed to withdraw without loss of lives. In March, the second stage of the war began. At that time, the number of Russian troops engaged in fighting in Chechnya or blocking the republic's borders reached 200,000. soldiers and 18 thousand. officers of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, with a quarter of these forces, i.e. 55,000 people, she took a direct part in the war (Grochmalski 2006, 14). Russia wanted to solve the Chechen problem as soon as possible, because on May 9, the fiftieth anniversary of the end of World War II was celebrated in the capital, in which the leaders of the victorious coalition countries were to take part (Grochmalski 2000, 194).

3. Violation of human rights and the first acts of terror

Over time, the First Chechen War became more and more cruel. A terrifying example was the massacre of civilians in the village of Samaszki, carried out on April 7-8 by 350 soldiers from OMON, SPECNAZ and SOBR units. A group of 103 women, children and the elderly was brutally murdered or burned alive, while about 200 men were placed in a filtration camp, where they were tortured (Marcinko 2004, 158).

On May 9, Victory Day was celebrated in the Russian capital. At the same time as bombs exploded in Chechnya, soldiers paraded in front of the world political elite in Moscow. American writer and journalist David Remnick wrote: "Among the soldiers who marched ahead of Yeltsin and President Clinton, there were (...) troops that participated in the attack on Grozny" (Remnick 1997, 271). The end of the war seemed to be near, and in the Chechen units de-pression was predominant. On June 11, the federal army landed an airborne landing behind the city of Shatoy that was captured four days later. It was a strategically important town, as it ensured rule in the northern part of Chechnya. On June 14, the Russians captured Knife-Yurt on the Eastern Front, and the Russian staff announced that they had taken control of the last two points of Chechen resistance.

In order to finally force Russia to end the war, the Chechens - for the first time in this war - decided to use terror. On June 14, 1995, a unit commanded by Shamil Basayev arrived in Budyonnovsk, located in the Stavropol Region, and within three hours gained control of the city, seized the seat of the local administration and shot a group of 20 officials (Stern 1997, 67). The partisans took 1,500 hostages and barricaded themselves with them at the local hospital which was mined. The assassins threatened to shoot 10 hostages for every Chechen soldier killed. At first, the unfavorable Russian authorities, forced by the shooting of five hostages by militants, accepted the Chechens' demand to organize a press conference in the occupied hospital. Shamil Basayev stated that his goal was to draw the attention of the international community to the tragedy unfolding in Chechnya (Borucki 1999, 326). In return for the release of the prisoners, demands were made for an immediate ceasefire in Chechnya, the withdrawal of the Russian army from the territory of the republic and the commencement of peace talks. The authorities of the Russian Federation did not agree to the conditions of the militants and on June 17, the special unit "Alfa" carried out an ineffective attack on the building in which 166 hostages were killed, prompting Moscow to agree to the terrorists' demands (Borucki 2002, 58).

Six buses were delivered and they returned to Chechnya. About 130 people traveled with them for part of the way, in order to avoid a potential attack by the Russian services. The group consisted of doctors, journalists, deputies of the State Duma, including Sergei Kovalev, a distinguished human rights defender (Borucki 1999, 326). Some of them took the role of hostages voluntarily. In the capital of Chechnya, the Russian and Chechen delegations started talks. The names of the members of the commission responsible for overseeing the ceasefire were agreed upon and the course of the elections that were to take place by November 5 and lead to the final settlement of the republic's status. Moreover, Russia has declared that it will abolish the power center created under its protectorate with Prime Minister Salambek Khajiyev and Umar Avtukharov, chairman of the National Agreement Committee.

The Russian governor in Chechnya, Doku Zawgayev, has postponed the elections until mid-December to be held simultaneously with the elections to the State Duma. Russian plans were simple to predict: the new government, led by Zawgayev, was to obtain electoral legitimacy and acceptance of international opinion, and the Russo-Chechen war would turn into an internal conflict between the legal government and the usurping Dzhokhar Dudayev (Jendroszczyk 1995).

On December 14-17, simultaneous presidential and parliamentary elections were held in Chechnya. The winner was of course Doku Zawgayev, who won as much as 95% of the votes. There was no doubt about the rigging of elections. Sergey Kovalev described them as a farce "according to the Moscow script" (Kovalov 1998, 167). On January 9, 1996, Dudayev's unit, numbering about 500 fighters, attacked the town of Kizlar, located in Dagestan. Nearly 3,000 were taken prisoner. The action was commanded by Dudayev's son-in-law, Salman Raduyev. The partisans attacked the barracks, the military airport and the hospital. They also managed to encircle a battalion of Russian internal troops. There were several unsuccessful attempts to storm the hospital. President Yeltsin reprimanded his subordinate generals for their ineptitude, and the State Duma demanded the resignation of Paweł Gracow. The fighters, together with the held hostages, withdrew from Kizlar to the village of Pervomajskoye, where they put up resistance for several days from a much larger federal army. Then they fled with the hostages into the mountains, successfully breaking through the lap ring. The Russians razed Pervomajskoye to the ground on the pretext of fighting the guerrillas in hiding (Borucki 1999, 326).

The plan to turn the war into an internal conflict has failed. The new president was very quickly marginalized. This was confirmed by the events that took place in February 1996. Then a crowd of 4,000 gathered in the center of Grozny under the ruins of the presidential palace. It was the largest demonstration since the arrival of federal troops in Chechnya. The demonstrators demanded the removal of the occupation forces, the dismissal of Zawgayev, and the official approval of the republic's independence by the Kremlin. On February 9, the protesters were pacified by Russian soldiers and Chechen militiamen. More than 10 people were killed and 18 injured. In response, Dudayev gave the order to storm Grozny. The action was to be performed by his subordinate units, and the whole operation was planned by Aslan Maskhadov, who also commanded it. On the morning of March 6, Chechen forces of around 600 took control of most of the city. Following such a demonstration, the forces were withdrawn from Grozny on March 9.

At the same time, units of the Russian special services were preparing a plan to kill Dudayev. On the night of April 21-22, after numerous unsuccessful attempts, the Russians achieved their goal. The rocket attack was carried out at Gechi-Czu. Dudayev died on the spot, and the information about his death was made public only on April 24, after the president's quiet funeral and the election of his successor, Zelimchan Yandarbiyev. The Kremlin hoped that Dudayev's death would cause internal divisions and a struggle for power, but this did not happen.

Yeltsin's main rival in the presidential elections, Gennady Zyuganov, who won all the polls at the time, announced on May 24 that his representatives in Chechnya were conducting talks with the parties to the conflict and presented them with a plan to end the dispute prepared by his electoral staff. Concerned, Yeltsin declared that he would implement the peace process in Moscow without any preconditions (Tremper 2004, 124). After the arrival of the Chechen delegation on May 27, bilateral negotiations began, which resulted in the signing of a preliminary document to cease military operations from June 1. Nevertheless, Moscow continued to support the team of Dok Zawgayev, who announced the merger of elections to the Chechen parliament with voting for the president of the Russian Federation - thereby violating agreements concluded between the Chechen government and the Russian authorities. The elections were held on June 14-16 in the territories occupied by the Russians. Their real results are unknown. Jacek Cichocki wrote: "The vast (...) majority of Chechens did not participate in them. (...) The OSCE mission operating in Grozny ruled that the elections were unfair and fraudulent" (Cichocki 1997, 9). The presidential elections in the Russian Federation were not decided in the first round - Yeltsin received 26.5 million votes, and Zyuganov 24 million. The incumbent president, wanting to take over the electorate of Alexander Lebed, who was in third position with 11 million votes (Halizak, Kuźniar, Popławski 1997, 136-137), appointed him secretary of the Security Council and his personal adviser on matters related to national security (Remnick 1997, 337-338).

On July 9, after the official announcement of the election results, the Russians again began mass warfare, once again breaking the peace provisions. The town of Szali was pacified, as well as Gichy, Mechkiety and Wiedeno, on July 29, an unsuccessful attack on Aslan Maskhadov was carried out (Zaucha 1996). At the same time, the Chechens were preparing for an operation code-named "Zero Variant", the main assumption of which was to go on a total offensive. On August 6, Maskhadov's main force of about 1,500 soldiers, led by Basayev, entered Grozny and soon found themselves in the center of the capital. Instead of carrying out a frontal assault on the city, grouped into smaller units, they surrounded the Russians, reaching all their positions in the city. In this way, on the very first day of fighting, they managed to gain control over almost the entire city. The "Zero Variant" campaign spread throughout Chechnya.

President Yeltsin ordered the secretary of the Security Council, Aleksander Lebed, to carry out a peace mission. On August 31, in the city of Khasav-Yurt, his meeting with Maskhadov was signed, during which an agreement was signed on the readiness to renounce force and threats to use force in resolving disputed conflicts, it was declared to respect the right of nations to self-determination and their equality, and to respect human and civil rights, without due to nationality, religion, affiliation (Ciesielski 2003, 46-47).

On January 27, parliamentary and presidential elections were held in the republic. They were supervised by the OSCE. Nearly 70% of the inhabitants were in favor of building an independent state. As a result of the elections, Aslan Maskhadov received the highest office in the country, gaining over 50% of the votes (Szmyd 2000, 25).

The presidents of Chechnya and Russia signed a peace agreement in the Kremlin on 12 May, replacing the agreement with Khasav-Yurt. The signatories have renounced the use of military force. Mutual relations were defined as equal and regulated on the basis of the norms of international law. For the Chechens, the signing of this treaty by Russia meant that it fully recognized the independence of the Chechen Republic. The correctness of such an interpretation was indicated by the very title of the agreement: "Peace treaty and principles of mutual relations between the Russian Federation and the Chechen Republic of Ichkeria". There are no references to Russian legislation in the text, only to the norms of international law (Ciesielski 2003, 48).

Sergey Kovalev (chairman of the Human Rights Committee in Russia, vice-president of the Memorial associa-

tion) showed great courage in exposing war crimes and mass violations of human rights in Chechnya. He exposed Russian crimes and tried to draw the attention of the international community to the Chechen tragedy. In a telephone conversation with Yeltsin from Grozny on December 24, 1994, he exhorted: "Every day, with our own eyes, we see planes bombing housing estates with impunity. Every day we see the corpses of civilians - cut with fragments, some without heads or legs. (...) As the human rights spokesman of the Russian Federation (...), I appeal to all political forces in Russia, to the whole world, to stop the extermination of the civilian population. (...) Now I am calling: Go! I call on all mothers to demand the return of their sons who are dying in this war" (Kovalov 1995, 14-15). At a press conference held on January 5, 1995 in Moscow, he recalled: "I want to emphasize once again that this is not a long time ago about the internal affairs of Russia. This is a matter for the international community because, according to a concept that is widely accepted around the world, if human rights are ruthlessly and massively violated somewhere, it is no longer an internal matter of a given country. This is the kind of brutal and massive trampling of human rights that we are dealing with in Chechnya" (Kovalov 1995, 22-23).

As a result of the First Chechen War, about 90,000 people in Chechnya were killed. Several hundred thousand had to leave their homeland. On the Russian side, nearly 40,000 soldiers have lost their lives, and the number of wounded has exceeded 80,000 (Pain 2001, 7-19). According to human rights organizations, there is no reliable data on how many Chechens have been injured or have suffered psychological trauma (Renaud 2010, 59). Chechnya was completely ruined. Towns, villages, schools and universities, hospitals, factories and construction enterprises were destroyed. Rail and road transport practically ceased to exist, as did telephone communication. Roads and water supply facilities were destroyed in over 70%. The cost of rebuilding the republic was estimated at around \$ 20 billion (Ferenc 2004, 19).

4. Russian fight against terrorism after the end of the First Russo-Chechen war

On August 7, 1999, several hundred Chechen fighters led by Shamil Basayev and Emir Hattab entered the neighboring Dagestan in the Cumadin region and Botlich. It was a response to the call of the Dagestani mullahs for support for the alleged uprising there. Chechens announced that the operation was aimed at liberating the country from Russian rule and creating an Islamic state in the Chechen and Dagestani lands. Russia immediately sent its troops to Dagestan, armed with heavy equipment and supported by the air force (Ciesielski 2003, 316). It seems very likely that the Russian general staff, concentrating large troops in this republic, decided at that time to start a new war with Chechnya (Wilk 1996, 10). Shamil Basayev's Rally to Dagestan was the perfect *casus belli* for the Russian Federation. Some sources say that the Russian side got information in advance about the militants' plans from both agents in his own intelligence and Aslan Maskhadov, who has struggled with domestic extremists (Ferenc 2004, 19). Chechen soldiers withdrew from Dagestan territory on August 24. The Russian mass media portrayed this as a great triumph for federal troops. Prime Minister Putin, together with Anatoly Kvashnin (Chief of General Staff of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation) visited the site of the recent clashes on 27 August. Putin praised his soldiers saying: "The Russian military has shown that it can fight". After less than two days, armed troops of the Ministry of Internal Affairs launched an attack on villages in Dagestan, which had been inhabited by the Wahhabis for many years. On September 5, Chechen units once again crossed the Dagestani border to help them. Despite the fact that the key communication junction for the republic was captured, the Russians announced victory over the Basayev group after a week of fighting.

The events which significantly influenced the subsequent course of the campaign in the Caucasus region took place almost simultaneously. On August 31, a bomb exploded in the Moscow department store "Охотный ряд", located in the vicinity of the Kremlin. As a result of the explosion, 1 person was killed and 40 were injured. During the next two weeks, a series of four more terrorist attacks were carried out in the Russian Federation: September 4 in the city of Bujnaks in Dagestan - 64 victims, September 9 in Moscow - 92 victims, September 13 in Moscow - 118 victims, September 16 in Volgorsk - 13 victims. Although the real initiator of these attacks is unknown to this day, Prime Minister Putin found the Chechens guilty. However, there were many positions among international analysts that the Russian secret services themselves were behind the wave of brutal terrorist actions (Grochmalski 1999, 22). The last detachment of Chechen fighters left Dagestan on September 13, but the Russians continued to concen-

trate their units in its area. Aslan Maskhadov rightly saw this as a preparation for armed aggression. On September 14, the Russian army carried out the first increased air raid on the villages and cities of Chechnya, and the Russian prime minister, in a speech to the Duma, blamed the attacks on Chechen terrorists and stressed that Islamist bases should be liquidated. These words found their supporters and propagators in the blink of an eye. The cycle of bomb attacks unfortunately caused an intensification of the wave of anti-Chechen sentiment. On September 17, 1999, the Federation Council authorized Vladimir Putin to take decisive steps towards Chechnya, not excluding the possibility of annulling the Khasav-Yurt peace agreements. A new war seemed inevitable now. German journalist and publicist Boris Reitschuster wrote: "Although Putin was only another man in the state, Yeltsin gave him a free hand in the matter of Chechnya" (Reitschuster 2005, 74). In a televised speech on September 19, the head of government announced that the Russian Federation would not withdraw both from Chechnya and from the North Caucasus. He also announced the breaking of the 1996 peace agreement with Ichkeria.

The Russian authorities made efforts to create an armed conflict with Chechens to carry out the final pacification of the rebellious republic (Ferenc 2004, 20). The war was also intended to distract public opinion from the increasingly frequent reports of corruption and illegal capital operations involving key government officials. Thanks to skillfully conducted politics, using hysteria widespread by terrorist attacks, a little-known politician, such as Vladimir Putin, made a dizzying career deciding to start a second war with the Chechen Republic. The officially conducted hostilities were preceded by about 1,300 air raids on the villages and towns of Chechnya, which lasted continuously for nearly a month. The Russians explained that the purpose of their actions was to destroy terrorist bases (according to Russian forces, about 2,000 fighters were to die in air attacks), but the Chechen side indicated that mainly civilian objects were destroyed during the air strikes, and more than 400 people were killed as a result. The invasion triggered a mass exodus of residents from the republic (Abraham 2001, 9).

From the very first moments of aggression, the Russian government apparatus tried to isolate journalists from the events in Chechnya. Information that was transmitted via radio, press and television were prepared by top-down reporters or the press services of the army and the FSB. President Boris Yeltsin created a special Federal Information Center, the purpose of which was to censor news about the conflict and to coordinate activities within the propaganda war. It presented the Russian army as modern and powerful, crushing its opponent without suffering any losses (Hooper 2006, 82).

The Russian units were moving slowly towards the interior of the country, using the scorched earth tactics previously used by the tsarist regiments of General Jermolow, Paskevich and Vorontsov (Nowakowski 2000, 8). All likely whereabouts of Chechen fighters were liquidated by massive artillery fire and bombing, and special forces of the FSB followed in the footsteps of the troops. Based on the archives compiled during the 1994-1996 war, its agents compiled meticulous lists containing the names of the fugitives. As soon as the FSB units were in a given locality, they immediately carried out a detailed "filtration" of the population, and the suspects were transported to "filtration camps". Since the first Russo-Chechen war, attempts have been made to keep their functioning away from the public eye. Access to them, in particular, was blocked for journalists and international organizations. There were cruel human rights violations, beatings, torture (electric current was also used), prisoners were attacked and bitten by dogs (Amnesty International 2000, 211-212). Shocking stories told by people who managed to survive the filtration camps were described by Anna Politkowska. One of them concerned a Chechen man named Isa, who was sent to the camp in the town of Chottuni: "Cigarettes were put out on his skin, his nails were torn out, his kidneys were beaten with Pepsi bottles filled with water. Then it was pushed into a pit called the <bathroom>, full of water (it was in winter, by the way). Smoke candles flew in the wake of the Chechens thrown into the pits. There were five of them in this pit. Not everyone managed to survive" (Politkowska 2006, 46).

On October 20, the Prime Minister of the Russian Federation visited the Russian forces stationed in Ichkeria. The purpose of his visit was to award the airmen for the selective bombing of "terrorist objects" (Reuters AFP 1999). The next day, in the town of Urus-Martan, Russian planes carried out a massive raid in which over 20 people were killed. They were women and children, thus completely innocent victims of the war. The Russians also carried out a gruesome rocket fire at one of the main trading markets in Grozny. 137 civilians were killed

then and nearly 250 were injured. Every day, ordinary, defenseless people died - mostly women with children. They had nothing to do with the terrorism that Russian soldiers were fighting. On October 24, a hail of special rockets exploding above the ground hit their victims with thousands of tiny cubes on the villages of Sejzen-Yurt and Wiedeno. The result was the death of 50 completely random people (Grochmalski 1999, 25).

The command of the Russian forces wanted in this way to force the civilian population to mass emigrate from their native lands, as this would improve the management of military operations. Chechens went mainly to Ingushetia. In October 1999, their number there already exceeded 170,000. refugees and was still growing, while about 5 thousand. among them were forced to live in the open (Radziwinowicz 1999). On October 26, General Troszew announced a \$ 1 million award for the head of Shamil Basayev. Soon the government corrected the general's words by declaring that they should be treated only as a metaphor.

The position of the positional fights ended with the victory of the Russians. On October 21, they managed to break the front line marked by the Terek River and march towards Grozny. The city was surrounded on three sides, and the federal army was less than five kilometers from the capital.

In the absence of a firm reaction from Western countries, Aslan Maskhadov tried to seek help from the Holy See. On October 28 he pleaded in a desperate letter to Pope John Paul II to protect the Chechen people from the "new genocide" (Jagielski 1999). Unfortunately, he did not receive a reply. Mass genocide against a small nation of rebellious highlanders took place in the silence of the international community.

The Council of Europe sent a delegation of 13 people to the North Caucasus, which stated in its report that the Russian Federation did not violate any international conventions in the fight against the Chechen people. The organization Human Rights Watch, outraged by this announcement, published information in which it accused Russian soldiers of arbitrary executions of 38 civilians on one of the streets of Grozny (Wojciechowski 2000). International human rights organizations have reported dozens of similar crimes. According to the reports of Memorial and the International League of Human Rights, there are testimonials documenting hundreds of executions of civilians carried out en masse by the Russian military in Grozny. The infamous lead in these crimes was a special unit of the Ministry of the Interior, stationed in Primary School No. 54. "It became famous" by pouring gasoline on people and setting them on fire. The French daily *Le Monde* reported on the functioning of the filter camps. A Russian journalist, Andrei Babicki, who also survived the camp, stated: "The concentration camp in Chernokozov can be easily compared to Auschwitz or the Stalinist camps. And somehow the international community does not seem to be going to deal with it" (Lewandowska 2000).

The federal army occupied the territory of Chechnya and removed individual partisan groups. The Chechens, seeing the ineffectiveness of the guerrilla warfare, decided to use the last possible means of combat, in their opinion, namely suicide bombings against Russian soldiers. Federal forces only formally had power and control in Chechnya. Every day there was a death of the occupying Russians. The appearance of radicalism in the Chechen ranks was the reason for helplessness and loneliness in the face of the brutal occupation and the deliberate extermination carried out on them. The behavior of the Russians towards Chechnya was terrifying, but equally terrifying was the passivity and far-reaching "understanding" of the outside world, especially of Western countries and organizations.

The terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 allowed the US to give Putin freedom to fight "Chechen terrorism". Moscow introduced even more brutal methods of pacifying the Chechen people. In a sense of the hopelessness of the situation, some from the Chechen leaders decided to move the conflict deep into the Russian Federation (Trenin 2003, 2). On October 23, 2002, a 50-person detachment of Chechen partisans seized the building of the Moscow theater on Dubrovka, taking about a thousand hostages prisoner. The operation was commanded by Mansur Barayev. On October 26, the special unit "Alfa" launched a tragic and ineffective assault on the building. Paralyzing gas was released into the theater building, the action of which, apart from the fighters, naturally affected the hostages as well. Over 150 people died as a result of being struck by a combat agent and hundreds of people were hospitalized. There were also women in Barajew's branch who lost their husbands and sons.

One of them said, “We waited for a just resolution, but the world was silent” (Ferenc 2004, 85). Radicalization of actions is an act of despair by the Chechens. Former deputy to the parliament of the Chechen Republic of Ichkeria, Adlan Badalov said: “I was wondering then why he (Beslan Gantemirov - M.D.) is creating the Muslim Brotherhood in Chechnya, if we do not have such goals as the terrorists set for themselves? We did not set such tasks and goals for ourselves and there was no such need. We wanted independence, sovereignty, and if the authorities of our state will have the leader of a terrorist organization, who will recognize us, what country would like to talk to us, establish diplomatic contacts? Back then, I was just thinking, and today I know for sure that it was planted by some Russian secret services” (Kuleba 2007, 38).

The most shocking action of the Caucasian fighters was to take over the school in Beslan (North Ossetia) on the inauguration of the school year, September 1, 2004. The 33 bombers (including Chechens, Ingush, Ossetians, Arabs, Russians, Kabardians and Tartars, which proves the gradual spreading of the conflict throughout the region) have been held hostage by innocent children, parents, teachers and employees of the facility. On September 3, the Russian special services tried to rescue the held hostages. For unknown reasons, terrorists blew up the school building. Over 350 people died and nearly 400 were injured.

The terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 allowed the US to give Putin freedom to fight “Chechen terrorism”. Moscow introduced even more brutal methods of pacifying the Chechen people. In a sense of the hopelessness of the situation, some from the Chechen leaders decided to move the conflict deep into the Russian Federation. On October 23, 2002, a 50-person detachment of Chechen partisans seized the building of the Moscow theater on Dubrovka, taking about a thousand hostages prisoner. The operation was commanded by Mansur Barayev. On October 26, the special unit “Alfa” launched a tragic and ineffective assault on the building. Paralyzing gas was released into the theater building, the action of which, apart from the fighters, naturally affected the hostages as well. Over 150 people died as a result of being struck by a combat agent and hundreds of people were hospitalized. There were also women in Barajew’s branch who lost their husbands and sons. One of them said, “We waited for a just resolution, but the world was silent”. Radicalization of actions is an act of despair by the Chechens. Former deputy to the parliament of the Chechen Republic of Ichkeria, Adlan Badalov said: “I was wondering then why he (Beslan Gantemirov - M.D.) is creating the Muslim Brotherhood in Chechnya, if we do not have such goals as the terrorists set for themselves? We did not set such tasks and goals for ourselves and there was no such need. We wanted independence, sovereignty, and if the authorities of our state will have the leader of a terrorist organization, who will recognize us, what country would like to talk to us, establish diplomatic contacts? Back then, I was just thinking, and today I know for sure that it was planted by some Russian secret services”. The most shocking action of the Caucasian fighters was to take over the school in Beslan (North Ossetia) on the inauguration of the school year, September 1, 2004. The 33 bombers (including Chechens, Ingush, Ossetians, Arabs, Russians, Kabardians and Tartars, which proves the gradual spreading of the conflict throughout the region) have been held hostage by innocent children, parents, teachers and employees of the facility. On September 3, the Russian special services tried to rescue the held hostages. For unknown reasons, terrorists blew up the school building. Over 350 people died and nearly 400 were injured (Falkowski 2007, 6-7).

5. Conclusions

According to John Russell, the Russo-Chechen conflict was probably one of the bloodiest conflicts in Europe since World War II, which attracted the attention of Western media only when terrorist attacks took place. After the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, Chechnya was recognized as one of the front lines of the international war on terrorism. All those who opposed Russia’s policy in Chechnya were labeled as “terrorists” and “bandits”. This led to the deliberate demonization of Chechens by Yeltsin and Putin in order to gain political gains in Russia itself, which made it practically impossible to resolve the conflict peacefully (Russel 2005, 103). During the first Russo-Chechen war, there were reports backed up by documents, accusing the Russian Federation of unhampered use of violence, using prohibited types of weapons and paralyzing humanitarian aid for war victims. Foreign observers in Chechnya reported the following crimes by federal troops: mass bombing and shelling of civilian settlements, rape, looting, murder and arbitrary executions without court sentences, unlawful deprivation of liberty, forcing civilians to move or preventing them from leaving danger-

ous places, dealing with those arrested, including committing torture, kidnapping hostages and using them as human shields. On the other hand, the nature of the crimes committed by the Chechen side was described as incidental. Chechen terrorism is a consequence and not - as Russia claims - the cause of the conflict. Foreign Islamic radicals gained a position in Chechnya only after the first Russo-Chechen war. It was the war that enabled the development of radicalism, which had not previously had any support in Chechen society. This is best evidenced by the fact that in 1996-1999 radicals were isolated in a small area of south-eastern Chechnya, and in 1999 President Maskhadov warned Russia against them and asked for help in combating them, but received no reply (Cornell 2005, 254).

The terrorist attacks were a desperate attempt to make the world aware that the Chechens were fighting for freedom and independence, but also for their physical survival, being the object of deliberate extermination. They require unequivocal condemnation, but the international community should realize that by failing to react to genocide and mass violations of human rights, it is jointly responsible for them (Jurgilewicz, 2020).

References:

- Abraham S. (2001), Chechnya: Between War and Peace, Human Rights Brief, 8(2)
- Amnesty International (2000), Lawlessness, violence, impunity. The Russian Federation and the Republic of Chechnya in documents (Bezprawie, przemoc, bezkarność. Federacja Rosyjska wraz z Republiką Czechenii w dokumentach), Warszawa.
- Babczenko A. (2009), Ten pieces about the war (Dziesięć kawałków o wojnie), Warszawa.
- Borucki M. (1999), Universal history until 1998 (Historia powszechna do 1998 roku), Warszawa.
- Borucki M. (2002), Terrorism. The evil of our time (Terroryzm. Zło naszych czasów), Warszawa.
- Cichocki J. (1997), Russo-Chechen conflict (Konflikt rosyjsko-czecheński), Warszawa.
- Ciesielski S. (2003), Studies in the history of Eastern Europe. 2. Chechnya-Russia. Two centuries of conflict (Studia z dziejów Europy Wschodniej 2. Czeczenia- Rosja. Dwa stulecia konfliktu), Wrocław.
- Cornell S.E. (2005), Russia's Gridlock in Chechnya: Normalisation or Deterioration?, In IFSH (ed.), OSCE Yearbook 2004, Baden-Baden.
- Czarnota Z., Moszumański Z. (1995), Chechnya 94-95 (Czeczenia 94-95), Warszawa.
- Czubiński A., Olszewski W. (1998), Universal History 1939-1997 (Historia powszechna 1939-1997), Poznań.
- Falkowski M. (2007), Chechnya between Caucasian jihad and „hidden” separatism (Czeczenia między kaukaskim dżihadem a „ukrytym” separatyzmem), Warszawa.
- Falkowski M. (2004), North Caucasus: the Russian Gordian Knot. The most important problems and conflicts in the region and their impact on the future of Russia (Kaukaz Północny: rosyjski węzeł gordyjski. Najważniejsze problemy i konflikty w regionie i ich wpływ na przyszłość Rosji), „Prace OSW”, Warszawa.
- Ferenc J. (2004), The world looks away. Chechnya in the light of the law and in the eyes of the world (Świat odwraca wzrok. Czeczenia w świetle prawa i w oczach świata), Toruń.
- Górecki W. (2002), The Caucasus planet (Planeta Kaukaz), Warszawa-Poznań.
- Grochmalski P. (1999), Chechnya. A real picture (Czeczenia. Rys prawdziwy), Wrocław.
- Grochmalski P. (2006), Russia and Chechnya - centuries of hatred (Rosja i Czeczenia - stulecia nienawiści), [in:] J. Brodowski, M. Smoleń (ed.), Chechnya - Russia: Myths and Reality (Czeczenia – Rosja: mity i rzeczywistość), Kraków.
- Halizak E., Kuźniar R., Popławski D., ed. (1997), Strategic Yearbook 1996/1997 (Rocznik strategiczny 1996/1997), Warszawa.
- Hooper J.B. (2006), War or Be Wagged: The Chechen Wars nad the Manipulation of the Russian Presidency, „Historical Perspectives: Santa Clara University Undergraduate Journal of History, 2(11)
- Jagielski W. (1999), Don't help Russia (Nie pomagajcie Rosji), „Gazeta Wyborcza”, 29.10.1999.

- Jendroszczyk P. (1995), Chechens fight and vote (Czeczeńcy walczą i głosują), "Rzeczpospolita", 18.12.1995.
- Koltsova E. (2000), Change in the Coverage of the Chechen Wars: Reasons and Consequences, "The Public", 7(3)
- Jurgilewicz M. (2020), Peaceful Ways of Solving International Disputes by the Mediation Method and Legal Security of State, *Przegląd Prawa Konstytucyjnego*, Bimonthly, 6(58), 317-329.
- Kowalow S. (1995), I've been to Chechnya (Byłem w Czeczenii), Podkowa Leśna.
- Kowalow S. (1998), The flight of the white raven (Lot białego kruka), Warszawa.
- Kuleba M. (1997), Steadfast Chechnya (Niezlomna Czeczenia), Kraków.
- Kuleba M. (2007), Shamil Basayev. Knight's ethos and the soldier's duty (Szamil Basajew. Rycerski etos a powinność żołnierska), Warszawa.
- Lewandowska I. (2000), It was a fluff (To była fuszerka), „Gazeta Wyborcza”, 06.03.2000.
- Malendowski W. (2000), International disputes and conflicts. Legal aspects (Spory i konflikty międzynarodowe. Aspekty prawne), Wrocław.
- Marcinko M. (2004), The issue of terrorism in the Russian-Chechen conflict and international law (Kwestia terroryzmu w konflikcie rosyjsko-czeczeńskim a prawo międzynarodowe), „Problemy Współczesnego Prawa Międzynarodowego, „Europejskiego i Porównawczego”, II, A.D. MMIV.
- Marszewski M. (2003), Islam in the post-Soviet area (Islam na obszarze postradzieckim), "Prace OSW", Warszawa.
- Nowakowski M. (2000), Three texts about Chechnya (Trzy teksty o Czeczenii), Warszawa.
- Pain E. (2001), From the First Chechen War Towards the Second, "The Brown Journal of World Affairs", Winter/Spring 2001, Vol. 8, Issue 1.
- Politkowska A. (2006), Second Chechen War (Druga wojna czeczeńska), Kraków.
- Radziwinowicz W. (1999), Nobody likes us (Nikt nas nie lubi), "Gazeta Wyborcza", 25.10.1999.
- Reitschuster B. (2005), Vladimir Putin. Where is Russia leading? (Władimir Putin. Dokąd prowadzi Rosję?), Warszawa.
- Remnick D. (1997), Resurrection. Fight for a new Russia (Zmartwychwstanie. Walka o nową Rosję), Warszawa.
- Renaud S. (2010), A View from Chechnya: An Assessment of Russian Counterinsurgency During the two Chechens Wars and Future Implications, Palmerston North 2010.
- Reuters, AFP, WJ (1999), Congratulations on the bombing (Gratulacje za bombardowania), "Gazeta Wyborcza", 21.10.1999.
- Russel J. (2005), Terrorists, bandits, spooks and thieves: Russian demonisation of the Chechens before and since 9/11, "Third World Quarterly", 26(1), The Politics of Naming: Rebels, Terrorists, Criminals, Bandits and Subversives.
- Stern J. (1997), Utimate Terrorists, Cambridge, Massachusetts, London.
- Szmyd Z. (2000), Chechen Republic in the fight for independence (Republika Czeczeńska w walce o niepodległość), Warszawa.
- The North Caucasus: The Challenges of Integration (I), Ethnicity and Conflict (2012), Europe Report, No. 220/19, October.
- Tremper J.M. (2004), The Decolonisation of Chechnya: Reviving the UN Trusteeship Council, "Journal of Public and International Affairs", 15/Spring.
- Trenin D.V. (2003), The Forgotten War: Chechnya and Russia's Future, "Policy Brief", 28, Listopad.
- Wilk A. (1996), An unprecedented rise in the position of the army (Bezprecedensowy wzrost pozycji armii), „Biuletyn OSW - Bezpieczeństwo i Obronność”, 6, 12.1996.
- Wojciechowski M. (2000), 38 executions in Grozny (38 egzekucji w Groznm), „Gazeta Wyborcza”, 11.02.2000.
- Zaucha A. (1996), Chechen offensive (Czeczeńska ofensywa), "Gazeta Wyborcza", 07.08.1996.

Marek DELONG is the Professor at Rzeszów University of Technology, PL. Research interests: international security, policy, international relations.

ORCID ID: 0000-0001-7766-5834

Stanisław TOPOLEWSKI is the Professor at University of Natural Sciences and Humanities in Siedlce, PL. Research interests: national security, internal security, information security.

ORCID ID: 0000-0001-8268-3754