

human rights *first*

FORMERLY THE LAWYERS COMMITTEE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

The New Dissidents

**Human Rights Defenders and
Counterterrorism in Russia**

Written by Archana Pyati & Edited by Michael McClintock

**Human Rights Defenders and
Counterterrorism Series No.1**

About Us

For the past quarter century, Human Rights First (formerly the Lawyers Committee for Human Rights) has worked in the United States and abroad to create a secure and humane world by advancing justice, human dignity and respect for the rule of law. We support human rights activists who fight for basic freedoms and peaceful change at the local level; protect refugees in flight from persecution and repression; help build a strong international system of justice and accountability; and make sure human rights laws and principles are enforced in the United States and abroad.

Acknowledgements

Human Rights First gratefully acknowledges the generous support of the David Berg Foundation, FJC – A Donor Advised Fund, Ford Foundation, Horace W. Goldsmith Foundation, William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, the J.M. Kaplan Fund, John D. & Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, Markle Foundation, John Merck Fund, Merlin Foundation, The Moriah Fund, Oak Foundation Limited, Open Society Institute, and the Scherman Foundation, Inc.

This report was written by Archana Pyati and edited by Michael McClintock. Tanya Lokshina of the DEMOS Center for Information and the International Helsinki Federation and Sergei Lukashovski of the Moscow Helsinki Federation contributed to the report. Human Rights First staff members Neil Hicks, Eric Biel, Raj Purohit, Kristin Flood and volunteer Alesia Vidruk also contributed. This report is first in a series focusing on counterterrorism and the situation of human rights defenders, an area of special concern for the Human Rights Defenders Program of Human Rights First.

This report is available online at www.humanrightsfirst.org

For more information about the report contact:
Human Rights First Communications Department
Tel: (212) 845-5245

Printed in the United States.
© 2005 Human Rights First. All Rights Reserved.

New York Headquarters

Human Rights First
333 Seventh Avenue
13th Floor
New York, NY 10001

Tel: (212) 845-5200
Fax: (212) 845-5299

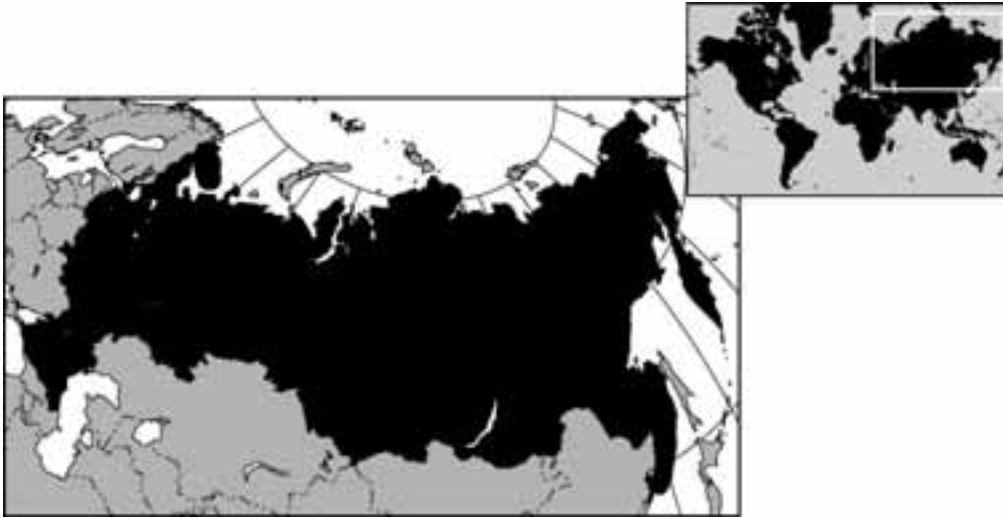
Washington, DC Office

Human Rights First
100 Maryland Avenue, N.E.
Suite 502
Washington, DC 20002

Tel: (202) 547-5692
Fax: (202) 543-5999

www.humanrightsfirst.org

The New Dissidents



Human Rights Defenders and Counterterrorism in Russia

Authoritarianism is on the rise in Vladimir Putin's Russia – with severe consequences for human rights defenders and other critics of the government. Since being initially welcomed as an efficient alternative to Boris Yeltsin, President Putin's drive to increase presidential authority and to undermine alternative power centers has increasingly alarmed domestic and international supporters of democracy and human rights in Russia.

Since coming to power in 2000, President Putin has subdued independent business elites, secured state dominance over broadcast media and major newspapers, and installed a quiescent legislature. This weakening of the checks on the authority of the Kremlin have coincided with a worsening conflict in Chechnya and the North Caucasus region of Russia in which the authorities are fighting a seemingly intractable counterinsurgency campaign against violent Chechen separatists. The conflict has given rise to increasingly audacious and brutal terrorist attacks on Russian civilians.

The Russian response to the terrorist threat has involved a renewed military campaign in Chechnya – the second Chechen war – and ever more stringent efforts to use the conflict to demand loyalty to state authorities. The threat of terrorism has become a pretext to depart from the rule of law. Serious human rights violations, including torture, extrajudicial executions, and “disappearances,” have escalated. Meanwhile, those in Russia who have sought to expose and oppose violations of human rights, including independent journalists and human rights defenders, have themselves become the targets of government attacks. In the climate of fear stoked by the escalating conflict in the Caucasus, human rights defenders have been criticized for their lack of patriotism, accused of being supporters of terrorists, and of being fifth-columnists in a country at war.

Since the September 11, 2001 attacks on the United States, international criticism of the Russian government's human rights abuses in the name of counterterrorism – especially in

the regions of Chechnya and Ingushetia – has dropped off. The international community has shown a new readiness to accept Russia's harsh tactics as Russia became a key ally in the "war on terrorism." President Putin, in turn, has evaded even muted U.S. criticism of his government's policies by repeatedly pointing to a "double standard" applied by the United States government in its own counter-terrorism practices.

Inside the Russian Federation, those who criticize government policies and practices on human rights grounds, especially as they relate to Chechnya and the Caucasus, are increasingly becoming victims of human rights abuses themselves. They include independent lawyers, doctors, and journalists, as well as members of Russia's many human rights organizations who are constantly fighting against the tide of abuse by the Russian government.

The Russian government is applying new measures intended to control religious or racist extremism to those who monitor human rights violations committed by the government. It has enacted new tax laws providing powerful levers to restrict the work of nonprofit, non-governmental organizations to curb criticism of its policies. And its agents are responsible for numerous killings and "disappearances" of individuals working with human rights organizations and others who stand up for human rights.

Finding Common Cause after September 11

Prior to the September 11 attacks, the international community leveled harsh criticisms on the Russian government for its military tactics and human rights violations in Chechnya and the surrounding region. But after September 2001, national leaders stepped back from the posture of firm and constructive criticism maintained during the first Chechen war and through the first year of Vladimir Putin's presidency, withdrawing most inter-governmental monitors from Chechnya and muting criticism in international fora. The level of international scrutiny and public debate over Russia's human rights performance declined even as atrocities against civilians by both Russian federal forces and rebels in the war in Chechnya reached new levels.

In the spring of 2002, the United Nations Commission on Human Rights declined to adopt a Russia/Chechnya resolution (in contrast to its resolutions in 2000 and 2001), and the Chechen conflict faded from the agenda of this major inter-governmental human rights forum. The European Union and the Council of Europe did not drop human rights in Chechnya from their agendas, but the force of their efforts appeared to falter. This was acknowledged with a note of triumph by some Russian officials, to the embarrassment of their European counterparts.¹

Some European Union governments began to send signals that they agreed that Russian policy in Chechnya was part of the general struggle against international terrorism. German Chancellor Gerhard Schröder said Chechnya was in a region with "an elevated threat, which we have now experienced. The different aspects of Russian policy should be

judged accordingly."² Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi said "Europe must open itself up to Russia" at a news conference after meeting with Putin in Berlin on September 26, 2001. "Europe must reconstitute itself on the basis of its Christian roots," he added. In a joint press conference with President Putin in November 2003, while serving in the E.U.'s rotating Presidency, Berlusconi grabbed the microphone when the Russian president was asked about the rule of law in Russia and criticized the international press for even asking such questions. He declared that "In Russia, there is terrorist activity...against Russian citizens. There has never been a corresponding response on the part of the Russian Federation that suffered these attacks."³

In a series of summit meetings in 2002 and 2003, Chechnya and human rights issues appeared to have been dropped entirely off the agenda. In statements issued from a series of summit meetings held at the time of the celebration of the 300th anniversary of the founding of St. Petersburg, world leaders – including U.S. President George W. Bush – scrupulously avoided references to Chechnya and human rights.⁴

Monitoring by inter-governmental bodies, with some notable exceptions, largely lapsed.⁵ Special representatives of U.N. human rights mechanisms were denied invitations to visit Chechnya or, when invited, were in practice denied access on a range of grounds. In December 2002, the field office of the Organization of Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) in Chechnya was closed after Russia refused to renew its human rights mandate. Although some initiatives were made within

the OSCE to overturn the decision, the needed political support among powerful member states was largely absent. Ultimately, as noted by Russian Federation expert Rachel Denber, the international community “acquiesced in Russia’s efforts to keep outside observers from being deployed to Chechnya.”⁶

The U.S. Role

The relationship between President Bush and President Putin began to warm immediately after the September 11, 2001 attacks. President Putin was the first world leader to call President Bush to express his condolences and support, indicating that the two countries had much in common in the fight against terrorism and alluding to the 1999 bombings that destroyed apartment buildings in Moscow. After a meeting in the aftermath of the attacks President Putin repeatedly expressed his support of the U.S.-led “war on terrorism.” Putin became a key ally in the U.S. military operation in Afghanistan, allowing U.S. humanitarian flights in Russian airspace and sharing intelligence.⁷ Both presidents issued statements stressing the warmth of their rapport and their mutual respect.

In October 2001, U.S. Ambassador Alexander Vershbow spoke publicly of the United States and Russia becoming allies, while ratifying Russian claims that Chechen rebel forces were receiving international support.⁸ Bilateral cooperation increased to the extent that on February 28, 2002, Ambassador Vershbow declared that “Russia was and will remain our most important partner in the antiterrorist coalition. The fight will last many years. Therefore, we want to cooperate more closely with Russia.”⁹

However, the relationship began to falter when President Bush pulled the United States out of the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) treaty in 2002. President Putin was emphatic in interviews that Russia was unhappy with the U.S. decision to end its commitment to the ABM treaty. Furthermore, the Russian President opposed the U.S. decision to invade Iraq and has promised no military or other support in the operation. In September 2003, President Putin indicated his continued disapproval of the

American invasion in Iraq and went so far as to suggest that U.S. forces in Iraq have committed human rights violations. In anticipation of a Bush-Putin meeting, reporters asked President Putin how he would handle questions about Chechnya. He immediately referred to the U.S. presence in Iraq: “Are you sure everything is OK with human rights there?” he said. “Or Afghanistan. Are you sure everything is OK there on human rights?” He also raised the possibility that human rights violations were occurring at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.¹⁰

President Bush has not been strongly critical of Russia’s human rights policies.¹¹ After a two-day meeting at Camp David in September 2003, President Bush emphasized the personal nature of his relationship with President Putin by referring to the leader as his friend and saying “I like him. He’s a good fellow to spend quality time with.” Amid much criticism, President Bush avoided discussion of Russia’s well-documented human rights violations in Chechnya and in fact expressed support for Russia’s crackdown in Chechnya because “Both of our nations have suffered at the hands of terrorists, and both of our governments are taking actions to stop them.”¹²

Facing criticism for Russia’s handling of the Beslan hostage taking crisis in September 2004, President Putin accused the United States of having a double standard. “Why don’t you meet Osama bin Laden, invite him to Brussels or the White House and engage in talks, ask him what he wants and give it to him so he leaves you in peace?” Putin said to reporters in September.¹³

Responding to the U.S. State Department’s insistence that there must be a political, not military, resolution to the conflict in Chechnya, Putin indicated that given the invasion of Iraq,

the West should have “no more questions about our policy in Chechnya.”¹⁴ The Russian government has since repeatedly deflected criticism of human rights violations it has committed in the name of counterterrorism by pointing to the United States’ own record of unilateral military occupation and documented use of torture since the September 11 attacks. As one commentator has noted: “Putin’s counterterrorism efforts are judged more leniently than those of other countries, and as a result his own citizens, and ours are less secure.”¹⁵

Terrorism in Russia

Terrorism was a part of the human rights debate in Russia long before September 11, 2001. An antecedent of the attack on the Beslan school and other terror attacks on Russian civilians was Chechen leader Shamil Basayev's June 1995 assault on the Budenosvsk hospital in Stavropol, when rebel forces took hostage hundreds of patients and staff. This was the first major such attack confronted by post-Soviet Russian society and resulted in 129 deaths.¹⁶ Despite strong protests from the security forces, the then-prime minister, Victor Tchenomyrdyn, called off the military operations and turned to negotiations, resulting in the release of the remaining hostages.

Despite Basayev's hospital assault, the first Chechen war, from 1994 to 1996, was portrayed by Russian authorities primarily as a war to defend the territorial integrity of the Russian Federation. The regular armed forces of the Russian Federation had set out to crush the breakaway Chechen Republic of Ichkeria, withdrawing only after suffering over 5,000 military casualties and killing tens of thousands of civilians in indiscriminate bombing and shelling. In the late 1990s, however, Russian leaders increasingly presented the situation in Chechnya in the context of international terrorism.

By the autumn of 1999, the issue of terrorism had become a serious public concern after unprecedented bombings of civilian apartment blocks in Moscow and the southern city of Volgograd, the destruction of a military officers apartment building in Dagestan, and incursions into Dagestan by armed groups under Basayev's command. Chechens were accused of responsibility for the attacks, although claims that members of the security services were involved in the Moscow blasts

continue to be the object of debate (see below). The public outrage over terrorism in Russian cities was used to justify the strengthening of the executive branch, particularly law enforcement agencies, to curb civil liberties, and to re-launch a military campaign in Chechnya, the second Chechen war. Prime Minister Vladimir Putin, who had taken office in August 1999, led the nation into the second Chechen war, beginning operations in late September 1999, with troops moving into the breakaway republic on October 1. Putin subsequently ran on a platform of firm action in the face of terrorism to a convincing win in the 2000 presidential election.

In the year before the September 11 attacks on the United States, Russian operations in Chechnya and counterterror actions throughout the country were already well underway. As terror attacks continued in Russian cities, a pattern emerged in which each attack was followed by massive police operations targeting ethnic Chechens and Caucasians residing in the cities.¹⁷ These police operations included random identity checks, in particular targeting persons thought to look like Chechens or Caucasians, searches of residential premises without warrants, arbitrary arrests, and false criminal charges. Those detained in such round-ups frequently complained of torture and other cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment. Abuse of people thought to be from the Russian republics of the Caucasus from official quarters coincided with a rise in violence by nationalist youth, with hate crimes motivated by skin-color and manner of dress leading to serious injuries and death.

The Growing Civilian Toll

Hundreds of Russian civilians have lost their lives in a growing number of terrorist attacks. In October 2002, Chechen rebels took about 800 Moscow theater-goers hostage, resulting in more than a hundred deaths as Russian soldiers stormed the theater. Suicide bombers attacked the seat of the Moscow-backed Chechen government in Grozny that December, leaving 50 dead. From May through August 2003, five bomb blasts claimed the lives of more than a hundred victims. In December 2003, more than 40 people were killed in a blast on a train.¹⁸

In 2004, the toll of civilian lives in terror attacks reached unprecedented levels. On February 6, a bomb exploded on a train near the Avtozavodskaya metro station in Moscow, killing 39 and injuring 70. Rebel fighters killed dozens of civilians in a June 21 raid on Nazran, Karabulak, and Sleptsovsk in Ingushetia, targeting public employees for murder. On August 21, rebel fighters carried out further killings of civilians in a raid on Grozny.¹⁹ Chechnya's president, Akhmad Kadyrov, was himself murdered with six others in a bomb explosion on May 6 at a stadium in Grozny.

Terror attacks on civilians reached a staggering level over nine days in late August and early September when, in three separate incidents, attackers held to be linked to Chechen fighters deliberately targeted, killed, and wounded hundreds of civilians. On August 26, two civilian aircraft were destroyed in mid-air explosions timed just minutes apart, killing 89 passengers and crew. Forensic specialists later found traces of explosives in the aircrafts' wreckage; the explosions were attributed to two female Chechen suicide-bombers, one aboard each plane.²⁰

On August 31, an explosion outside the Ryzhskaia metro station in Moscow killed

at least ten people and injured 51 more. The investigation concluded that a lone female bomber intended to enter the metro station but detonated the explosives on the street after sighting police standing by the metro entrance.²¹

The September 1 to 3 attack in which hundreds were killed at School No. 1 in Beslan, North Ossetia, was the single terrorist act that most traumatized the Russian people. Heavily armed men and women burst into the school as approximately 1,200 children, their parents, and teachers gathered to celebrate the beginning of the academic year. The assailants, who made demands concerning the conflict in Chechnya, held the hostages without food or drinking water for over 48 hours. Then the mass killings began on September 3, and Russian security forces stormed the school.²² A Chechen separatist website subsequently published a letter in the name of Shamil Basayev claiming responsibility for the Beslan attack.²³

The official death toll of hostages at Beslan has been fixed at 335, although claims continue to be made by some Russian commentators that the death toll was even higher.²⁴ Official misinformation in the course of the siege encouraged doubt on the official reports on its resolution: during the three days of the crisis, a figure of just 354 hostages was given, despite information from hostages' relatives and the numerous observers that kept vigil at the school building that at least 1,000 persons were held. It was later confirmed that some 1,200 hostages were in the school during the siege.²⁵

The Role of Human Rights Defenders

During the years immediately following the collapse of the Soviet Union, the Russian human rights movement – with Soviet-era dissidents at its core – was highly respected by broad sectors of the public and government alike. During the 1994 to 1996 war in Chechnya, human rights groups played an essential role in documenting abuses by the Russian military. The human rights movement presented alternatives to official information about the conflict, bringing evidence of human rights violations to the public and receiving considerable coverage in the media.²⁶ A prime example was the Soldiers' Mothers Committee, which was especially effective in gathering and publicizing the number of Russian casualties when official sources deliberately concealed this information.²⁷

The effect these organizations had on public perceptions of the Chechen conflict made some authorities come to see them as adversaries. Those who drew attention to official abuses in Chechnya became scapegoats and were accused by the Russian authorities of a lack of patriotism, betraying national interests, slandering the army, and collaborating with the separatists.²⁸ From this point on, human rights defenders began to be perceived as a direct challenge to the authority of the government, and their relationship with the state began to deteriorate. Soviet-era dissidents and human rights defenders, who were respected in the early 1990s within circles of power, gradually became marginalized.

Human rights defenders already faced heightened levels of criticism at the outset of the second war in 1999. Domestic human rights monitors, including journalists investigating

human rights issues, faced new and extreme threats to their safety. Legal action was taken to dissolve some organizations, and some defenders were imprisoned. Measures to exclude international monitors, from intergovernmental bodies such as the OSCE, human rights bodies, and the international press from Chechnya were more extensive and more effective than during the first war.

The climate of public opinion in Russia had also dramatically shifted by the outset of the second Chechen war, due in large part to the reality of terrorist attacks on civilian targets in Russian cities. Ongoing terrorist attacks and resulting public outrage provided the backdrop to a concerted effort by Russian authorities to discredit and to obstruct the civil society organizations offering a unique window into government abuse in Chechnya. Government control of the news media limited the dissemination of independent reporting on the human rights situation while providing a vehicle through which to discredit Russia's vibrant human rights movement and the information it gathered in the conflict zones.

Those who monitored and protested human rights abuses in Chechnya did so increasingly in isolation, as independent reporting in the press, and in particular the broadcast media, diminished, and as public anger extended beyond Chechnya's terrorists to the Chechen people as a whole. Those who spoke up for the rights of Chechen civilians were tarred as sympathizers with Chechen terrorists.

A former advisor to Russian president Boris Yeltsin, Emil Pain, in mid-2000 described a new media approach to human rights concerns that was dominated by official summa-

ries and dry reports using “professional military jargon,” and a reluctance to investigate or condemn even notorious abuses.²⁹ While self-censorship was in part a natural response to the changing public mood generated by terrorist attacks on Russian civilians, direct censorship was also a part of the new scenario. Pain described the sharp increase of censorship of reports on military actions, while claiming that even during the early days of the Gorbachev period “there was never such suppression of dissent on state television as is the case today,” with “no statements...allowed that are even slightly critical of the Russian government’s actions in Chechnya” on the most important stations.³⁰

The new policies were soon tested by independent journalists seeking to report on the Chechnya conflict.³¹ An early signal that independent journalists would report on Chechnya at their peril was the detention on January 15, 2000, and for a time “disappearance” of Andrei Babitsky, a correspondent with U.S.-funded Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty who was known for his reporting from conflict areas in Chechnya.³² On February 5, Russian authorities claimed they had handed him over to “Chechen rebels” in exchange for Russian prisoners, but he remained in the custody of Russian Federal Security Service (FSB) forces. Babitsky’s ordeal had a chilling effect on Russian and foreign journalists – independent reporting by the news media from inside Chechnya practically ceased, even as human rights monitors continued to take extraordinary notes.³³

Monitors of international press freedom and military analysts have contrasted Russian policies regarding the control of information concerning the first Chechen war with policies since 1999. U.S. military analyst Timothy L. Thomas observed in an article on “information warfare” that “Russian authorities initially shut off independent reporting during the second war in Chechnya, and did everything possible to ensure that official TV and newspaper reporters carefully reported their facts from the battlefield.”³⁴ New procedures made it largely impossible for journalists to work independently in Chechnya, and military protocols

provided guidelines even on the terms journalists were to use in reporting.³⁵ On December 1999, Presidential Resolution No. 1538 “created the Russian Information Centre (RIT), which filtered information from the theatre of military operations, and selected information from foreign publications to be disseminated in Russia.”³⁶ As the press was excluded from the conflict areas, monitoring and reporting by human rights defenders assumed progressively greater significance.

The branding of human rights defenders as collaborators with terrorists was also part of the high level offensive. When the Russian Federation’s fifth periodic report on its observance of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) was reviewed by the U.N. Human Rights Committee in Geneva in October 2003, Chechen president Akhmad Kadyrov spoke on behalf of the Russian delegation. Kadyrov protested that criticism by the committee’s experts with regard to Chechnya was based on the “untrustworthy evidence” provided by NGOs and that this was one-sided and biased information. He also claimed that all NGOs in the region that were not “cooperating” with him were collaborating with the terrorists and made other threatening allegations, including personalized ones, against Chechen human rights defenders.³⁷

During 2004, a year of escalating terrorist activity, a new attitude toward the growing role of civil society organizations in Russia that extended beyond the Chechnya conflict was also shown at the highest level. On May 7, during a press-conference on the situation of Russian prisons, General Valerii Krayev, the Ministry of Justice’s Chief of Sentence Enforcement, declared that human rights organizations, prisoners’ families, and lawyers were destabilizing the Ministry of Justice by bringing pressure on the prison administration and spreading false information in the media.³⁸ He said that human rights organizations “were financed by criminal organizations,” and distinguished between 163 human rights organizations funded by “oligarchs,” and “more than 360.... [with which] it is possible to reach a constructive cooperation.”³⁹

On May 26, President Putin appeared to echo General Krayev, concluding his annual State of the Nation address with a chilling aside on the role of civil society in Russia. While praising the thousands of associations that are working “constructively,” he singled out others in what was universally understood as an attack on human rights defenders:

far from all of them are geared towards defending people’s real interests. For some of these organizations, the priority is rather different - obtaining funding from influential foreign or domestic foundations. For others it is servicing dubious group and commercial interests.

President Putin added that these organizations are silent in regard to the most acute problems of the country, and attributed this to their unwillingness to “bite the hand that feeds them.”⁴⁰

President Putin’s speech was immediately seen as a validation of earlier attacks by lesser officials on the legitimacy of the human rights movement.⁴¹ Russian officials responded to the president’s speech with a new and increasingly aggressive offensive against human rights defenders.⁴²

In campaigns to discredit independent human rights defenders, public officials and the state-controlled media routinely maintain that human rights defenders directly or indirectly assist terrorists and other forces trying to destroy the Russian State. Human rights monitoring, particularly when concerning Chechnya, is characterized as siding with the enemy. In a comment on President Putin’s May 2004 speech criticizing human rights organizations, Foreign Ministry spokesman Aleksandr Yakovenko added a new element by criticizing humanitarian agencies as well, declaring that many of these organizations “are involved more in monitoring, and not in providing real humanitarian aid, although the declared goal of these organizations is humanitarian aid.”⁴³

After the events in Beslan in September 2004, Russian authorities renewed their efforts to place events in Russia within a framework of international terrorism. In his State of the Nation address on September 4, right after the

Beslan crisis, Putin stated unequivocally: “What we are dealing with are not isolated acts intended to frighten us, not isolated terrorist attacks. What we are facing is direct intervention of international terror directed against Russia. This is a total, cruel and full-scale war that again and again is taking the lives of our fellow citizens.”⁴⁴ A few days later, at his meeting with foreign journalists in Novo-Ogarevo on September 9, he explained that in this war he needs the support of the West. Reporters indicated that Putin sought reassurances that Western leaders would not expect Chechen independence to be on the table. And they should underscore that nobody is pushing him to negotiate or - as he put it - “deal with people who kill children.”⁴⁵

On September 7, over 100,000 people took part in an anti-terrorist rally in Moscow, held to a soundtrack of patriotic songs. A resolution was read out to the crowd by actor V. Lanovoi calling for all Russians to come together “in the fight against international terror,”⁴⁶ and to demanding “a merciless struggle be launched against the executors and the organizers of terrorist attacks, no matter where those criminals are and who inspires them to do what they are doing.”⁴⁷ Lanovoi, apparently on his own initiative, followed the reading of the resolution with a rhetorical attack on human rights defenders, denouncing as “hypocritical and false” their “words about human rights and universal values.”⁴⁸

A concerted campaign was launched to vilify opposition leaders and human rights figures as collaborators with Chechen terrorists. In the second half of October, Moscow streets and the metro saw numerous leaflets featuring a composite photograph of Chechen terrorist leader Shamil Basayev, exiled entrepreneur and Putin critic Boris Berezovsky, and three key opposition politicians, Vladimir Ryzhkov, Irina Khakamada, and Sergei Glazyev, all shown in camouflage uniforms. A sign under the picture identified all of the above as “participants in the negotiations on destroying the Russian Federation.”⁴⁹

Similarly, a letter was disseminated on the Internet on October 25, in the name of Aslan Maskhadov, president of the breakaway Che-

chen Republic-Ichkeria, that appeared intended to portray leading Russian human rights activists as collaborators of Chechen terrorists. The human rights defenders named included some of the most distinguished of Russia's human rights community, including Elena Bonner, head of the Andrei Sakharov Foundation, Valery Borshev, member of the Moscow Helsinki group, Svetlana Gannushkina, Chair of the "Civic Assistance" Committee, Lev Ponomarev, head of the Movement "For Human Rights," and Yuri Samodurov, Director of the Andrei Sakharov Center and Museum "Peace, Progress, and Human Rights."

The statement reportedly praised these human rights leaders in a way portraying their monitoring activities as being supportive of the rebels, and Maskhadov was purported to have signed a decree giving each of them an award and a large cash prize. The decree was later denounced as part of a security service defamation campaign. Svetlana Gannushkina, Chair of the Civic Assistance Committee, said she received the letter in an anonymous email and called it "a fake," adding "I can only suspect our noble special services." Lev Ponomarev, head of the Movement for Human Rights believed that the letter was drafted and disseminated "by evil-wishers. No one called me. No one suggested anything like that to me. We looked this up on the official website of the Ichkeria 'government,' and there is no such decree. It's just a provocation."⁵⁰

The stirring of nationalistic and xenophobic feelings in society brought with it a pronounced rise in violent attacks against Caucasians and foreigners by extremist racist groups. In one incident, on September 18, a group of some 20 extremists attacked four Caucasians on a train in the Moscow metro. The victims were taken to hospital with knife-wounds and fractures. According to one of the witnesses, the aggressors got on the train, sighted the Caucasians and started beating them cruelly, screaming all the while, "This is your reward for the terrorists attacks!"⁵¹

Newly harsh measures against suspected terrorists and their sympathizers were also demanded by political leaders. In the wake of

Beslan, many politicians, state officials, and regional legislatures called for the return of death penalty. On September 10, 2004, Lyubov Sliska, First Vice-Speaker of the State Duma, explained to journalists, "I am for the introduction of this measure with regard to terrorists and those who finance terrorist attacks." While acknowledging that the restoration of capital punishment (a moratorium is now in force) may be negatively viewed by a number of foreign states, she explained that "after 9/11 the USA drastically reinforced all kinds of security measures and that never caused any objections by European countries."⁵²

Amangeldy Tuleev, Governor of the Kemerovo region, went further, proposing to make the families of terrorists criminally liable for their deeds.⁵³ Experts did not take the proposal seriously at the time, attributing it to post-Beslan hysteria, and a politician trying to draw the frightened electorate to his side. Not long afterward, however, Prosecutor General of the Russian Federation Vladimir Ustinov, the chief state official responsible for upholding the rule of law in the country, proposed to the State Duma on October 29 that relatives of terrorists be made subject to "counter hostage-taking."⁵⁴

Later in the same day, the leading human rights organization Memorial addressed a public letter to President Putin suggesting that he had just two options in responding to Prosecutor General Ustinov's proposals. The first was "to promptly address the Federation Council with a proposal to dismiss V. Ustinov from office as Prosecutor General of the Russian Federation." The second was to do nothing. "Either of the two decisions will be highly symbolic. Either will define the future of Russia, at least to the extent in which the country's future depends on you personally. The choice is yours."⁵⁵ President Putin did not respond to Memorial and took no public action in response to Prosecutor General Ustinov's "counter-hostage-taking" proposal.⁵⁶

The massacre at Beslan served to set in motion the dismantling of some key democratic institutions in Russia. On September 13, 2004, at a special meeting of the cabinet,

President Putin elaborated upon his project of political changes sparked by the Beslan attack. Among the most significant were proposals to end the election of Russia's regional governors, with the governors or presidents of the 89 regions to be nominated by the president. The president would also gain new powers to dissolve troublesome regional legislatures that opposed presidential nominees. Elections to the lower house of the legislature, the Duma, would also be transformed, with all candidates elected on the basis of national party lists. Currently, half of the Duma candidates are elected from local district constituencies, with half elected based on party lists.⁵⁷ President Putin also proposed consolidating all counterterrorism efforts in a single agency, as he said was done by "a whole number of countries which have been confronted with the terrorist threat," an apparent allusion to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security.⁵⁸ A bill to implement the president's political reforms was tabled in the Duma and passed in its first reading on October 29, 2004.⁵⁹

When Putin voiced his plans for political reforms to increase presidential authority on September 13, his political opponents and human rights defenders immediately argued that the changes proposed would undermine the very foundations of Russian democracy.⁶⁰ On this occasion, the Bush administration, too, added its voice. In a White House speech on September 15, President Bush expressed "concern" that the proposals to centralize political power could undermine democracy:

You know, recently I talked to President Putin of Russia. I told him this country mourns the loss of life as a result of the terrorist attacks, the terrorist attack on the school. I told him we stand shoulder-to-shoulder with them in fighting terror, that we abhor men who kill innocent children to try to achieve a dark vision. I'm also concerned about the decisions that are being made in Russia that could undermine democracy in Russia; that great countries, great democracies have a balance of power between central government and local governments, a balance of power within central governments be-

tween the executive branch and the legislative branch and the judicial branch. As governments fight the enemies of democracy, they must uphold the principles of democracy.⁶¹

Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov promptly responded to the media, observing that "First of all, the processes that are under way in Russia are our internal affair."⁶²

Today, every terrorist attack gives another impulse to the gradual tightening of state control over public life in the country and to the steady reinforcement of the role and powers of the special security services. Likewise, each new outrage against Russian civilians by Chechen separatists is followed by another media onslaught aimed at affirming the priority of national security interests over human rights and fundamental freedoms—and discrediting anyone critical of the government. As violence from the Chechen conflict spreads and escalates in severity, local human rights defenders are increasingly vulnerable.

Russian leaders increasingly speak of the country as a "fortress under siege." And in a fortress under siege there can be no opposition, only traitors, or fifth columnists. This is precisely how it was described by the deputy head of the President's Office, Vladimir Surkov, in an interview published in the biggest Russian daily newspaper, *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, on September 28, 2004:

In the country which is practically under a siege, there appeared a fifth column of left-wing and right-wing radicals....The false liberals have more and more in common with the real Nazis. They have that common hatred. The hatred for what they call Putin's Russia. But it is in reality their hatred for Russia as such.⁶³

Real public concern over the atrocities committed by Chechen rebels in Russian cities, combined with the government's control of the media, have created a climate of fear which make human rights advocacy increasingly difficult and dangerous.

Attacks on Human Rights Defenders

As hostility toward critics of Russian policy in Chechnya grows, the situation for human rights defenders in Chechnya and the surrounding region has become increasingly dangerous. Defenders face threat of harm by Chechen separatists, and Russian troops and security forces (and their Chechen allies) are responsible for numerous cases of intimidation, arrest, torture, “disappearance,” and murder.

Following the election of the Moscow-backed Akhmad Kadyrov as president of the Chechen Republic in October 2003, the risk of danger increased (Kadyrov was killed in a bomb blast in May 2004).⁶⁴ The controversial election coincided with the efforts of Russian authorities to return 80,000 displaced Chechens from Ingushetia to Chechnya, a campaign that included armed raids, arbitrary detentions, random searches, beatings, and other ill-treatment, resulting in the death of at least one person. While blocking human rights groups from monitoring events, Russian forces justified the raids as necessary ostensibly to weed out terrorist insurgents hiding among the refugees, although neither weapons nor suspected rebels were reported to have been found.⁶⁵ The increased violence and government blockades made it more dangerous for Moscow-based national human rights groups as well as those working at the local level in Chechnya and Ingushetia. A study of attacks on human rights defenders in the region revealed “a steep rise in incidents of persecution of defenders in 2003 and 2004.”⁶⁶

In the last few years, more than a dozen employees, volunteers, and journalists associated with the Society for Russian-Chechen Friend-

ship, a nongovernmental human rights organization with offices in Nizhny Novgorod, Chechnya, and Ingushetia – or their family members – have been pursued, beaten, or killed by Russian forces. Aslan Davletukaev, a journalist working for the Society, was picked up by federal agents at his home in Chechnya. When his body was found, his face had been battered, his limbs broken, and he had been shot in the back of the head.⁶⁷

Luisa Betergiraeva, a volunteer with the Society, was shot and killed at a Russian military roadblock on December 13, 2001.⁶⁸ Imran Ezhiev, the organization’s leader, has been detained and attacked multiple times. In addition, his cousin was detained by police at a highway checkpoint, his brother – a volunteer with the Society – was pursued and killed by masked members of the armed services at his home, and another brother was shot in the leg during the same incident.

Activists involved with other human rights organizations based in the region, such as Memorial’s Chechen branch, Sintar, Koalitsa, Omega, and Civil Protest, have experienced similarly devastating abuses.⁶⁹ For example, witnesses claim that on the night of January 11, 2000, federal servicemen from an army checkpoint shot and killed the parents and uncle of Shamsudin Tangiev, a Memorial employee. Thereafter his home has been fired upon by soldiers from a nearby checkpoint, and he has received death threats from the police. Among attacks on defenders in 2003, a female humanitarian worker was raped by police, and a young activist was abducted by Russian-speaking, armed men from his family’s home and has never been seen again.

Many journalists who report on human rights violations for the local, regional, and international press have been attacked. On July 4, 2003, in the center of Nazran, Ingushetia's capital, three unidentified armed men abducted Ali Astamirov, a 34-year-old Chechen journalist for *Agence France Presse*. He received anonymous threatening phone calls prior to his abduction. Astamirov remains missing.⁷⁰ Media is also controlled through intimidation; the newspaper put out by the Society for Russian-Chechen Friendship, *Pravozaschita*, was closed down by federal officials just before Russian presidential elections and allowed to reopen one month after the elections had concluded.⁷¹

Due to the impunity with which such violations occur in the region, some victims and their families seek justice through petitions with the European Court of Human Rights.⁷² As a result, some have been the victims of violent retribution by the government. Zura Bitieva, an anti-war activist who had filed a petition with the Court alleging torture and other mistreatment suffered during a month at a federal detention facility, was killed on May 21, 2003. Witnesses reported that a government vehicle stopped outside her home, and in the early hours of the morning, fifteen Russian-speaking men emerged, broke into Bitieva's home and shot her as well as her husband, brother, and son. A one-year-old child was left alive but found with tape over its mouth.⁷³ More than a dozen other European Court petitioners and their relatives have "disappeared" or been killed by Russian federal forces after months of being followed.

Lawyers who represent petitioners to the European Court for Human Rights are themselves in danger. On January 20, 2005, armed men believed to be associated with the pro-Russian Chechen armed forces detained 49-year-old lawyer and human rights defender Makhmut Magomadov at the home of friend in Grozny, the Chechen capital. Magomadov's work, in partnership with the International Helsinki Federation, the International Protection Center, and the Chechnya Committee of National Salvation, focused on kidnapping, abduction and other serious violations of human

rights allegedly committed by pro-Russian Chechen militia forces.⁷⁴ He was released soon afterwards.

Even government officials who speak out against human rights abuses face intimidation and threats to their safety. Rashid Ozdoev, a deputy procurator in the Republic of Ingushetia, was detained and "disappeared" on March 11, 2004, after sending reports to federal authorities about "disappearances" and killings allegedly committed by Russian security services. Evidence has linked his "disappearance" with his professional activities and established with near certainty that Russian agents were responsible.⁷⁵

Human rights defenders in other regions within Russia have been subject to persecution when their investigations exposed evidence suggesting state complicity in abuses. Mikhail Trepashkin, a lawyer, was a participant in an investigation into the Moscow apartment house bombings of September 1999, that killed over 200 civilians and did so much to heighten public concerns over the terrorist threat of the Chechen separatists.⁷⁶ In 2002, Trepashkin became part of an independent commission established to investigate the attacks. The investigation revealed supposed evidence of agents of Russia's Federal Security Service (FSB) involvement in the bombings.⁷⁷ However, no report was ever published as the commission's co-chairman was murdered, another member died suspiciously of food poisoning, a third was brutally beaten, and two others were removed from their parliamentary seats.⁷⁸

Trepashkin was hired by Tatiana and Alyona Morozova, the Russian-American daughters of a woman who was killed in the blast, to represent their interests during the prosecution of Chechen men accused of transporting the explosives. On October 22, 2003, just days before he was to appear in court, Trepashkin was jailed on charges of possessing an illegal firearm. He claims that the charges were fabricated in order to prevent him from presenting the evidence implicating state agents in the bombings. In May 2004, he was convicted of "divulging state secrets" and his trial on the gun possession charge is still continuing.⁷⁹

Targeting Defenders through Legislation

The work of human rights defenders is also being challenged by legislative measures which have become more restrictive in the name of counterterrorism. Using new laws and amendments to existing laws supposedly geared toward curbing terrorist activity, the Russian government can now more readily suspend or dissolve human rights organizations, prosecute their leaders, restrict media and press statements by NGOs, and discourage financial contributions to particular classes of nongovernmental organization. The new laws threaten the autonomy and freedoms of all civil society associations, as well as the press.

The registration regime for nongovernmental organizations in Russia requires organizations to be recognized by the Ministry of Justice and to meet basic requirements established in legislation adopted in the mid-1990s. While organizations may be able to continue functioning without registration, they will have no legal status and so be unable to carry out financial transactions, rent premises, issue publications, or do anything requiring legal recognition. Denial of registration, suspension of registration, and requirements to re-register are each measures that can severely obstruct the work of human rights defenders.

In 1995, a law was enacted requiring that all public associations registered under Soviet law re-register, with a deadline of June 1999, in a process that was subsequently criticized for abuse. A July 2000 motion for resolution of the Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly called for an inquiry into reports that many NGOs were reportedly obliged to change their name or statute in order to qualify for re-registration, including the removal of the phrase “protection of human rights” or “protection of citizens’ rights,” on the grounds that “only the state and professional lawyers are allowed to protect these rights

in Russia,” while others were denied registration altogether on uncertain grounds. It cited allegations “that some regional and local authorities used the requirement for NGOs to re-register as an opportunity to silence critical NGOs, in particular those working in the field of human rights and on ecological issues.”⁸⁰

The use of the registration regime to harass human rights organizations that are at odds with public authorities has continued. Registration has been subject to prolonged delays for some organizations, and challenges to existing registration on an ad hoc basis may come in direct response to the effectiveness of organizations’ human rights work.⁸¹

In January 2003, a military prosecutor set in motion an inquiry by the Ministry of Justice into the Soldiers’ Mothers Organization of St. Petersburg, holding in a formal petition that their activities violated the terms of their registration under the laws on “social groups” and “nonprofit organizations.” Of particular concern was the group’s monitoring and reporting on the treatment of conscript soldiers. In June, after an inquiry, the Ministry of Justice found the organization in violation of the laws under which it was registered. The violations included “the presence of religious posters and objects on the walls of the association’s offices, in violation of the association’s bylaws.” Efforts to re-register were twice rejected, requiring new documentation and the redrafting of the group’s bylaws. Ultimately, after months of disruption, the group’s re-registration was completed.⁸²

In line with President Putin’s May 2004 address questioning the independence, integrity, and patriotism of organizations receiving funds primarily from foreign foundations, new provisions in the Tax Code require that nonprofit organizations pay heavy taxes on any contributions they receive from international foundations.⁸³ Since such organizations often de-

pend in large part on such grants to function independently, this could be disabling. A bill exempting organizations that can demonstrate that their work is for “the rights of man and citizen” passed its first reading, but human rights organizations fear that it will not pass into law, making it impossible for many of them to function.⁸⁴

Though the Russian government has associated terrorist acts within its borders with religious extremism since the first Chechen war, it was not until just after the September 11 attacks that the law “On Countering Extremist Activities” was passed.⁸⁵ The law prohibits the creation of associations with extremist goals or activities, adding to existing measures that have regulated civil society organizations since the 1990s. The government has the power to suspend the activities of any nongovernmental organization whose activities are viewed as a “humiliation of national dignity,” as threatening “the constitutional order,” violating “the territorial integrity of the Russian Federation,” or undermining “the security of the Russian Federation.”⁸⁶ Such a broad formulation is an invitation to abuse.⁸⁷

Although the law’s provisions have not so far been widely enforced against racist violence, they were promptly applied to persecute civil society organizations, religious associations, mass media, and even commercial companies operating in certain regions.⁸⁸ The new law allows the administration to harass and intimidate human rights defenders by avoiding a lengthy court battle before suspending or closing organizations.

For example, two human rights NGOs from Krasnodar territory, the “School of Peace” Fund and Novorossiisk Human Rights Committee, launched a campaign to draw media attention to a hunger-strike by Meskhetian Turks, which began on June 22, 2002, in the village of Kievskoe in Krasnodar.⁸⁹ On June 25, representatives of the two NGOs were requested to go to the regional capital, Krasnodar, for a meeting about the hunger strike with the head of the inter-ethnic relations department of the Krasnodar Territorial Administration. At the meeting, they were told the new “Extremist Activities” law would be used against them as soon as it was in force and against all those who disagreed with the policies of the Krasnodar Governor, Alexander Tkachev. The “School of Peace” Fund was subsequently suspended by administrative order of the governor and

the two NGOs were threatened with permanent closure.⁹⁰

Another well-known human rights organization in Krasnodar, the Krasnodar Human Rights Center, has been threatened by the authorities for many years. With the adoption of the new law, the Territorial Department of Justice summarily suspended the activity of the organization for six months, maintaining that its work was threatening the security of the state.⁹¹

The Chechen Committee of National Salvation (CCNS), based and legally registered in Nazran, Ingushetia, is active in gathering and disseminating information on the human rights situation in and around Chechnya. In August 2004, the prosecutor’s office of Ingushetia made a submission to the Nazran district court of Ingushetia claiming that CCNS had disseminated information of an extremist character, thus violating the law “On Countering Extremist Activities.”⁹² In its submission, the prosecutor’s office referred specifically to twelve CCNS press releases and claimed that CCNS was purposefully inciting public hostility towards representatives of the State and attempting to make the population resist the State.

In September 2004, at the request of director Ruslan Badalov, the press releases were assessed by the Independent Council of Legal Expertise (a group of prominent Russian lawyers) and found to be free from extremist content. On October 26, 2004, the Nazran district court rejected the prosecutor’s claim after a campaign organized by Russian and international human rights NGOs in support of Ruslan Badalov and his organization. If the court had supported the claim of the prosecutor and recognized the press releases as “extremist” materials, CCNS could have been closed down entirely.

The law “On Countering Extremist Activities” has the potential to sharply restrict the autonomy of nongovernmental human rights organizations. In the past, human rights organizations in some Russian regions were harassed and threatened with closure on the grounds of registration irregularities. The Krasnodar School for Peace, which works to defend the rights of the Meskhetian Turkish (or Turkic) minority in Russia, faced suspension under the law “On Extremist Activities” in 2004; it had previously been threatened with closure on the pretext of not meeting registration requirements in 2003.⁹³

The Russian authorities also manipulate other vaguely worded criminal laws against extremist propaganda to harass human rights organizations seeking to monitor human rights violations occurring in the context of the Chechen conflict. For example, on January 20, 2005, FSB agents raided the offices of the Russian-Chechen Friendship Society in the city of Nizhny Novgorod. Stanislav Dmitrievsky, co-chair of the society and editor of its newspaper, *Human Rights Defense*, as well as other staff members were interrogated by the FSB about articles published in the newspaper. The newspaper deals mainly with the situation in Chechnya and the surrounding region, with a special focus on human rights issues. FSB agents suggested that the newspaper's contents violated Criminal Code Section 280, banning extremist propaganda and threats to Russia's "constitutional order." FSB agents seized the organization's legal documents and initiated a criminal investigation of its activities.⁹⁴

The government aims to further silence Russian dissidents through legislation prohibiting media analysis of counterterrorism operations. Conservative forces in the lower legislature proposed amendments to the laws "On Fighting Terrorism" and "On Mass Media" to further restrict freedom of speech during counterterrorism operations. If the amendments are passed, existing bans on propaganda relating to terrorism or extremism in any form of media would be extended to a general ban on information "serving to propagate or justify extremist activity, including information containing remarks by individuals aimed at precluding counterterrorist operations, propaganda and (or) justification of resistance to the conduct of an anti-terrorist operation."⁹⁵ The practical implications of the amendment, if passed, could be very broad, making punishable any discussion of the Chechnya conflict in the press that could be deemed critical of federal policies and operations there.

At the same time, government officials and national broadcast media executives signed the "Anti-Terrorism Convention" to restrict coverage of terrorism and antiterrorist government operations.⁹⁶ The agreement came on the heels of journalists reporting incompetence in the Russian government's response to the October 2002 hostage-taking crisis in Moscow's Dubrovka Theater Center, in which theatergoers and actors died. President Putin sharply

censured the media, and in January 2003, the government-controlled Gazprom dismissed the director of a national television station it dominated because of its critical coverage of the government's handling of the hostage crisis. Similarly, in the wake of the Beslan school assault in September 2004, the director of the newspaper *Izvestia*, Raf Shakirov, was fired in what was widely reported as a consequence of anger at the newspaper's publication of photographs of victims of the Beslan tragedy and criticism of the government's handling of the siege.⁹⁷

Conclusion

Since the mid-1990s, Russian authorities, in both rhetoric and practice, have been persistently moving away from the human rights safeguards provided for in the Russian Constitution and from compliance with the international human rights obligations of the Russian Federation. Human rights are increasingly undermined as if they are inimical to policies of national security, preserving territorial integrity, and other interests of the state. Under these circumstances, human rights defenders have been facing ever greater challenges and difficulties in their day to day work.

For Russian human rights defenders the two principal landmarks of this negative process were the first and the second Chechen wars, with the international repercussions of the September 11 attacks on the United States of America only compounding an already deteriorating situation. September 11, 2001, had a destructive impact on human rights work in Russia primarily because it marks the time that the international community began to close its eyes to human rights violations in Russia. The Russian Federation became an important strategic partner of the United States in the “war against terrorism.” As a result of the events of September 11 and their consequences, Russian human rights defenders lost much of the support of Western democracies that they had enjoyed since the period of Soviet dissent.

By means of political initiatives and provocations, the Russian authorities have clearly demonstrated their readiness to use the most extreme methods against those who dare to criticize government policies, especially in the field of counterterrorism, an issue that the government has increasingly exploited to bolster its own power, weaken alternative power centers, and to silence dissent. After Beslan,

Russian human rights defenders have no doubt of the vulnerability of each and every one of them, just as the Russian media understood this after the destruction of independent television.

These developments appear particularly dangerous today as Russia becomes a more authoritarian state, with such key democratic institutions as independent media, free and fair elections, an independent business community, and independence of the legislative and judiciary under threat. At the moment, the principal hope of Russian human rights defenders is the renewed support of the international community in its dealings with President Putin.

Endnotes

¹ Following a meeting with Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights Alvaro Gil-Robles on May 27, 2004, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov declared that the issue of Chechnya "is dropping off the politicized agenda of our relations with the Council of Europe just as it has for the U.N. Human Rights Commission." Charles Gurin, "Lavrov and Gil-Robles Differ Over Chechnya," *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, May 28, 2004.

² "Chechen Rebels Make Peace Overture," *St. Petersburg Times*, September 28, 2001, available at http://www.sptimesrussia.com/archive/times/708/top/t_4752.htm (accessed February 13, 2005).

³ Asked by the press whether he agreed with Berlusconi's views on Chechnya, E.U. Commission President Romano Prodi responded mildly that "our information makes us, as always, concerned," and noted that "Europe has on several occasions expressed its concern for the situation of human rights in Chechnya." CNN, "Berlusconi Jumps to Putin Defense," November 7, 2003, available at <http://edition.cnn.com/2003/WORLD/europe/11/07/italy.berlusconi.ap/> (accessed February 10, 2005).

⁴ See Rachel Denber, "'Glad to be Deceived': the International Community and Chechnya," Human Rights Watch, *World Report 2004*, available at http://hrw.org/wr2k4/_Toc58744956 (accessed January 14, 2004).

⁵ Notable exceptions include the U.N. Committee against Torture, which expressed concern over the "numerous and consistent allegations of widespread torture" in Russia in May 2002. Committee against Torture, "Conclusions and Recommendations," U.N. Doc. CAT/C/XXVIII/Concl.5, May 16, 2002, available at <http://www.memo.ru/hr/hotpoints/N-Caucas/misc/kpp7.htm>. After much debate, in April 2003, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe adopted a resolution highly critical of the human rights situation in Chechnya, and the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees repeatedly criticized the ill-treatment of internally displaced people in Ingushetia. Denber, "'Glad to be Deceived.'"

⁶ Denber, "'Glad to be Deceived.'" This is contrasted with the role of the OSCE's Assistance Group in Grozny during the first Chechen war (1994-96), which "was the best equipped institution to lead a documentation effort on Chechnya... played a crucial role in negotiating an end to it, and was still on the ground as late as 1998."

⁷ See Stephen Sestanovich, Congressional Testimony: U.S.-Russian Relations, To Committee on International Relations, U.S. House of Representatives, March 18, 2004. Available at http://www.cfr.org/pub6869/stephen_r_sestanovich/congressional_testimony_usrussian_relations.php (accessed February 7, 2005).

⁸ Mark A. Smith, "Russian Perspectives on Terrorism," Conflict Studies Research Centre, January 2004, citing BBC Monitoring Archive, October 20, 2001, <http://archive.monitor.bbc.co.uk/archive/search> (accessed February 4, 2005).

⁹ *Ibid.*, citing BBC Monitoring Archive, February 28, 2002.

¹⁰ Mark MacDonald, "Bush Needs Support from Putin, Despite Disagreements over Iraq Forces," Knight Ridder Newspapers, September 24, 2003, available at <http://www.realcities.com/mld/krwashington/6851404.htm?template=contentModules/printstory.jsp> (accessed February 14, 2005).

¹¹ At the same time, under Secretary of State Colin Powell the State Department criticized the Russian government for enforcing counterterrorism laws without making distinctions between political separatists and terrorists when arresting, torturing, or murdering in the name of counterterrorism. President Putin in turn accused the United States of actually undermining its efforts in Chechnya by meeting with leaders of the independent Chechen "government." Powell confirmed U.S. meetings with Chechen leaders, indicating that while the United States recognizes Russian sovereignty in the region, it was necessary for the U.S. to gather information. One high-level representative of the Chechen "government" was granted political asylum in the United States as he feared persecution at the hands of the Russian government.

¹² CBS/AP, "Bush, Putin Press Iran, N. Korea," September 26, 2003, available at <http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2003/09/26/politics/main575258.shtml> (accessed February 14, 2005).

¹³ CNN.com, "Russians Rally against Terrorism," September 7, 2004, available at <http://www.cnn.com/2004/WORLD/europe/09/07/russia.school/> (accessed February 14, 2005).

¹⁴ Nicholas Kralev, "Putin Rips Washington's Calls for Diplomacy with Chechens," *Washington Times*, September 8, 2004, available at <http://www.washingtontimes.com/world/20040908-121147-2686r.htm> (accessed February 14, 2005).

¹⁵ See Stephen Sestanovich, "Putin's Double Standards," *Washington Post*, October 17, 2004, available at <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A37015-2004Oct15.html> (accessed February 14, 2005).

¹⁶ Pravda, "Budenovsk Mourns Those Killed In Basayev Band's Attack On The City In 1995," June 14, 2001, available at <http://english.pravda.ru/accidents/2001/06/14/7708.html> (accessed February 14, 2005). Human rights groups condemned the hostage taking and called on both sides to respect the lives of civilians. See Physicians for Human Rights, "Medical Group Calls on Professional Medical Associations to Condemn Siege and Assault on Russian Hospital, Calls Acts War Crimes," June

22, 1995; see also Human Rights Watch, "European/Central Asian Overview: Russian Federation," *Human Rights Watch World Report 1995*.

¹⁷ Here and further, the term "Caucasians" refers to peoples of the Caucasus.

¹⁸ BBC News, "Timeline: Russia," available at http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/europe/country_profiles/1113655.stm (accessed February 13, 2005).

¹⁹ See Memorial, "From the Conflict Zone," June 2004, available at <http://www.memo.ru/eng/memhrc/texts/4bul06.shtml> (accessed January 22, 2005); see also Memorial, "Armed Raid on Grozny," August 21, 2004, available at <http://www.memo.ru/eng/memhrc/texts/4groz-at.shtml> (accessed January 22, 2005).

²⁰ Moscow Helsinki Group, "News," available at www.mhg.ru/news/8230764.html (accessed February 13, 2005).

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² *Ibid.*; see also Memorial, "Beslan: the Hostage-Taking at the School," *From the Conflict Zone: Bulletin of the Human Rights Center "Memorial,"* September 2004, available at <http://www.memo.ru/eng/memhrc/texts/4bul09.shtml> (accessed January 24, 2005).

²³ BBC News, "Chechen Rebel Claims Beslan Siege," September 17, 2004, available at <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/3664864.stm> (accessed January 24, 2005).

²⁴ CNN.com, "New Details Emerge on Siege Rebels," September 8, 2004, available at <http://www.cnn.com/2004/WORLD/europe/09/08/russia.video/> (accessed February 15, 2005).

²⁵ Peter Baker and Susan B. Glasser, "Russia Collects Dead at School," *Washington Post*, September 5, 2004, available at <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A61422-2004Sep4.html> (accessed February 15, 2005).

²⁶ The impact of the human rights movement in the first Chechen war has been highlighted by military studies of the role of information – or "Information Warfare." See Timothy L. Thomas, "Information Warfare in the Second (1999-Present) Chechen War: Motivator for Military Reform?," Foreign Military Studies Office, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, 2002, available at http://fmso.leavenworth.army.mil/FMSOPUBS/ISSUES/iwchechen.htm#_ednref42 (accessed January 14, 2005).

²⁷ "In both Chechen conflicts it took public pressure applied by the Soldiers' Mothers Committee finally to force the government to account for its soldiers. This public pressure group demonstrated how in the information age, contradictory information could rise and escape the clutches of state control. Therefore, while it might be possible to win the [Information Warfare] struggle by controlling public opinion in the early going, it was demonstrated that the press or public pressure could nullify this control later on or control could be affected negatively by outside events." Timothy L. Thomas, "Information Warfare."

²⁸ See, for example, Nabi Abdullaev, "Chechnya Tore Apart Rights Movements," *St. Petersburg Times*, December 14, 2004, available at http://www.sptimes.ru/archive/times/1029/news/n_14409.htm (accessed February 4, 2005).

²⁹ Emil Pain, "The Information Component in the Second Chechen War," paper presented at the US/Russia Information Warfare Seminar, Washington, DC, January 26, 2000, available at <http://fmso.leavenworth.army.mil/fmsopubs/issues/secchech/secchech.htm> (accessed January 24, 2005).

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ During the first Chechen war, both Russian and foreign correspondents routinely sought contact with separatist leaders. This was outlawed in the course of the second Chechen campaign.

³² Federal military forces detained Babitsky for alleged collaboration with the separatists through his reporting and held him briefly in the Chernokozovo "filtration" camp, where detainees were brought to have their identity checked and possible connections with insurgents established. Babitsky "disappeared" until February 9, when he appeared, battered but alive, in a videotaped broadcast on Russian Independent Television. He was released on February 29 after sustained protests from Russian and international human rights organizations, and strong bi-partisan demarches by members of the United States Congress.

³³ United States, Congressional Research Service, *Chechnya Conflict: Recent Developments*, pp. 24-5 May 3, 2000, available at <http://www.fas.org/man/crs/RL30389.pdf> (accessed December 12, 2005).

³⁴ Timothy L. Thomas, "Information Warfare."

³⁵ Timothy L. Thomas, "Manipulating the Mass Consciousness: Russian & Chechen "Information War" Tactics in the Second Chechen-Russian Conflict," Foreign Military Studies Office, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, available at <http://fmso.leavenworth.army.mil/fmsopubs/issues/chechiw.htm> (accessed January 24, 2005).

³⁶ Thomas, "Information Warfare."

³⁷ As reported by Tanya Lokshina, Moscow Helsinki Group, in attendance.

³⁸ FIDH, Open letter to Mr. Vladimir Putin, May 24, 2004, available at http://www.fidh.org/article.php3?id_article=1097 (accessed January 20, 2005).

³⁹ *Ibid.* Krayev referred expressly to funding by exiled entrepreneur Boris Berezovsky. See Peter Rutland, "Is Putin Out to Destroy Civil Society in Russia?," *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, June 1, 2004, available at http://www.jamestown.org/publications_details.php?volume_id=401&issue_id=2970&article_id=236788 (accessed January 20, 2005); see also Francesca Mereu, "NGOs Warned They May Be Next," *Moscow Times*, May 27, 2004 (available at <http://www.globalpolicy.org/ngos/state/2004/0527next.htm> (accessed January 20, 2005)).

⁴⁰ President Putin also added: "Naturally, such examples can not serve as a reason for us to blame civic associations as a whole. I think that such negative phenomena are unavoidable and temporary. In order to curtail such phenomena and to invigorate a further growth of the institutions of civic society, one does not need to invent anything. Our own experience and experience gathered elsewhere throughout the world has already proven that a whole number of approaches are productive

here." See "Full Text of Putin's State of the Nation Address to Russian Parliament," BBC Monitoring Former Soviet Union, May 26, 2004, available at http://business.mappibiz.com/mpelembe/Putin_Russian_Parliament.html (accessed January 22, 2005).

⁴¹ See Peter Rutland, "Is Putin Out to Destroy Civil Society in Russia?," *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, June 1, 2004, available at http://www.jamestown.org/publications_details.php?volume_id=401&issue_id=2970&article_id=236788 (accessed January 20, 2005); see also Francesca Mereu, "NGOs Warned They May Be Next," *Moscow Times*, May 27, 2004 (available at <http://www.globalpolicy.org/ngos/state/2004/0527next.htm> (accessed January 20, 2005).

⁴² Human Rights Watch, *Human Rights Watch World Report 2005*, available at <http://www.hrw.org/english/docs/2005/01/13/russia9867.htm> (accessed February 10, 2005), summarizing the aftermath of Putin's speech: "Just days after the address, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs accused humanitarian organizations in Chechnya of using their missions as a cover for anti-Russian activities. One of the central Russian television stations, TVC, devoted an hour-long primetime program to denouncing the work of human rights groups, accusing them of what the presenter called their 'hatred' for Russia. Along the same lines, a political analyst close to the Kremlin, Gleb Pavlovskii, rebuked rights activists for being 'engrossed' in Western ideals. The day after President Putin's state-of-the-nation address, on May 27, masked intruders ransacked the office of a major human rights organization in Tatarstan that provides legal support for victims of torture. The group continues to face harassment from law enforcement agencies, as do many other regional human rights NGOs."

⁴³ "Russian Foreign Ministry criticizes activities on NGO's in Chechnya," *RIA/Novosti*, May 27, 2004; and *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, May 28, 2004, citing *Moscow Times*, May 27, 2004, available at http://www.jamestown.org/publications_details.php?volume_id=401&issue_id=2968 (accessed February 10, 2005).

⁴⁴ Address by President Vladimir Putin, Moscow, September 4, 2004, text available at http://www.rusembcanada.mid.ru/pr/040904_2_e.html (accessed February 14, 2005).

⁴⁵ Fiona Hill, "Stop Blaming Putin and Start Helping Him," *New York Times*, September 10, 2004, (available at http://www.ccisf.org/home/articles/september_2004/nyt_09.10.2004.htm).

⁴⁶ <http://www.edin.ru/news.html?rid=1788&id=73656>

⁴⁷ Kremlin.org, "About 135,000 People Came to the 'Russia Against Terror' Meeting," September 7, 2004, citing *Russian News and Information Agency*, available at http://kreml.org/news/65063368_

⁴⁸ Andrei Demidov, "Meeting 'Russia Against Terror,'" available at <http://ikd.ru/Campaign/xeno/terr-mieting>.

⁴⁹ Caucasian Knot, "Deputy V. Rijkov Demands Prosecution of Those Who Distribute Leaflets in the Subway," October 28, 2004, available at <http://kavkaz.memo.ru/newstext/news/id/719681.html> (accessed February 14, 2005). According to its website, Caucasian Knot is a partnership project of Memorial, the Civil Society Program of the Open Society Institute, the Human Rights Institute, and the information research center Panorama.

⁵⁰ Agency of Social Information, October 25, 2004, available at www.asi.org.ru (accessed December 20, 2004).

⁵¹ NEWSru.com, available at <http://www.newsru.com/arch/crime/19sep2004/brit.html>.

⁵² Kolokol.Ru, available at <http://www.kolokol.ru/news/76595.html>, (accessed February 14, 2005). In Russia, a moratorium on capital punishment has been in force since 1996. This moratorium and the eventual abolishment of the death penalty was one of the conditions of Russia's accession to the Council of Europe.

⁵³ NEWSru.com, available at <http://www.newsru.com/arch/russia/09sep2004/tuleev.html> (accessed December 20, 2004).

⁵⁴ Caucasian Knot, "Ministry of Internal Affairs and FSB Submit Draft Law about Prevention of Terrorist Acts," October 29, 2004, available at (<http://kavkaz.memo.ru/newstext/news/id/720923.html>). See also Charles Gurin, "Prosecutor General: Let's Take Terrorists' Relatives Hostage," *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, November 1, 2004, available at http://www.jamestown.org/publications_details.php?volume_id=401&issue_id=3126&article_id=2368774 (accessed January 22, 2005).

⁵⁵ Caucasian Knot, "State Duma is ready to consider hostage-taking as a means to counter hostage takers," October 30, 2004, available at <http://kavkaz.memo.ru/newstext/news/id/721320.html> (accessed February 14, 2005).

⁵⁶ Caucasian Knot, "Ministry of Internal Affairs and FSB submitted draft law about prevention of terrorist acts," October 29, 2004, available at <http://kavkaz.memo.ru/newstext/news/id/720923.html> (accessed February 14, 2005).

⁵⁷ Steven Lee Myers, "Putin Moves to Increase Power, Citing Effort to Fight Terror," *New York Times*, September 13, 2004, available at <http://www.nytimes.com/2004/09/13/international/europe/13CND-RUSS.html?pagewanted=2&ei=5070&en=985f098abfbec73&ex=1108530000> (accessed February 10, 2005); and BBC News, "Putin Tightens Grip on Security," September 13, 2004, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/3650966.stm> (accessed February 10, 2005).

⁵⁸ Myers, "Putin Moves to Increase Power."

⁵⁹ Robert Coalson, "Analysis: How Will Russian Governors Be Appointed?," Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, November 1, 2004.

⁶⁰ See, for example, Charles Gurin, *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, "Poll Shows Almost Half Oppose Appointing Russian Governors," September 24, 2004, available at http://www.jamestown.org/publications_details.php?volume_id=401&issue_id=3082 (accessed December 15, 2004).

⁶¹ White House, "Hispanic Heritage Month Celebrated," September 15, 2004, available at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2004/09/20040915-8.html> (accessed February 10, 2005); see also Joseph Curl, "Bush tells Putin to uphold 'principles of democracy,'" *Washington Times*, September 16, 2005, available at <http://www.washingtontimes.com/functions/print.php?StoryID=20040916-123012-1864r> (accessed February 10).

- ⁶² *Ibid.*, Curl.
- ⁶³ Komsomolskaya Pravda, available at <http://www.kp.ru/daily/23370/32473> (accessed December 20, 2004).
- ⁶⁴ See Human Rights Watch, *Human Rights Overview: Russia* (2003). According to the report, all of the candidates running against Kadyrov dropped out shortly before the race. Also, government reports that an overwhelming number of voters elected Kadyrov were contested by eyewitness accounts that polling stations were “deserted.”
- ⁶⁵ See Human Rights Watch, “Spreading Despair: Russian Abuses in Ingushetia,” September 2003, available at <http://www.hrw.org/reports/2003/russia0903/> (accessed March 9, 2004).
- ⁶⁶ International Helsinki Federation for Human Rights, “The Silencing of Human Rights Defenders.”
- ⁶⁷ *Ibid.*
- ⁶⁸ Amnesty International, “Russian Federation: The Risk of Speaking Out, Attacks on Human Rights Defenders in the Context of the Armed Conflict in Chechnya,” 2004, available at <http://www.amnesty-eu.org> (accessed December 20, 2004).
- ⁶⁹ See Amnesty International, “Russian Federation: The Risk of Speaking Out;” FIDH, “Russia: Human Rights Defenders Faced with the ‘Dictatorship of the Law,’” October 12, 2004; International Helsinki Federation for Human Rights, “The Silencing of Human Rights Defenders in Chechnya and Ingushetia,” September 15, 2004.
- ⁷⁰ International Helsinki Federation for Human Rights, “The Silencing of Human Rights Defenders in Chechnya and Ingushetia,” September 15, 2004.
- ⁷¹ *Ibid.*
- ⁷² In January 2003, the European Court for Human Rights ruled that their claims were admissible as there is no access to an effective remedy for the human rights violations taking place in Chechnya. See “Six Complaints against Russia Concerning Events in Chechnya Declared Admissible,” Registrar of the European Court for Human Rights, January 16, 2003, available at <http://www.echr.coe.int/Eng/Press/2003/jan/Decisiononadmissibility6Chechenapplicationseng.htm>.
- ⁷³ International Helsinki Federation for Human Rights, “The Silencing of Human Rights Defenders in Chechnya and Ingushetia,” September 15, 2004.
- ⁷⁴ Human Rights Watch, “Chechnya: Human Rights Defender Abducted,” January 22, 2005.
- ⁷⁵ Amnesty International, “Russian Federation: The Risk of Speaking Out.”
- ⁷⁶ Sophia Kishkovsky, “Critics See Kremlin’s Hand in Charges Against Ex-K.G.B. Agent New York Times,” *New York Times*, December 12, 2004.
- ⁷⁷ Maria Danilova, “Rights groups, lawyers say Russian jailed to avenge bombing probe,” Associated Press, May 24, 2004; Kim Murphy, “Russian Ex-Agent’s Sentencing Called Political,” *Los Angeles Times*, May 20, 2004; Sophia Kishkovsky, “Critics See Kremlin’s Hand in Charges Against Ex-K.G.B. Agent New York Times,” *New York Times*, December 12, 2004.
- ⁷⁸ U.S. Representative Christopher Smith, “The Case of Mikhail Trepashkin: Testimony before Congress,” November 16, 2004.
- ⁷⁹ Human Rights First, “Demand a Fair Trial for Russian Lawyer, Mikhail Trepashkin, available at http://www.humanrightsfirst.org/defenders/hrd_russia/alert121504_trepashkin.htm (accessed February 14, 2005).
- ⁸⁰ Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, “Problems of registration of non-governmental organizations dealing with human rights in the Russian Federation,” Doc. 8799, July 8, 2000; and Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, “Honouring of obligations and commitments by the Russian Federation,” Doc. 9396, March 26, 2002, available at <http://assembly.coe.int/Main.asp?link=http://assembly.coe.int/2FDocuments%2FWorkingDocs%2FDoc02%2FEDOC9396.htm> (accessed February 10, 2005). For background on this issue, see Information Center of the Human Rights Movement and the Center for the Development of Democracy and Human Rights, “Report on the Violations Committed in the Course of Registration and Re-Registration of Public Associations in the Russian Federation in 1999,” in *International Journal of Not-for-Profit Law*, February 15, 2000, available at http://www.icnl.org/JOURNAL/vol2iss4/ar_yuri1.htm (accessed February 10, 2005).
- ⁸¹ FIDH, “Russia: Human Rights Defenders Faced with the ‘Dictatorship of the Law,’” September 2004, available at http://www.fidh.org/article.php3?id_article=1980 (accessed January 20, 2005). The title refers to on President Putin’s election pledge to impose a “dictatorship of the law.”
- ⁸² *Ibid.*
- ⁸³ *Ibid.* A bill is under consideration which would heavily tax contributions from Russian foundations as well.
- ⁸⁴ *Ibid.*
- ⁸⁵ Federal Law No. 112, On Countering Extremist Activities, July 25, 2002, available at <http://www.hro.org/docs/rlex/duma/41/ex6.htm> (accessed February 22, 2004).
- ⁸⁶ The broad language of the law was criticized by both the U.N. Human Rights Committee and the U.N. Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. See Concluding Observations of the Human Rights Committee, U.N. Doc. CCPR/CO/79/RUS, November 6, 2003; Concluding Observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination: Russian Federation, U.N. Doc. CERD/C/62/07, Sec. B, Art. 22, March 21, 2003, available at [http://www.unhcr.ch/tbs/doc.nsf/\(Symbol\)/08a9408084499c9ac1256d01003766d3?Opendocument](http://www.unhcr.ch/tbs/doc.nsf/(Symbol)/08a9408084499c9ac1256d01003766d3?Opendocument) (accessed February 23, 2004).
- ⁸⁷ For more details, see A. Verkhovsky, “The Most Recent Legislative Initiatives: Draft-Law ‘On Countering Extremist Activities,’” *Nationalism, Xenophobia and Intolerance in Contemporary Russia*, pp. 124-130 (2002), available at <http://www.mhg.ru/english/1FB9294> (accessed February 22, 2004).
- ⁸⁸ The SOVA-Center for Information and Analysis, a Russian nongovernmental organization, has researched the law’s application from the summer of 2002 to the present day. They found that the law was not in practice widely used to counter extremist

groups and racist violence, but that it served as an effective repressive mechanism for selective use. Available at: <http://www.sova-center.ru>.

⁸⁹ An ethnic minority in the Russian Federation, deprived of access to a wide spectrum of civic, political, social, economic and cultural rights.

⁹⁰ Tanya Lokshina and Sergei Lukashovski, Moscow Helsinki Federation, "Challenges of Human Rights Work in Russia after September 11," April 13, 2004.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*

⁹² Submission no. 7-135-04, dated August 2, 2004, signed by Sh. Kh. Aushev, Deputy-Prosecutor of Ingushetia

⁹³ The U.S. Department of State's annual human rights report on Russia in 2004 noted: "authorities continued to put pressure on the NGO, School for Peace, because of its activities in support of Meskhetians in the Krasnodar region. On July 14, in a meeting with the head of School for Peace, a Krasnodar representative of the Ministry of Justice stated that the organization would be disbanded because it had listed only one founder rather than the statutorily required three. In the course of the conversation, the Ministry official strongly criticized School for Peace for its activities on behalf of Meskhetians and the director's contacts with foreigners. In December, a district court in Krasnodar ruled that the School for Peace should be disbanded; the NGO was appealing the decision at year's end. Most of the NGO's work was being carried out through a sister organization, the Novorossiysk Committee for Human Rights."

⁹⁴ International Helsinki Federation for Human Rights, "FSB Raids the Russian-Chechen Friendship Society," January 20, 2005.

⁹⁵ *Gazeta*, "On the Modification of Article 4 of the Russian Federation's 'On Media' and Article 15 of the Federal Law 'On Fighting Terrorism,'" available at <http://www.gazeta.ru/parliament/info/laws/4860.shtml> (accessed February 22, 2004).

⁹⁶ Signed in April 2003. Committee to Protect Journalists, "Attacks on the Press 2003: Russia," available at <http://www.cpj.org/attacks03/europe03/russia.html> (accessed February 11, 2005).

⁹⁷ Oksana Yablokova, "Izvestia Editor Resigns Over Beslan Coverage," *The Moscow Times*, September 7, 2004, available at <http://www.themoscowtimes.com/stories/2004/09/07/011-full.html> (accessed February 10, 2005). See also Yevgenia Albats, "Russia Media, A dead man still walking," *The Center for Public Integrity*, January 31, 2005, available at <http://www.publicintegrity.com/ga/report.aspx?aid=601> (accessed February 10, 2005).



human rights *first*

FORMERLY THE LAWYERS COMMITTEE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

New York Headquarters

Human Rights First
333 Seventh Avenue
13th Floor
New York, NY 10001

Tel: (212) 845-5200
Fax: (212) 845-5299

Washington, DC Office

Human Rights First
100 Maryland Avenue, N.E.
Suite 502
Washington, DC 20002

Tel: (202) 547-5692
Fax: (202) 543-5999

www.humanrightsfirst.org