

The New Chechen Jihad: Militant Wahhabism as a Radical Movement and a Source of Suicide Terrorism in Post-War Chechen Society

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Abstract

The first act of Chechen suicide terrorism occurred on June 7, 2000 and was carried out by two young women. This inaugurated the migration of suicide terrorism from other conflict zones, into the Chechen conflict. How suicide terrorism as a tactic made its way into Chechnya is the topic of this paper, which provides an analysis of the events concerning the importation of militant ideologies and radical terrorist movements taking place since the Chechen declaration of independence as well as an empirical and theoretical analysis of Chechen suicide terrorism based on psycho-social interviews that were collected in Chechnya over a two-year time period from March 2003 to March 2005. We report data about suicide terrorism and the radicalization process from thirty-two interviews with family members and close associates of thirty-four Chechen suicide terrorists inquiring about the terrorists' backgrounds, experiences, religious, and psychological reasons leading up to their suicidal acts.

Recent history of Wahhabism in Chechnya

Wahhabism is a non-indigenous form of Islam originating in the Arabian Peninsula in the 18th century from a reformist movement begun by Mohamed ibn Abd al Wahhab (1703-1791) to return Islam to its original purity. Wahhab based his ideas on a strict interpretation of the Quran and his movement had as its central tenant the oneness of God. He condemned idolatry in all forms as well as anything that could possibly be interpreted as an intermediary to God, ordering the destruction of sacred tombs, shrines, etc. He also not only allowed, but also called for waging war on fellow Muslims who had reverted back to a state of jahiliyyah – the state of barbarism and ignorance that prevailed in the Arabian peninsula prior to Mohamed's revelations¹. Wahhabism as a belief system, although not in itself necessarily militant, is the subset of Islam that has been used to inform the terrorist ideology which is at the basis of the current worldwide salafi jihad.²

Wahhabism, interpreted in its most radical and militant type also forms the ideological underpinning of Chechen terror groups. While the label Wahhabism denotes a totally other and neutral meaning in the Gulf States and elsewhere in the world, it should be understood that in Russia, Chechnya, the Caucasus, and the other former Soviet Union republics this label denotes an ultra militant form of

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Islam and refers to militant religious groups that promote jihad and terrorism – so much so that in Russian the word wahhabist has become synonymous with terrorist. For the purposes of this paper we adhere to the Russian meaning of the word as it is understood in the Chechen context – we refer to Wahhabists in Chechnya as those groups that have formed according to a militant interpretation of Islam which promotes jihad and allows for and promotes terrorism. By doing so we mean no offense to Wahhabists who practice Islam peacefully in other parts of the world (or in Chechnya for that matter) and we fully acknowledge that this term has an entirely other peaceful meaning outside of Chechnya.

History of the Involvement of Islam in the Chechen Russian Conflict

There is nothing new about the use of religion as a rallying cry in behalf of revolution and pursuit of social justice. Throughout the world religious rhetoric is often used for political gain and Islam like any other religion can be used as an instrument for political and military mobilization.³ Indeed in 1858 Chechen leader, Imam Shamil and his fighters attempted to establish an Islamic state, when then as now, Islam was used as a rallying force - a call to solidarity against those seen as outsiders and oppressors.

While Shamil's uprising was crushed by the Tsar's power, Islam itself, like all other religious expression throughout the former Soviet Union came under attack in Chechnya during the Soviet years by official policies of state imposed atheism. While many Muslims continued to practice in Chechnya during the seven decades of Soviet power, as did believers in many other Soviet republics, it was in most cases impossible to do so openly without risking job, education and even one's life. Children who learned their religion did so at home privately and in secret learning from grandparents and parents. Ritual practices such as prayer, circumcision, commemorating feast days etc. were often still carried out in secret but at risk. Many mosques were destroyed during this time period and only the very brave or elderly dared to pray at the mosques or make other outward signs or statements of their belief.

Hence with the fall of the Soviet Union many Chechens, as other former Soviet citizens were ignorant about their faith roots and eager to learn more. In Chechnya however this set the stage for vulnerability to adopting radical and nonindigenous beliefs that soon poured over the borders as the former state imposed policies of barring religious expression were completely lifted. At the same time as this massive political upheaval and influx of new ideas, Chechnya became subject to armed conflict, another aspect that increased the population's vulnerability to interest in militant and radical forms of Islam.

When the Soviet Union collapsed in 1991, Chechnya's newly elected president Dudayev declared independence - as did many of the other former Soviet republics (Belarus, Ukraine, Uzbekistan, Azerbaijan, etc.). While the Chechens declared their independence from Russia alongside these others, the main difference between them was that Chechnya had been a state inside the Russian federation whereas the others had never been part of the Russian Federation. They were independent republics of a now disintegrated union. The Russians were ready to accept the collapse of the Soviet Union but not of their own federation.

In 1992, a time while Russia was writing their own new constitution, Chechnya adopted a constitution defining it as an independent secular state governed by a president and parliament. The Russian

Federation was having difficulties of its own at the time, and Yeltsin just coming out of coping with a besieged Moscow largely ignored these developments. However in 1994 the Russian forces declared the Chechen independence movement a rebel uprising and launched an armed attack to crush it. An estimated 100,000 persons, many of them civilians, were killed in the 20-month war lasting from 1994 to 1996, which amazingly ended in a stunning victory for the Chechen insurgents who managed through guerilla warfare tactics to drive the much better armed military Russian forces out. This victory by the Chechen rebels in many ways mirrored the greater victory that had been won only a few years earlier by smaller less well armed forces that had been victorious in driving the Soviet Union out of Afghanistan.

Shamil Basayev who would later become the most important Chechen terrorist leader and mastermind behind the most infamous terror acts including the Beslan school hostage taking in which children fleeing the scene were shot in the backs by terrorists, was at this time not yet fully under the Wahhabist influence. Returned from war he was hailed as a great hero and greatly loved by Chechens of all ages, but particularly by young boys and men who admired how the great Russian army had been repelled through his leadership during the war. Basayev harbored great ambitions for freedom. Even before the first war he announced to the Chechen leadership that the independence movement beginning in Chechnya would spread throughout the entire Caucasus region and that not only Chechnya but the entire region would ultimately be freed from the Russians. Later his actions as a rebel leader and terrorist acting both inside and beyond the borders of Chechnya would follow this sentiment and desire to see his wish carried out.

Initial Stage of Wahhabism in Chechnya

During the fall of the Soviet Union, Muslims the world over were eager to support the resurgence of Islam throughout the region and as a result money from richer countries poured into the former Soviet republics to support the rebuilding of mosques, schools and other forms of Islamic expression. The same took place in Chechnya. However with the move by Moscow in 1994 to crush the Chechen independence movement and the subsequent war (1994-1996) this influx of foreign money took an ill-fated turn. As the Russian forces invaded, the salafi jihadists who had just won their war with the Soviet Union in Afghanistan turned their concern to other conflict zones involving Muslims. The plight of the Chechens during the war and the numerous human rights abuses that occurred at the hands of the Russians were well publicized; hence Chechnya became identified by these jihadi groups as one of the most important new battlegrounds. Money which had already been pouring in from foreign countries to rebuild Islamic institutions now became much more tightly focused on the perceived oppression of the Chechens who were caught up in armed conflict to win their independence and the militant form of Wahhabism which had sustained the Afghan jihadists began its journey into Chechnya. It was carried in by many means, including via foreign fighters with Afghan war experience who appeared in Chechnya to aid in what they saw as the jihad against Russia. The most notable of these was Saudi born Khattab who came to Chechnya in 1995.

During the first war the goals of the nationalist rebels were clear: national independence from Russia. Islamic identity of the Chechen nationalists did not play heavily into their rhetoric or actions. Indeed in 1992 Chechnya had adopted a constitution defining it as an independent secular state governed by a president and parliament. Four years later however as the war was ending things had changed dramatically. Chechnya's first elected president Dudayev complained bitterly that, "Russia . . . has

forced us to take the Islamic path.”⁴ He made this statement in response to the failure of both sides to find a suitable end to the war of independence and his feeling that it drove the nationalists into the arms of the better-funded and trained Wahhabists. Thus while the first war was essentially nationalist and separatist in nature, even toward its end Chechen leaders were beginning to feel the effects of the Wahhabist influence in terms of funding and ideology.

Perhaps the best evidence of this was Basayev’s decision to lead a potential “suicide” mission in the traditional military sense of the word into neighboring southern Russia where he and his group staged a mass hostage taking operation designed to break the resolve of the Russian government and force them to give into his demands to a ceasefire, withdrawal of Russian troops and to end the war in Chechnya. The first of two rebel raids took place in Budyonnovsk in June of 1995 but this place was only accidental. The plan had been for Basayev and his group of about 100 to 200 fighters to bring the war as far as they could into Russia where they would take hostages, but when surprised by the police in the village of Budyonnovsk they gathered more than a thousand hostages from the town, held them in the local hospital and engaged in a bloody stand-off with Russian troops. In this hostage-taking event Basayev showed himself capable of ordering the execution of civilian hostages which he did when the Russians refused his demand to hold a press conference before the gathered media. The stand-off ended with the Russians giving the rebels safe passage (protected by hostages they took with them). The death toll exceeded one hundred and thirty. This raid and the one that followed became pivotal features turning the war in favour of the Chechens and forcing the Russians to a peace agreement, but it was also the turning point for Shamil Basayev to move from warfare to terrorism purposefully targeting civilians.

A similar event occurred in Pervomayskoe in 1996 this time led by Chechen fighter Salman Raduev. In each of these cases the Chechen rebels garnered mass media attention for the war in Chechnya and in the former they succeeded in forcing the Russians to give them safe passage back to Chechnya in exchange for the release of hostages. At this time Basayev was already starting to pick up the militant jihadist ideology from his Saudi fellow fighter and Wahhabist Khattab and reflected this in his increased use of Islamic rhetoric - telling his fighters they could become “martyrs” for Islam etc. Likewise Basayev’s audience was increasingly not only the Chechens and Russians but also foreign funders who were likely impressed by his daring success and ability to back the Russians down.

The second war ended in a negotiated settlement (via the Khasavyurt agreement) after Maskhadov ordered a raid on the Russian forces in Grozny who crumbled in resistance. The corrupt Russian forces had sold many of their arms to their own enemy. Unprepared for the attack they were overwhelmed. The Russians leadership had also lost their resolve after civilians had been attacked both in Budyonnovsk and in Pervomayskaya. A negotiated peace was struck.

From 1994 to 1997 the Chechen people became extremely disillusioned. In November of 1994 before the war was even officially declared by Russia, the Russian Army and pro-Russian Chechen opposition had attacked Grozny with fifty Russian army tanks. Chechen fighters destroyed all the tanks and captured Russian soldiers who admitted that they had official orders through Russian generals Shkirko and Kotenkov to attack Grozny. From November 27 through December 10th, 1994 Russian airplanes bombed Chechnya everyday, this still before the war was officially declared. Many civilians were killed and their homes were destroyed. Looking for support from the west, Chechens were disappointed to find that Western governments declared events happening in Chechnya as an internal

affair of Russia. Civilians understood that the war had begun despite no official acknowledgement of it on the Russian side and many took arms to defend themselves.

On December 11th, 1994 the Russian government officially declared war naming it, “The actions for restoration of legality, law and order in the territory of the Chechen Republic.” The decree was signed by Yeltsin in late Nov, 1994 but not officially published until summer of 1995 as Yeltsin did not want to call international attention to the armed conflict. The Russian Army came to Chechnya from three sides: Dagestan, Ingushetia, and North Ossetia. Many civilians – women and elderly without arms stood across the roads trying to block the tanks. Near the borders between Chechnya and Dagestan civilians blocked a column of tanks and managed to capture sixty soldiers. From December onward the Russian Army bombed Grozny for three months until they destroyed the capital city completely.

The Russians had expected a quick victory with few losses, hoping to send a strong message to any other ceding republics, but found that they could not overtake Grozny. At this time the Russians changed tactics and began to aim for a loss of twenty-five killed Chechens for each killed Russian soldier and ten killed Chechens for each one wounded Russian soldier. Later Basayev would repeat this rule to the Russian Army in Budyonovsk where he took hostages, and it was echoed again later by the Chechen terrorists in their mass hostage taking operations – in the Dubrovka theater (Nord Ost) in Moscow and in Beslan where the hostage takers threatened to kill ten persons for each one of their own that would be wounded⁵.

In May of 1995 the Chechen rebels were blocked in the mountains and had few variants to surrender. They could continue guerilla warfare or try to move the war from Chechnya to Russia turning to the use of terrorist acts. In June Basayev opted for terrorism and headed with his fighters into Russia where he took over the hospital in Budyonovsk. (Basayev claimed that he was able to cross Chechnya and get as far into Budyonovsk by bribing corrupt Russian forces at checkpoints.) One hundred and thirty hostages were killed in this attack whereas at this point in time more than fifty thousand civilians in Chechnya had been killed and about one hundred and fifty thousand wounded.⁶

In July of 1995, after eight months of war between three to four thousand Chechen fighters and more than fifty thousand Russian soldiers, a negotiated peace settlement was reached but not realized. At this time Yeltsin declared that there is international terrorism in Chechnya and therefore the Russian army could not win the war. The war continued and in January of 1996 Salman Raduev led the an incursion into Dagestan taking over the village of Kizlyar and held hostages in the maternity hospital. The rebels used the hostages to get as far as Pervomaysakya where they were attacked by Russian forces. In March of 1996 Chechen fighters took Grozny and held it for three days but were driven back to the mountains again. Finally in August of 1996 Chechen fighters took over Grozny. Massive war actions with daily bombardments resulted in many civilian deaths and casualties. As a result of the terrorist raids and Chechen fighters overtaking Grozny a peace agreement was finally agreed to and signed. On the Russian side they had lost their resolve for the war, especially in the face of mass hostage taking operations on Russian soil. On the Chechen side more than one hundred thousand civilians had been killed.⁷

Following the first war (1994-1996) Wahhabism in its militant form was imported full scale from the Middle East into Chechnya. Even then it was linked ideologically to the global Salafi jihad in that ideas promulgated by Wahhabists about engaging in jihad in order to liberate oppressed Muslims with

terrorism were put forward as an accepted method of resistance. However the Chechen form of this ideology retained a nationalist character – jihad for independence from Russia rather than worldwide jihad.

In 1997 free from the constraints of war the Wahhabits were particularly active. They started to build mosques that openly espoused a radical and militant form of Islam that was a new (to Chechnya) version of Islam. This was a time when many in Chechen society were still eager to learn about their Islamic roots and also vulnerable to militant forms of Islam – as most everyone anticipated that they were living under borrowed time – that their hard won independence was likely to be short lived. Armed conflict it was assumed by many would resume in only a matter of time. Money now flowed in freely to Chechnya alongside foreign fighters and Arab teachers to fund a militant expression of Islam: militant Chechen Wahhabism and the Chechen jihad were given birth.

Conflicts between Chechen Wahhabits and Traditional Chechen Sufism

The most prevalent version of Islam in Chechnya, prior to this influx, was and continues to be Sufism. The new Wahhabist mosques put forth into Chechen society ideas not peculiar to traditional Chechen experiences of Islam. Wahhabits however make use of shared Islamic doctrines as a means of justifying their actions and in so doing began to create a conflict between Wahhabits and traditional Muslims in Chechnya.

As Wahhabits spread their ideas they claimed that their version is the only true form of Islam. Traditional Muslims made counter claims that Wahhabism is a pseudo-religion that was created to destroy traditional Chechen Islam. The main differences between the two religious ideological stances as they took form in Chechnya that gave rise to conflicts between Wahhabits and traditional Muslims in Chechen society are as follows:

1. Traditional Chechen Muslims esteem Ustazies which are the spiritual teachers who first accepted and distributed Islam in Chechnya. These priests knew the Arabic language and could read and translate the Koran. Ustazies declared values of pacifism, mercy and compassion. They were against any type of warfare. In contrast the new ideology proclaimed by Wahhabits glorified war as the path of jihad and martyrdom as a main value that should be adopted by every Muslim in Chechnya.
2. Traditional Chechen Muslims make use of prayer rituals of chanting, clapping their hands and rocking the body, which is named “zikr”. Traditional Chechen Muslims glorify God by chanting the name of Allah, some prophets and the Ustazies. Wahhabits condemn these practices and call them idolatry. Wahhabits on the contrary use “nashids” prayers that repeat portions of the Koran and Islamic writings that give glory to Allah, his one prophet Muhammad and that invoke jihad.
3. Wahhabits distributed many new religious publications in Chechnya, the most prominent being the book entitled “One God”. This publication took issue with any practices that did not strictly reinforce the oneness of God and that made any use of intermediaries to God or glorifying any of his prophets or saints, all of which are traditional Chechen Islamic practices.

4. Chechen men and women traditionally dress in European fashions and are free in their clothing following only minimal habits of modesty that are common to many other European and modern Muslim countries. By contrast the women who followed the Wahhabit ways began to dress in hidjab, covering themselves in ways that Chechen women have never done so in the past. Hence the Wahhabit proposed dress that differed dramatically from ethnic and modern clothes of Chechen women. They likewise proposed a new image for Chechen men as well with long hair, moustaches, beard and Arabic clothing.
5. Traditionally Chechen families consider the father as the head of the family. Wahhabit by contrast promoted the concept of Muslim brotherhood stating that Muslim brothers (i.e. fictive kin⁸) are more important than parents and other family members. As a result conflicts arose in many families where parents were no longer respected as they were in the past.
6. Wahhabit created in Chechnya Sharia courts in which they punished with beatings by canes those who were caught drinking alcohol, using drugs and other crimes. Before Wahhabism there were government courts for serious crimes but only public condemnation in society for issues of moral trespass.
7. Wahhabism became an extreme trend in Chechen expressions of Islam. In Chechnya Wahhabit killed traditional Muslim leaders who tried to resist their activity. The majority of Chechens did not support Wahhabism but the assassination of traditional Chechen imams became a means to silence the majority.

Secondary Stage of Wahhabism in Chechnya

Following the initial influx of Wahhabist mosques and schools promoting their ideology into Chechnya, military training camps were created. In 1997 in anticipation of a repeated war with Russia, the training center "KavKaz" was created in the mountain area of Chechnya. The leader of this center was Saudi born Khattab who arrived after fighting in the Afghanistani jihad. Many other instructors arrived from Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, Syria, Egypt, Algeria, and also from Great Britain and France. New links were forged through Khattab and his supporters further establishing connections between sponsors in the Middle East and local pro-Wahhabi groups across the region.

The KavKaz center recruited young Chechens making use of the Wahhabist mosques and schools that still at this time operated openly to indoctrinate and recruit potential members to their training camps. The training program of the KavKaz center is similar to what is reported in al Qaeda operations manuals in many aspects. They allow for and justify kidnapping, beating and killing of civilians and hostages for achievement of "holy" goals. The "KavKaz" Center includes the Majlis al-Shura (i.e. the Military Consultation Council). Likewise similar to other Islamic related terrorist organizations the Wahhabit center uses the concept of "brotherhood" (i.e. fictive kin) which creates a strong as blood bond between those who pledge loyalty to one another – being willing to fight for each other to the death. The KavKaz Center operated legally from 1997-1999.

In July 1998 the Wahhabit military group attempted to take over the Chechen city of Gudermes. It was the first armed attack of the Wahhabit against Chechen religious authorities. During that time Chechen religious leaders had officially protested against Wahhabism on TV, in mosques and religious meetings

because Wahhabits killed the Mufti of Dagestan by a car bomb on July 21, 1998. Shortly after the murder of the Dagestan Mufti there was unsuccessful attempt on the Mufti of Chechnya. Chechen religious leaders banned Wahhabism and demanded the expulsion of foreign Wahhabits including Khattab.

During the interim period following the end of the war in 1996 (via the Khasavyurt agreement) and the ensuing war in 1999 striking conflicts developed between different factions within the Chechen leadership. In 1996 prior to the end of the war Russian forces using a high tech missile guided by his mobile phone had killed President Dudayev. In the power vacuum that followed two figures emerged who would become the leaders of Chechen rebel and terrorist activities for years to come. The first of these was popular war hero Shamil Basayev who had returned home from the war already influenced by his close relationship to Khattab and who through Khattab was falling under the Wahhabists influence. Not yet committed as he would become to embracing terrorist tactics, Basayev had seen the effects of taking and killing civilian hostages in Budyonovsk – how his action and that of Salman Raduev taking hostages in the Pervomaysakya raid - had turned the course of the war and was likely deeply influenced by this as he would later continue to endorse mass hostage taking tactics. The second figure was the more experienced statesman Aslan Maskhadov, also a field commander and former member of the Russian artillery brigade, who became president in 1997. Although forced together in the end, Maskhadov unlike Basayev did not endorse extending the war beyond the borders of Chechnya and never endorsed terrorism against civilians.

As the new president, Maskhadov facing a destabilized Chechnya found that even with his best efforts he was erratic at halting the increased criminalization; kidnappings of high level Russians, Chechens and foreigners for ransoms; and the other conflicts that were occurring. Moreover he was no match in rebuilding the state infrastructure and installing a stable peace with Russia in the face of rampant criminalization and the increasing material support for competing jihadist oriented groups who were well sponsored by funds flowing in from the Middle East. Increasingly he faced pressure from political, ideological and religious figures such as Zelimkhan Yandarbiyev, Movladi Udugov, Shamil Basayev, Ibn Khattab, Salman Raduyev, and others who advocated the Islamization of Chechnya.⁹ In 1999 Chechen President Maskhadov gave in to pressure from the Wahhabists declaring Shariah law to be phased in over three years. Despite playing into the Wahhabist's hand Maskhadov never regained control and the interim period between the two wars was marked by instability, criminalization and insecurity as well as a marked increase in the Wahhabist influence in limited yet important sectors of Chechen society.

In 1999 the fragile peace was broken. In September 1999 a series of apartment bombings occurred in Moscow that were attributed to Chechen terrorists although that account is still under dispute in some circles.¹⁰ Likewise in August, 1999 rebel leaders Shamil Basayev and Ibn Khattab led a rebel incursion into neighboring Dagestan to recover former Chechen ethnic territory¹¹ and to declare a reunited Islamic state.

Third stage

In August 1999 when the Wahhabits attacked Dagestan, the Russians had their fill and invaded again - beginning the second war in Chechnya. This time however the Russians changed tactics. Unwilling to risk suffering defeat again at the feet of the now well trained and equipped Chechen guerillas, the Russians opted instead for a campaign of carpet bombing which essentially razed the major cities of

Grozny, Argun, Urus-Martan and many villages and destroyed the infrastructure of the country. Hospitals, universities, airports, cultural centers and apartment blocks - essentially everything became a target for the months of bombings that ensued in 1999 and continued unabated for five months. Civilians suffered the worst. Streams of refugees fled the country while the rebel nationalists now driven into common unity and firmly entrenched with the well-trained Wahhabits battled against the Russian army from August 1999 until March 2000.

By then the Wahhabit organization had become an underground guerilla and terrorist structure made up of many small groups, or cells, similar to al Qaeda affiliates. Each of these groups included five persons and one of these persons was Emir (i.e. commander) to whom the other four submitted. Each of the groups had a certain territory and certain functions. Persons who accepted membership to such group pledged never to leave them. If he attempted to exit, he would be killed. Each Emir was ready to kill any of the four members of his group for treachery.

Fourth stage

Since the middle of 2000, the Russians had a firm foothold in Chechnya and the official end of the second war was declared. However armed skirmishes continue up to the present as well as terror attacks. Facing an armed occupation of Chechnya which included numerous and formidable checkpoints, frequent aggressive and violent *zachistki* (cleansing or counter-terrorism) operations, the Wahhabits were forced underground and changed tactics. They began to use suicide terrorism and echoing their prior successes at Budyonnovsk in 1995 and Pervomayskaya in 1996, combined for the first time in world history suicide terrorism with mass hostage taking.

Following the official end of the war it was no longer possible for the nationalist separatist rebels to operate openly. As Dudayev had bemoaned earlier eerily foreseeing the future, many of the rebels had been driven into the arms of the Wahhabists. Maskhadov and Basayev were forced together in exile into the mountain camps. Basayev increasingly began to leave behind his former identity as a nationalist rebel leader, taking on the Wahhabist identity which included embracing terrorism, so much so that in a press interview in 2005 Basayev openly said, yes I am a terrorist, although he called the actions of the Russian forces against civilian targets terrorism as well.¹² Over time Basayev changed his name to Imir Abdullah Shamil Abu Idris. Chechnya also was no longer referred to by its former Soviet Union name but was called by the Wahhabits as the Chechen Republic of Ichkeria although this name was not Wahhabi in origin and had been given to it at the time when Dudaev declared independence.

Despite the import and spread of militant Wahhabi ideas into Chechnya during the past ten years it is important to state that the majority of the Chechen population continues to follow its Sufi roots and popular support for terrorism does not currently exist. Initially militant Wahhabists tried to convince traditionalist rebels that they were infidels and needed to convert. These Wahhabist organized their own fighting units separate from the traditional rebels. Today however among the rebels, fighting groups are mixed including both Wahhabists and traditional Sufi Muslims and many of these in words at least attempt to maintain a distance from Wahhabi ideology and do not embrace terrorism tactics against civilians nor endorse Basayev's actions against civilian targets. Rebel leader Doku Umarov for instance states that he came to the war as a patriot and has maintained his traditional Muslim beliefs, never succumbing to militant Wahhabism.¹³ He scoffs at being labeled a Wahhabi terrorist and clearly

denounces the Beslan school takeover and targeting of civilians. He states that it is an act of Russian propaganda to mix the entire Chechen independence movement with Wahhabism labeling patriotic soldiers as terrorists, “They say I am a Wahhabi or a follower of radical Islam. That is laughable. I have a whole front. I go along that front and I don't see people fighting to bring to the world Wahhabism or terror.” He goes on to speak of the atrocities committed by Russian soldiers and the anger and trauma over these atrocities that motivates young recruits to continue to join the rebels to fight in a military fight with Russian soldiers, leaving aside terrorism. Unfortunately these same factors motivate recruits to the Wahhabi organizations as well.

It is only small sectors of the society that have become active Wahhabi communities, all of these which emerged since the second war. Continuously since 1997 recruitment to the Wahhabit groups was actively carried out. Recruiters looked especially for contacts with people whose family members were killed, wounded, arrested or disappeared. Arriving in mass with money, training and arms during the period between two wars, the Wahhabit recruiters understood how to make use of the psychological state of traumatized people. They played upon the population’s anxiety, particularly of young people that a foreign occupier would return to kill them, but that they (the Wahhabists) could train them to withstand and fight back in the name of Allah. Fearing that the Russians were only biding their time until a second war and also sure that revenge was warranted for the heavy losses in the first war, many who had suffered in the first war fell under their influence. This is one of the most important bases for how a movement so alien to Chechen culture as Wahhabism could attract so many persons from different age, gender, education and social levels to involve themselves with suicide terrorism.

Chechen Suicide Terrorism

The first act of Chechen suicide terrorism¹⁴ occurred on June 7, 2000 and was carried out by two young women Khava Barayeva, cousin of well-known Chechen field commander Arbi Barayev and Luisa Magomadova. Together they drove an explosives laden truck into the temporary headquarters of an elite OMON (Russian Special Forces) detachment in the village of Alkhan Yurt in Chechnya. This inaugurated the migration of suicide terrorism from other conflict zones, into the Chechen conflict leaving stunned Russians and Chechens to ask what could possibly cause two young women to choose to end their lives in this way and what organization and ideology backed such acts?

The organizational answer came in the form of claims of responsibility most often emanating from Shamil Basayev who at this point had changed his name to Imir Abdullah Shamil Abu Idris and called his group various names (Riyadus-Salikhin or Paradise Gardens) claiming at times to have a cadre of female bombers. Basayev was holed up in the mountains evading arrest likely through a system of bribes to poorly paid Russian soldiers and “contractniki” (contracted soldiers) who were eager to augment their poor wages¹⁵.

Summary and Frequency by Year of Chechen Suicide Attacks

Table One gives a summary of the total number (n=28) of Chechen suicide acts to date¹⁶ that we have counted relying on news reports and intelligence sources. In these suicide terror acts 939 people were killed and 2913 injured in these, and 2043 hostages were involved in two of the attacks that involved mass hostage taking (Nord-Ost and Beslan). We estimate the total number of Chechen suicide

terrorists involved in these twenty-eight attacks to be approximately 112 with a distribution of 48 women and 64 men.

SUMMARY OF TOTAL NUMBER OF SUICIDE TERROR ACT ATTRIBUTED TO CHECHENS¹⁷

Table One:

	Date of terrorist act	Place of terrorist act	Total Terrorists	Women terrorists	Men terrorists	Killed victims	Injured victims	Hostages	Terrorists death
1	June 07, 2000	Chechnya, Alkhan-Yurt Military base (Khava Baraeva, Luiza Magomadova)	2	2	0	2	5	0	Dead
2	June, 2000	Chechnya, Military checkpoint	1	0	1	?	?	0	Dead
3	July 02, 2000	Chechnya, Military base (Movladi)	1	0	1	33	81	0	Dead
4	Dec. 2000	Chechnya, MVD building (Mareta Duduyeva)	1	1	0	?	?	0	Wounded, later dead
5	Nov. 29, 2001	Chechnya, Urus-Martan, Military office (Elza Gazueva)	1	1	0	1	3	0	Dead
6	Feb. 5, 2002	Chechnya, Grozny, Zavodskoy ROVD (Zarema Inarkaeva)	1	1	0	23	17	0	Wounded
7	Oct.23-26, 2002	Moscow theatre	40	19	21	129	644	<800	Dead
8	Dec. 27, 2002	Chechnya, Grozny, Governmental complex (Tumrievs family)	3	1	2	83	<200	0	Dead
9	May 12, 2003	Chechnya, Znamenskaya, Governmental complex	3	1	2	59	111	0	Dead
10	May 14, 2003	Chechnya, Iliskhan-Yurt, Religion festival (Shahidat Shahbulatova, Zulay Abdurzakova)	2	2	0	18	145	0	Dead
11	June 5, 2003	North Osetia, Mozdok Military bas (Lida Khildehoroeva)	1	1	0	17	16	0	Dead
12	June	Chechnya, Grozny,	2	1	1	6	38	0	Dead

	20, 2003	Governmental complex (Zakir Abdulazimov)								
13	July 5, 2003	Moscow, Rock festival (Zulikhan Elihadjieva, Mariam Sharapova)	2	2	0	14	60	0	Dead	
14	July 11, 2003	Moscow, Twerskaya str. (Zarema Mujikhoeva)	1	1	0	1	0	0	Lived	
15	July 27, 2003	Chechnya, Grozny, Military building (Mariam Tashukhadjieva)	1	1	0	?	?	0	Dead	
16	Aug. 1, 2003	North Osetia, Military hospital	1	0	1	35	300	0	Dead	
17	Dec. 5, 2003	Southern Russian near Yessentuki, train (Khadijat Mangerieva)	4	3	1	41	<150	0	Dead	
18	Sept. 15, 2003	Ingushetia, FSB office	2	1	1	2	31	0	Dead	
19	Dec. 9, 2003	Moscow, National Hotel near Duma	1	1	0	6	14	0	Dead	
20	Feb. 6, 2004	Moscow subway station Avtozavodskaya	1	0	1	41	<130	0	Dead	
21	April 6, 2004	Ingushetia, president's car	1	0	1	2	25	0	Dead	
22	Aug. 25, 2004	Airplane TU-134 Moscow-Volgograd (Sazita Jebirhanova)	1	1	0	43	0	0	Dead	
23	Aug. 25, 2004	Airplane TU-154 Moscow-Sochi (Aminat Nogaeva)	1	1	0	42	0	0	Dead	
24	Aug. 31, 2004	Moscow, subway station Rijskaya	1	1	0	10	33	0	Dead	
25	Sept.1-3, 2004	North Osetia, Beslan school (Roza Nogaeva, Mariam Tuburova)	32	2	30	330	470	1120	Dead	
26	May, 2005	Chechnya, Grozny	1	1	0	0	0	0	Dead	
27	May, 2005	Chechnya, Assinovskaya	2	2	0	0	0	0	Dead	
27	May, 2005	Chechnya, Assinovskaya	2	2	0	0	0	0	Dead	
28	July, 2005	Chechnya, Grozny	1	0	1	0	0	0	Dead	
			112	48	64	939	2913	2043		

100% 43% 57%

Three suicide attacks followed the first with four total in 2000, one in 2001, three in 2002, suddenly jumping to eleven in 2003 and diminishing again to six in 2004, and down to three in 2005 (at the time of this writing in November 2005), for a total of twenty eight suicide attacks to date. Table Two shows a summary of the frequency of attacks by year. The majority of suicide attacks were carried out in 2003.

Table 2.

FREQUENCY OF CHECHEN SUICIDE ATTACKS YEARLY

Year	Frequency	Percent
2000	4	14%
2001	1	4%
2002	3	11%
2003	11	39%
2004	6	21%
2005	3	11%
Total	28	100%

Targets of Chechen Suicide Attacks

The Chechen suicide attacks can be divided into three categories, sorted by intended target type. The first category is suicide attacks aimed at military installations. The majority of these attacks were carried out in Chechnya or in nearby regions. The second is suicide attacks intended for pro-Moscow government installations in and around Chechnya. Three quarters of these type of suicide attacks were carried out inside Chechnya. The majority of victims of this second category of suicide terrorist attacks were civilian Chechen Muslims rather than Russian military. Recall however that the Wahhabit ideology allows and even commands to kill unrighteous civilians and even righteous civilians in order to achieve “ holy” goals. Hence these type of terror acts are authorized whether or not they kill Muslims, Chechens, civilians or militarized Russians.

Numerous Chechen believers have been killed in Wahhabi suicide attacks. For instance three suicide bombers exploded themselves and killed eighty-three civilians in the truck bombing of the pro-Russian governmental complex in Grozny in December of 2002. In a similar case fifty-nine civilian Chechens were killed by three suicide bombers in a pro-Russian government complex explosion in northern Chechnya on May of 2003.

The third category of suicide attacks is directed at purely civilian targets. The majority of them were carried out in Moscow and around Chechnya. The most terrible of these attacks are the Moscow Dubrovka Theatre/Nord Ost takeover on October of 2002 in which over eight-hundred hostages were taken and one hundred-twenty-nine died in the storm¹⁸ and the Beslan school takeover on September of 2004 in which over one thousand teachers, parents and children were held for three days with a still contested number likely reaching over three hundred killed in the ensuing storm of the school. Table Three shows a summary of the type of Chechen suicide attacks by place.

Table 3.

TARGET TYPE OF CHECHEN SUICIDE ATTACKS

	Target type	Chechnya	Southern Russian region	Moscow	Total
1	Military	7	3	0	10
2	Governmental	3	1	0	4
3	Civilian	4	2	8	14
	Total	14	6	8	28

Trends in Targeting

In its first two years (2000-2001) Chechen suicide terrorism targeted only military bases and only inside Chechnya. As the military responded by hardening its defenses inside Chechnya the terrorists moved their suicide operations increasingly to Russia during and following 2002 including repeatedly striking Moscow itself. The first of these attacks in Moscow in 2002 involved the dramatic mass hostage-taking siege of the Dubrovka theater (Nord Ost) in which forty armed terrorists (nineteen of them women with bombs strapped to their bodies) held approximately eight hundred theatergoers for nearly three days. One hundred twenty-nine hostages were killed in this event, the majority dying from gas introduced into the theater by Russian Special Forces who ended the siege by gassing and storming the theater. Following this event the Chechen terrorists continued to target civilians inside Russia likely realizing the media amplification benefits of doing so: targeting in 2003 a rock concert just outside Moscow and two downtown Moscow targets (one near the Duma) followed in 2004 by bombings on two Moscow metros, the Beslan school takeover and two flights originating from Moscow¹⁹. For the Chechen terrorists groups, striking outside of Chechnya and in spectacular ways brought them worldwide media attention that strikes inside Chechnya did not.

The worst years for suicide attacks were 2003 and 2004 with sixty-three percent of attacks occurring during these years. Some argue that this was in response to and following the time period during which the most brutal Russian counter-terrorism operations in Chechnya took place and those in turn motivated terrorist groups to increase their frequency of suicide attacks as well as carry them out inside Russia and targeting Moscow.²⁰ While this may be true, it's a two-sided equation and cyclical as Moscow certainly had a reason for increasingly targeting terrorists after the Dubrovka/Nord Ost takeover in 2002 and in years following as they continued to receive attacks inside Moscow.

Other authors argue that the Chechen terrorists increasingly embraced suicide terrorism when the Russian response to the Nord Ost takeover (of storming the building and shooting all the terrorists dead) made it clear that the Russians were no longer willing to negotiate safe passage for the terrorists in mass hostage taking operations as they had been in the past as in Budyonnovsk in 1995 and partially up to Pervomayskoe in 1996 – causing the terrorists to realize that to continue on this path they must embrace “martyrdom” operations.²¹ While this is likely part of the truth it's unlikely the whole story as it doesn't explain why the Nord Ost operation was planned as a combined mass hostage taking suicide operation before knowing of the hopelessness of escape. The Nord Ost terrorists arrived in suicide belts and proclaimed themselves as suicide terrorists to their hostages, the Russians and to the

whole world and stated that they were going to kill their hostages, blow up the theatre and themselves unless the Russians withdrew from Chechen territory – a demand they knew ahead of time was unlikely to end well for them. This decision to appear in suicide belts and proclaim themselves as “shakids” was made well beforehand and even documented in a video tape that was given to Al Jazeera to air during the siege in which one of the female bombers states, “Even if we are killed thousands of our brothers and sisters will come after us ready to sacrifice themselves.” This was all planned ahead of time without knowing what the Russian Special Forces response would be in the Nord Ost case. Something had dramatically changed before October 2002 in terms of ideology and choice of terror tactics.

Our interviews with the family members and close associates of the Dubrovka/Nord Ost terrorists made clear that the anticipation of death in the theater by the terror sponsoring groups and the terrorists themselves was made well ahead of going to the theater. We conclude this based on the fact that some of these terrorists left notes behind admitting to going on a “martyrdom” mission while others subtly indicated before leaving that they would never be returning. The hostages from Dubrovka also were told by their hostage takers that the greatest thing for them was to die as a martyr, that they came to die and so on.²² Likewise interviews with hostages of the Beslan takeover who spoke intensively with the hostage takers also make clear that the suicide terrorists there came to die but still could not comprehend that the Russians would consider storming a school filled with young children hostages²³. Hence it is clear to us that the decision by Chechen terror groups to use suicide terrorism combined with mass hostage taking operations had more to do with strategy than simply giving into despair over the belief that the Russians would not allow them to escape if they wished to live in exchange for giving their hostages life.

Researchers of suicide terrorism know that suicide terrorism is nearly always used strategically by organizations and generally resorted to when the enemy is much stronger and better equipped militarily. Likewise it is often used in later stages of the conflict²⁴ and finds a receptive base of support in areas where occupation occurs, particularly if the foreign occupier is of another religion than those occupied and is perceived as oppressive and unjust.²⁵ All of these conditions exist within the Chechen conflict and they coincide with the importation into Chechnya of a militant ideology that supports martyrdom operations. Thus on the organizational level we conclude that the move to adopting suicide terrorism and the increased reliance on it is firstly a sign that by the year 2000 the militant Wahhabit terrorist ideology had found fertile ground in Chechnya and that once firmly entrenched in limited pockets of society that the terror groups responded dynamically to the conditions of two lost wars and the ongoing brutal counterterrorism operations using the militant Wahhabit ideology that they had successfully transmitted into Chechnya from the middle east. Indeed Basayev as early as 1995 had led a “suicide” operation that had ended well for him. The nationalist rebels who ended up in a state of guerilla warfare found that over time they were fighting side by side with religiously linked terrorists who endorsed other tactics than traditional warfare - although the nationalist political goals remained the same (albeit changed to endorsement by the Wahhabi groups of an Islamic state, versus a secular one).

We would also add another argument and attribute the increase in suicide bombings in 2003 to the recognition of the effects of press coverage that were especially recognized in regard to the Dubrovka Theater takeover in 2002. There the terrorists made spectacular use of theater themselves, dressing the women in black hadjibs reminiscent of mourning clothes with clearly visible bomb belts tied at their

waists. The title of Black Widows and stories of them being wives and mothers of killed Chechens circulated around the globe with the world population aghast at this vision, asking themselves how bad conditions in Chechnya could be to drive women to put on suicide belts and go to Moscow to bomb themselves? Following the Dubrovka takeover in 2002 the Chechen terrorists understood the utility of bringing their terror acts to the heart of Russia and the press coverage that occurs when purely civilian targets are utilized. The Beslan school takeover was similarly planned with an eye for media coverage, although in the case of Beslan, taking young children hostage and shooting them as they attempted to escape proved to work against garnering any worldwide support for the terrorists' cause. It did however manage to call attention back to the plight of the Chechen people.

It's curious to make notice as well of the practice of the Chechen terrorists in filming themselves and their actions during suicide terrorist mass hostage taking operations. During the Dubrovka/Nord Ost theater takeover the terrorists placed huge banners proclaiming slogans such as "death to the infidel" in Arabic which had little likelihood of helping garner support to their cause in the western media, but the terrorists carefully filmed themselves and their actions in both this case and in the Beslan school takeover. While it's impossible to know for certain, these films may be intended to be smuggled out of the event to be sent back to those who fund the operations, to the home organization, to be used in Internet outreach in behalf of the Chechen jihad, to be aired on sympathetic television outlets, to be used in training of future "martyrs" to encourage them, or have other purposes, but it does appear that when the spectacular martyrdom operations take place the terrorists themselves feel it is important to record them on film.

It must also be noted that changes in targeting also occur in response to the ability to succeed in hitting targets. In response to the initial onslaught of suicide terrorism to military targets and later government targets inside of Chechnya the military hardened defenses and following this the groups moved to increase their attacks on Moscow and other outside of Chechnya targets. In response, the Russian government has made access by Chechens to Moscow increasingly controlled and Chechens now find it difficult to travel freely and to receive external passports. This perhaps will lead to a reversion to acts inside Chechnya and close by, outside its surrounding borders which is accomplished by traveling freely to targets by bribing corrupt soldiers at checkpoints as was done in the Beslan attack and also in the recent 2005 Nalchik attack.

In 2005 all of the suicide bombing attacks (n=3) took place inside Chechnya. In one of these attacks, three female suicide terrorists exploded themselves in May (one in Grozny and two girlfriends in Assinovskaya). They had prepared to carry out their mission on May 9th but were discovered beforehand and they exploded themselves to avoid arrest. The date chosen for their act was a highly symbolic day - Victory Day – in which Russia and former Soviet states make a prominent display of their military might a day in which a suicide bombing would certainly diminish this display of military readiness. Indeed on this same date in 2004 the pro-Russian backed Chechen President Kadyrov was killed with his entourage when the stand where he was viewing the display of Russian military might exploded under his feet – a huge statement by the terrorists about their ability to strike the Russian forces. This also underscores the expressive nature of both suicide and non suicide terrorism in this conflict. The third attack and most recent suicide bombing (as of this writing) was on July seventh in Grozny at the time of the terrorist acts in London. It is unknown and most unlikely that there is any connection to the acts. A young man exploded himself in car bomb near a military checkpoint. Table Four show a breakdown of attacks by year, frequency, type and location of target.

Table 4.

TREND BY YEAR IN TARGET TYPE AND LOCATION OF CHECHEN SUICIDE ATTACKS

Year	Military bases	Governmental places	Civilian places	Total	Chechnya	Southern Russian region	Moscow	Total
2000	4	0	0	4	4	0	0	4
2001	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	1
2002	1	1	1	3	2	0	1	3
2003	4	2	5	11	4	4	3	11
2004	0	1	5	6	0	2	4	6
2005	1	0	2	3	3	0	0	3
Total	11 (39%)	4 (14%)	13 (47%)	28	14 (50%)	6 (21%)	8 (29%)	28 (100%)

Suicide Terrorism or Guerilla Warfare?

Depending on one's definition of terrorism, and there are hundreds of definitions²⁶, it is possible to argue that the suicide attacks against military targets were not terrorism but guerilla warfare, and that the killed civilians were simply "collateral damage." This argument becomes more difficult when considering the attacks against pro-Russian government complexes where the majority of victims were Chechen civilians and impossible once one moves to the heinous attacks involving mass hostage taking particularly the Beslan school takeover where children attempting to flee the scene were shot in the back by terrorists. It is unclear how much the exiled president Maskhadov put in his lot with Basayev after the end of the second war when both of them had to live as fugitives from the Russians. Photographs released over the web of them sitting together at a table in Arabic dress, bearded and eating together paint a picture of "brotherly" comradeship and make it appear that Maskhadov adheres to the Wahhabi traditions. However much forced together by a common enemy, the parting of ways perhaps occurs around the issue of terrorism. Maskhadov always refused to claim responsibility for any operations targeting civilians, while Basayev proudly claims them, stating the occupation of Chechnya and the war atrocities committed by Russian forces as his justification. Indeed following the Dubrovka Theater Nord Ost hostage taking event in which one hundred and twenty nine Russians were killed (most of them by the gas introduced into the theater by Russian special forces) Basayev proudly claimed the event and also made suicide terrorism threats for the future saying, "People without any demands, who will not be taking anyone hostage, will come next time. They will come, and their main goal will be to destroy the enemy and deal the most severe blow onto him." At the same time he publicly resigned from the rebel leadership asking Maskhadov to forgive him for not informing him of the operation ahead of time and to relieve him of all his posts except for command of the "Riyadus-Salikhin reconnaissance and sabotage battalion of shahids (martyrs). Clearly the one had taken the terrorist path – although still with nationalist goals in mind, while it is unclear if the other might still be termed only a nationalist rebel.

Progression from Nationalist War to Some Groups Leading a Religious Jihad

On the side of the organizations we can see the progression on the one side of a failed insurgency to continued guerilla warfare and on another side the importing of the militant Wahhabist ideology into Chechnya as it was introduced at the end of the first war, accelerating its foothold between the two wars and consolidating its grip in some pockets of society during the second war and the ensuing military occupation which follows to this day. The second war which was in many ways incited by the actions of the Wahhabist groups (i.e. Basayev and Khattab's incursion into Dagestan) brought so many deaths, destruction and human rights violations with it that it served as final proof to a small minority of Chechens that a new response and new way of thinking and acting was needed. The Wahhabists were already poised to respond with an ideology, training and call to arms for all those who were ready to agree to take part in a new form of warfare: a jihad involving terrorism against Russia. Fatwas were declared that removed the barriers to self sacrifice in behalf of the group and suicide terrorism or "martyrdom" operations became the new weapon of choice.²⁷

Halfway into the new jihad, the Nord Ost takeover in 2002 riveted worldwide attention to the Chechen cause prompting many to wonder what could possibly motivate so many young women to appear dressed in black ready to die with bombs strapped to their bodies. Our research inside Chechnya interviewing the family members and close associates of many of these suicide bombers who took part in that event as well as others, conducting what was essentially psychological autopsies²⁸ of the suicide bombers begins to answer that question.

Our Research Study

Methods & Results

Our research relied upon semi-structured interviews and focused on open-ended questions regarding life events previous to becoming terrorists, personality and behavioral changes leading up to the terrorist act, and possible motivations for it. It was difficult to make contact with the family members of suicide terrorists because nearly all had already been visited and interrogated by Russian special services and continued to fear retaliation. However they agreed after being told that the interviews would be anonymous and confidential and that the authors are trying to understand the psychological underpinnings of suicidal terrorism.

Sample

The sample consists of sixty-one interviews from various sources inside and outside Chechnya. The sample was made up of thirty-two close family members or close associates who reported on thirty-four suicide terrorists and two would be suicide bombers; four seriously radicalized individuals who were interviewed (two of these were from the group of thirty-two family members/close associates) and additional insights from eleven hostages interviews from the Dubrovka/Nord Ost hostage-taking siege and sixteen interviews from hostages held in the Beslan school takeover. It thus relies on a total of sixty one interviews. The postmortem terrorist interviews were collected in Chechnya over a two-year time period from March 2003 to March 2005. The Nord Ost hostage interviews were collected from the first week of December 2002, five weeks after the terrorist takeover and into the first week of

March 2003, four months after the takeover. The Beslan hostage interviews were collected in August of 2005 close to the one-year anniversary date of the attack, a time when emotions and traumatic memories were dramatically heightened. All of the descriptive statistics that we report from our sample are based upon the thirty-four suicide terrorists which we were able to closely study (post-mortem) through the family member/close associate interviews we collected in Chechnya. We augment our descriptions of these specific terrorists by their family members and close associates with hostages' observations of the terrorists with whom they spent three days, many of them having ample opportunity to observe their behaviors, interactions and to seriously engage in discussions with them.

Demographic characteristics of the Suicide Terrorists in our Sample

Age: The mean age of the Chechen suicide terrorists (at the time of their act) was 24, and the age range was 15-45 (standard deviation of 6.57). There was no significant age difference by gender.

Gender: In our study females made up more than three quarters of the sample and males less than one quarter (see Table Five). Of all one-hundred and twelve suicide bombers to date, forty-three percent (n=48) have been female and fifty-seven percent (n=64) have been male, hence our study over represents female bombers.

Table 5.

GENDER OF CHECHEN SUICIDE TERRORISTS IN OUR SAMPLE

Gender	Frequency	Percent
Female	26	76.5%
Male	8	23.5%
Total	34	100%

Marital and familial status: Almost half of all suicides in our study were unmarried, but it's difficult to conclude that single persons are more willing to volunteer for suicide missions since we know that the Chechen militant Wahhabi ideology encourages the opposite. Half of the married, divorced and widowed individuals in the sample had children, but this was not an obstacle for their carrying out their suicide mission. Indeed unlike practices among Islamic related Palestinian and Lebanese groups that make use of martyrdom operations (i.e. HAMAS, Palestinian Islamic Jihad, and Hezbollah) which favored sending individuals who are unmarried or at least not parents as bombers – Chechen militant Wahhabi ideology favors martyrdom operations for those who are married and who have children seeing them as having fulfilled their life duties of reproducing prior to sacrificing their lives.

Table 6.

MARITAL STATUS & GENDER CROSSTABULATION

	Marital status	Females	Percent	Males	Percent	Total	Percent
1	Single	13	50.0	5	62.5	18	52.9
2	Married	3	11.5	2	25.0	5	14.7
3	Divorced	4	15.4	0	0	4	11.8
4	Widow	5	19.2	1	12.5	6	17.6
5	Second marriage	1	3.9	0	0	1	2.9

	Total	26	100	8	100	34	100,0
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Education:

Despite the widespread belief that suicide terrorists are undereducated youth who are easily duped into giving their lives in an act of martyrdom our study did not bear out this myth. The education level of the suicide terrorists in our sample was similar to the educational level of the general Chechen society with many being college and university educated. This is a similar finding to many other studies of suicide terrorists where it is shown that they are as or more educated than their peers.²⁹ While Chechen society traditionally favors and pushes their young to achieve the highest education possible the majority of youth in Chechnya do not currently have sufficient educational opportunities because the education system has been destroyed during wartime and also during the last ten years many schools worked badly or did not work in general. Yet when one considers the widespread frustration and lack of educational opportunities in Chechnya currently it is striking that only a small group of young people became terrorists and that those that do, at least according to our sample, have been well educated.

Table 7.

EDUCATION OF CHECHEN SUICIDE TERRORISTS IN OUR SAMPLE

	Education level	Frequency	Percent
1	High school	23	67.6
2	College	2	5.9
3	University	6	17.6
4	Studying on University or college	3	8.8
	Total	34	100.0

One woman (age 31) had two university diplomas: economical and juridical. Another woman had finished a theatre faculty of university.

Socio-economical status:

The majority of Chechen suicide terrorists that we studied were unemployed as are most Chechens living in the current post war occupation situation. Only four women in our sample had a legitimate means of making an income - they traded in the market.

Table 8.

EMPLOYMENT OF CHECHEN SUICIDE TERRORISTS IN OUR SAMPLE

	Employment	Frequency	Percent
1	Unemployed	30	88.2
2	Own business	4	11.8
	Total	34	100

Due to the devastation of war, it was very difficult to find and utilize normal markers to categorize the economic status of the suicide bombers' families. The interviewer made a subjective analysis based upon the respondent's reports and her own analysis of their living situation, which was often directly observed during the interview. The economic level of the majority of the suicide terrorists' families was middle. Only two suicide terrorists were from high class and two were from poor class.

Table 9.

SOCIO-ECONOMICAL STATUS OF CHECHEN SUICIDE TERRORISTS IN OUR SAMPLE

	Socio-economical status	Frequency	Percent
1	Poor	2	5.9
2	Middle	20	58.8
3	Good	10	29.4
4	High	2	5.9
	Total	34	100.0

Participation in war

Six of eight men that we studied were former fighters and five of them (14%) were being hunted as fugitives by the Russian forces. Seven of the twenty-six women helped the fighters working as medical nurses and couriers. Two sisters learned to shoot and place land mines. Another woman (age 33) learned to shoot and drive a car (privately owned cars are still a very new phenomena in the entire former Soviet Union and most families do not own cars and women still rarely learn to drive in Chechnya). This woman also worked with the fighters assisting them as a medical nurse.

Table 10.

PARTICIPARION IN WAR OF CHECHEN SUICIDE TERRRORISTS IN OUR SAMPLE

	Participation in war	Frequency	Percent
1	Fighters	6	17.6
2	Helpers of fighters	7	20.6
3	No participation in war	21	61.8
	Total	34	100.0

Psychological trauma

Before the wars of independence (1994-96 and 1999-2000) there was no suicide terrorism in Chechnya. The last ten years in Chechnya there have been continuous actions of war. According to the research of the World Health Organization in 2002, sixty-nine and a half percent of the Chechen population survived such psycho-traumatic events as: threat to life; the long stay under bombardments; killing and wounding of family members; disappeared family members and torture. According to the WHO study thirty-one percent of the Chechen population is estimated to have post-traumatic stress disorder

(PTSD).³⁰ A 2004 Medecins Sans Frontieres report of refugees in the tent camps of Ingushetia found similar results: one in five displaced Chechens have personally witnessed violence and one in three have personally experienced violence – the types which included maltreatment, detention as a hostage, arrest or kidnap, and forced labor.³¹ All of these experiences create deep vulnerabilities in individuals to be open to groups that can equip them for revenge and whose ideology justifies violence as an answer to their experiences.

One of the authors, Akhmedova made a clinical study of 653 persons with PTSD showing that in thirty-nine percent of the cases PTSD was accompanied by the development of fanaticism³². These persons are characterized by ideas of revenge, social estrangement, suspiciousness, and rigidity. Their life values changed dramatically as a result. Financial welfare, family and even their own health cease to be important for them. Only revenge for their sufferings and humiliations, or self-sacrifice to achieve revenge becomes important for them.

These are the persons we believe become involved in terrorist organizations and our data support this conclusion. In this study all of the subjects had suffered traumatic events: forty-seven percent of the sample (n=16) had experienced multiple traumas including the death and/or torture of more than one close family member (these included parents, brothers, husbands); eight percent (n=3) had suffered the disappearance of a family member after arrest (which usually means torture and death); and one had suffered with a returned family member having been severely tortured while in detention.

Table 11.

TRAUMATIC EVENTS SUFFERED BY CHECHEN SUICIDE TERRORISTS IN OUR SAMPLE

	Traumatic events	Frequency	Percent
1	More than 1 family member killed	16	47.1
2	Father or mother killed	5	14.7
3	Brother killed	8	23.5
4	Husband killed	1	2.9
5	Family member disappeared after arrest	3	8.8
6	Family member tortured	1	2.9
	Total	34	100.0

The experiences of deep personal traumatization and bereavement create in some a vulnerability to seek out the ideological message of those promoting jihadist methods – and especially in youth this helps the sufferer to find a framework for dealing with their shattered world assumptions, to address their emotional suffering, survivor guilt and sense of a foreshortened future.³³

Half of the suicide terrorists in our sample carried out their bombings six to eight years after the traumatic events which makes it clear that many were not acting in an immediate reaction of revenge. Instead it appears that over time their traumatic stress did not heal, their traumatic exposure through two wars only increased, and during this time they somehow became exposed to the militant Wahhabi ideology and terror groups that gave them not only the ideology but also the means to apply a short-lived psychological first aid to their posttraumatic stress by equipping them for revenge. In only one

case was a bombing accomplished in a nearly immediate response to a trauma (only three months after the trauma). This case was Elza Gazueva whose husband and brother were tortured and killed by the Russian forces. Gazueva went directly to the military headquarters and managed to get close enough to the commandant who was responsible for taking her husband and brother from her home and who had ordered their torture and death to ask, “Do you remember me?” before exploding herself and killing him.

Table 12.

ELAPSE OF TIME BETWEEN TRAUMA AND TERROR ACT IN OUR SAMPLE

	Time between trauma and terror act	Frequency	Percent
1	Less 1 year	1	2.9
2	1 year	3	8.8
3	2-3 years	7	20.6
4	4-5 years	6	17.6
5	6-8 years	17	50.0
	Total	34	100.0

According to the reports of family members and close associates the following changes were observed in the suicide bombers following their traumatic experiences: ninety-four percent (32/34) showed social alienation and isolation; sixty two percent (21/34) had signs of depression; twenty-nine percent (10/34) were suspicious; twenty-six and a half percent (9/34) showed new indications of fanaticism and aggression; twenty percent (7/34) increased in conflicts within the family; and eight percent (3/34) felt strong guilt for not having done more to save a killed family member. All of these signs of posttraumatic stress created within the subjects a deep vulnerability to Wahhabi ideologies promoting revenge and self sacrifice. Likewise in addition to their deeply traumatic psychological state, the Wahhabits could play upon the fact that the duty to revenge in Chechen society continues to exist over even long periods of time. Likewise the Wahhabits through their ideology of allowing for targeting of innocent civilians for the purposes of jihad and naming other ethnic groups infidels and thus dehumanizing them, further encouraged the pathological response to trauma that Akhmedova had already documented in trauma survivors – of generalizing their response and wish for revenge beyond the original wrong-doer.

Table 13.

POST-TRAUMATIC CHANGES IN CHECHEN SUICIDE TERRORISTS IN OUR SAMPLE

	Post-traumatic changes	Frequency	Percent
1	Social alienation & isolation	32	94.1
2	Depression	21	61.8
3	Suspiciousness	10	29.4
4	Fanaticism	9	26.5
5	Aggression	9	26.5
6	Conflicts	7	20.6
7	Guilt	3	8.8

Revenge for personal suffering

In Chechen traditions there is an ideology of rights that are guarded by revenge and of justice as it is dispensed within familial groups. Whenever a family member is harmed or killed this system assigns responsibility to family members to seek out the evil-doer and make him pay accordingly. The following are an explanation of the traditional Chechen rules of revenge:

1. Murder should be punished with murder;
2. Only males may revenge, females may only take actions to revenge if there are no males in her family and among her relatives to do so;
3. For the murder of a female two males should be killed: the murderer and a member of the murderer's family;
4. Revenge should be directed only to the murderer, not to others, even to his family members or close associates;
5. The revenge is not limited in time, it can be realized many years after a murder;
6. The revenge can be averted if respected elders intervene with the victim's family asking them to forgive the murderer and reach agreement to stop the revenge;
7. Revenge never calls for the avenger to kill himself in order to murder the other.

This ideology of revenge was present in Chechnya before Islam took root there in the sixteenth century. In the Soviet time period it was not as strictly codified but was and is now still carried out when family members chose not to use the normal governmental court systems. It does not in normal practice spread beyond seeking out the originator of the harm or his close family to repay in a regulated (by traditions) manner his evil deed.

Recently however, with widespread war, traumatization and bereavement, revenge is becoming generalized in the minds of many. This is partly due to the militant Wahhabi ideology which encourages revenging upon the entire group and acting against civilian targets, but there are some other factors that contribute as well. It is for instance difficult, if not impossible for a Chechen citizen to find the murderer of his or her family members among professional military, police and paid soldiers in the war situation. These actors generally operate anonymously. In many cases victims do not know who has tortured or been the executioner of their family members. Likewise Russian forces in Chechnya are well known to be heavily involved in corruption (selling weapons, taking prisoners for bribes, accepting bribes at checkpoints, stealing from citizens during raids, etc.) and for dispensing "justice" as they see fit. All of these things contribute to a view that unfortunately results in all members of the forces being implicated as roaming freely without regard to human rights or legal concerns. Terrorist organizations capitalize upon this fact transforming the personal evil-doer to a larger enemy group and connecting the longstanding ideology and cultural duty to revenge with the newly introduced ideology of militant jihad against the corrupt and godless west, Russia in particular. Terrorists changed the postulate of "my revenge is to my enemy for killing my family member" to that of "our revenge is to our enemies for killing our community members – the we being the Muslim brothers".

Indeed thirty-eight percent (13/34) of the suicide terrorists in our sample stated spontaneously to our respondents before taking part in their terror act that they would seek revenge for the violent death of their family member at the hands of the Russian powers. Elza Gazueva carried out her personal

revenge. She exploded herself with District Commandant Geidar Gadzhiev who arrested and tortured her husband and brother. In Chechnya Gadzhiev was well-known for having personally headed up and participated in the torture of many civilians. Gadzhiev had personally summoned Elza Gazueva to witness her husband's torture and execution.³⁴ His death and her suicide terror act is one that was not widely deplored by the wider community as most suicide terrorism acts are in Chechnya, because of its resonance within the population of meting out direct vengeance and justice to a known murderer. In another case, Lida Khildekhoroeva carried out the suicide bombing of a military bus in Mozdok (North Osetia). According to her cousin, Lida asked a Wahhabit Emir to let her to make this bombing after another woman (Zarema Mujukhoeva) backed out of it. Two of Lida's brothers had been killed in war. She didn't search as the Chechen ideology of revenge dictates for those individuals who had killed her brothers but instead revenged to a "common enemy", although still a military target. In both of these cases the suicide bombings did not take place according to the tradition of revenge. In Elza's case the family member who should have revenged failed to do so, and the one who was most traumatized did it.

Religion

Previous religiosity

The majority of all Chechens are Muslims, but they have different levels of religiosity. There are attributive believers who carry out some external attributes, but as a whole they do not know and do not fulfill religious instructions. Also there are believers who have deep religious beliefs and adhere to the traditional basis of Sufi Islam as it is practiced in Chechnya. In our sample more of the first type of more secular representatives of the Muslim faith became involved to the Wahhabit organization than the second whose faith had already developed in traditional Sufi religious families. This makes sense as the first group had nothing to which to assign meaning and with which to rebuild their shattered world assumptions³⁵. Whereas the second group was likely better able to draw upon already deeply held religious faith in eternal values and an eternal God, as well as Sufi beliefs that likely protected them from generalizing revenge, encouraged them in calming posttraumatic arousal states and helped them to rebuild a sense of self within a chaotic, violent and unpredictable world.³⁶ Likewise their already existing understanding of the Koran according to Sufi principles would prevent them from being as vulnerable to accepting the militant Wahhabi teachings than their counterparts who identify themselves as Islamic, know they have a non-Islamic (i.e. potentially infidel) enemy, and who are open as secularized Muslims to any interpretation of Islam which helps them to deal with their posttraumatic states of mind.

Table 14.

RELIGIOSITY OF CHECHEN SUICIDE TERRORISTS IN OUR SAMPLE

	Religiosity	Frequency	Percent
1	Secular	28	82.4
2	Traditional religion	6	17.6
	Total	34	100.0

Relationship with Wahhabits

All of the respondents in the sample reported that the suicide terrorists (n=34) increased in religiosity *following* their traumatic experiences and they become adherents to fanatical Wahhabit beliefs, which in our thinking made clear that the experience of deep personal traumatization paved the way for accepting a militant jihadist ideology that ultimately ended in them sacrificing themselves as bombers.

Twenty percent (7/34) of the sample had been involved with Wahhabits at least peripherally prior to their transformations in response to traumas but they also greatly deepened their involvement with militant ideas of the Wahhabits in response to their traumas. Of this twenty percent, three of these terrorists were already married to spouses steeped in Wahhabit beliefs before their traumas, and in response they changed dramatically in their appearance and embracing the militant Wahhabit ideology. The other three were sisters of Wahhabits. Their brothers were killed in two cases and one disappeared. According to their family members the sisters were deeply personally traumatized by the death of their brothers and changed in their emotions and behavior. Even though not previously endorsing their brother's Wahhabit beliefs and practices their traumatic response to the deaths of their brothers swung them over to embracing the Wahhabit lifestyle and ideology. The last one was married to a Wahhabit instructor who was from an Arabian country. Her brother was also a Wahhabit Emir. Both of them were killed in war and she carried out a suicide bombing one year after her brother's death.

The other eighty percent of the sample (n=27) sought out the Wahhabit groups and their beliefs and practices *in reaction to* deep personal traumatization, seeking as they were for answers and relief to their posttraumatic states. They were fully aware in seeking out these groups that the Wahhabits embrace militant jihad and endorse suicide terrorism.

Table 15.

RELATIONSHIP OF THE SAMPLE OF SUICIDE TERRORISTS WITH WAHHABIT GROUPS

	Relationship	Frequency	Percent
1	Before trauma	7	20.6
2	After trauma	27	79.4
	Total	34	100.0

Jihadist ideology and trauma

The Arabic word "jihad" means "struggle". The Koran explains that the greater jihad is the striving of a servant against his low desires, meaning that jihad is an internal struggle to make oneself a better person (7). But Wahhabits insist that militant-jihad is the true jihad.

According to our respondents all of the suicide terrorists told them that making jihad was their main value. This was also said by suicide terrorists who spoke in depth to hostages in both the Dubrovka Theater/Nord Ost takeover and in the Beslan school takeover.³⁷ In our study, according to our respondents reports, it appears that in sixty-two percent of the cases the suicide terrorists had fallen into a serious depression following their traumatic experiences. It is well know that the wish to die - for suicide - is a major symptom of depression. Likewise it is a common desire often expressed by the

traumatically bereaved in the time period after the death of a loved one – the wish to reunite by death with the loved one in the hereafter. But suicide is forbidden in Islam, similarly to the prohibition against suicide given by other religions. Therefore martyrdom can become a very attractive idea for traumatized people. Jihadist ideology proposes the idea of martyrdom and self-sacrifice in exchange for forgiveness of sins, salvation and instant entry to Paradise. Survival guilt and a sense of a foreshortened future that are symptoms of psychological trauma can be coped with by self-sacrifice. Martyrdom is an honorable choice for a troubled, bereaved and guilty individual. It consoles the one who is giving up his or her life that in paradise they will be reunited with their loved ones who have gone before. And if there is guilt about leaving family behind the ideology promises that they will gain entry into paradise through the act of their family members martyrdom. Throughout the preparation for a suicide mission the candidate for it is subjected to indoctrination of the positive value of suicide which is referred to only as self-sacrifice for the community and the greatest honor of “martyrdom”. But Jihadist ideology also destroys the moral borders denying the value of human life when lives are sacrificed for the greater good according to the perspective of the jihadist. Jihadist ideology in the Wahhabit interpretation permits and justifies the capture of hostages, kidnapping, and murder of innocent civilians. The usual moral red lines are missing in a Jihad.³⁸

Fanaticism

According to Walter Laqueur it is easier to describe various aspects of fanaticism than to account for its mainsprings.³⁹ As was noted previously about one third of the cases of PTSD in Akhmedova’s sample were accompanied by the development of fanaticism⁴⁰. Fanaticism is based on the overly valued idea that governs behavior, emotions and relations of an individual. This idea narrows the vital purposes, interests and values that usually govern an individual’s life down to one mission. In the case of Wahhabit’s fanaticism the sole valued ideal becomes that of revenge by martyrdom and self-sacrifice. Fanaticism is what makes a huge chasm between normal suicides and suicide terrorists: a normally suicidal individual wants only to die and remove himself from unbearable emotional pain (i.e. “psychache”)⁴¹, but the suicide terrorist wants to die himself, using his death to kill those people upon whom he wishes to revenge.

In our study respondents described twenty-six percent (9/34) of the suicide terrorists in ways that could be described as fanatical. These suicide terrorists repeatedly talked about jihad and martyrdom as their main value and life meaning. They did not allow others to criticize their life views and were not open to discussion on this topic, trying instead to impose their views on friends and family. For instance one male suicide terrorist (22 years old) participated on the Moscow theatre takeover. Our respondent, his cousin described him, “He was an adolescent when his father and brother were killed. He became closed and gloomy. He said that he should revenge for them, that he hates the Russians who killed them. All his interests were reduced only to weapons, war and revenge. Then he began to be interested in religion though before he had not even the skills to pray. He started to read the Wahhabitists’ books that he took from his uncle. He changed externally, grew his hair long and a beard. Then he has gone to “Jamaat” to Khattab. His mother was afraid very much of these changes that occurred in him so quickly. But she had no real influence over him. She asked me to talk with him because I had good relations with him. When I tried to talk with him about his new beliefs, he told me that if I shall criticize him he will quarrel with me”.

Nationalism/Patriotism

In our study we found that it is difficult to distinguish religious and nationalist motives of Chechen suicide terrorists. All of the suicide bombers in our sample clearly had taken on the militant Wahhabi religious ideology. Indeed this is the group that equips all bombers in Chechnya. That being said it is likely both religious motives and nationalistic are operative, and that the militant religious ideology is simply that which supports those who endorse it for carrying on the fight for independence in a new manner – i.e. through a jihad which allows targeting civilians and making use of suicide terrorism. The overlap between the two is shown in the popular song about the first Chechen suicide bomber Khava Baraeva that supports Wahhabit ideology. Some of the words of the song are as follows:

Dear Chechnya is filled with blood and became blood-red.
 Our sisters are dead in flames of fire,
 But these sacrifices will not be useless.
 Jihad is happening,
 For rescuing our homeland,
 Maybe the whole nation will become shahids.

In our study twenty-one percent (7/34) of the suicide terrorists spoke to our respondents in a way that made it clear that they also had clear nationalist motives. It is likely that many more did, but that this was not necessarily discussed with the respondents as ill will over the wars; numerous human rights violations; continued fear from counter-terrorism operations and a general desire to be free of the ongoing Russian military occupation is a rather obviously shared sentiment among most Chechens – whether or not they simply wish to return to normal life or in the case of the minority harbor visions of a dramatically changed independent Islamic state.

On the side of the terror organization, despite having taken on the militant Wahhabi notions of jihad - nationalism, versus a wider global jihad is still the guiding force. This was clear in Basayev's letter following the Dubrovka Theater/Nord Ost hostage taking operation in Moscow when he claimed that his main goal in carrying out the operation was to bring an end to the war and halt the genocide of the Chechen people. Likewise he stated in his communiqué "Inshallah, sooner or later, like it or not, the Russian people and leadership will have to end this bloody slaughter. They will have to stop this war, agree to peace and get off our land. Sooner or later we will achieve victory, but as long as there is one single Russian soldier on Chechen land, this war will go on, and from now on it will take place both here, on Chechen territory, and throughout Russia - the aggressor country."

Similarly the demands when made by the Wahhabits in their terror operations are always for national independence and for the Russian forces to leave Chechnya. However as stated earlier Basayev has continually harbored ambitions for independence of the entire Caucasus region and has repeatedly attempted to bring the war beyond the Chechen borders. He first did so in his hostage taking operations inside Russia, then later with his incursion into Dagestan. Basayev's choice to take hostages of school children in Beslan in North Ossetia had firstly the political goal of garnering media attention and attempting to force Russia to leave Chechen territory. However an additional unstated potential political goal may have included revenging for, or worse reigniting the still smoldering animosities between the Ossetians and neighbouring Ingush who fought brutally in 1992 in an ethnic dispute over the disputed region of Prigorodny. The majority of hostage takers in that event were

Ingush who likely still remember the atrocities during that time period in which women in one village were raped in mass and their breasts cut off⁴². Likewise during the Soviet era the Ingush were united with the Chechens in the Chechen Ingush Republic and while the Ossetians are primarily Orthodox Christian, the Ingush share the same religion and language as the Chechens. In 2004 the Chechen Wahhabi influence was already spilling over into the neighboring republics with many arrests and small skirmishes occurring between the Wahhabits and the Russian forces. In October 2005 Basayev openly announced his intentions to stir up rebellion within the region declaring the existence of the “Caucases Front” a group of rebels whose first public act was to attack multiple Russian governmental sites (FSB headquarters, the police, etc.) in the town of Nalchik in Kalbardiya Republic in October 2005. The resulting Russian crackdown in the already disheartened Muslim republic likewise has the potential to spark further rebellion there over issues of human rights, unemployment and Russian corruption. Hence Basayev is actively exporting the militant Wahhabi ideology beyond Chechnya’s borders by expanding his network to nearby Muslim neighbors making use of terror tactics and guerilla warfare to in attempts incite national rebellion throughout the region.

Humiliation and Moral Superiority

The Wahhabits believe that their version of Islam is the correct or orthodox one and hence refer to themselves not as Wahhabits but as the true believers. In having adopted this new to Chechnya version of Islam and it’s jihadist views toward Russians the Wahhabits express a moral sense of superiority vis a vis the Russians “infidels” and even toward their fellow Chechens who they label as failing to be “true” believers. Unfortunately the Russians often play into this infidel view of them by acting in ways that are offensive to the Chechen population. This occurs both in simple things and in more gross human rights violations. For instance, Chechnya having a primarily Islamic population frowns upon drinking and drunkenness. Russians by contrast are well known to incorporate heavy drinking into their social lives and drunkenness among soldiers serving in Chechnya is commonplace. Likewise Chechen men and women follow a certain code of respect toward one another which is not often followed by Russian soldiers who heckle Chechen women on the street, speak to them inappropriately and generally make them uncomfortable at checkpoints and so on. Rape of both men and women, torture, kidnappings, hostage taking and forced labor have all been reported as serious and not infrequent human rights abuses taking place at the hands of the Russian forces.⁴³ The widespread corruption and abuses that occur within the Russian forces and the pro-Russian Chechen government contributes to the wronged Chechen citizen claiming the higher moral ground and when exposed to the militant Wahhabi way of thinking such an individual is vulnerable to be moved to respond to these very real wrong doings by adopting their ideology and practices - including terrorism.

While the Wahhabits preach a creed that gives a sense of moral superiority over the occupiers, everyday Chechens struggle with countless large and small humiliations including having their homes turned to rubble and their possessions reduced to ashes. Most Chechens live in difficult circumstances, many still without electricity and running water having been restored to whatever “new” living quarters they have been able to find. Destroyed roads are still difficult to navigate and checkpoints arrest traffic crossing town. To get to some destinations crossing the capital of Grozny one may have to pass as many as eighteen checkpoints and bribes are necessary to cross them. It is impossible to refuse to pay as refusing to pay a bribe to cross results in having one’s documents challenged, something found wrong with one’s vehicle or other accusations resulting in fines or potential arrest. A normal person going to work using public transport may spend three hours per day waiting ten to fifteen minutes per

checkpoint for seven or more checkpoints. Speaking about the moral exhaustion she feels about the endless checkpoints she has to cross to get to work, one Chechen woman explains, “When they stop the bus yet again and they come with their guns and dogs and we all have to get out and show our documents and they search everything, it makes you feel like you are not even a human being anymore.”

The *zachistki* or “cleansing” operations that were very frequent in the early years following the war still continue today although less frequently. Typically they involve the Russian forces surrounding a region where they suspect terrorists to be harboring often in the early morning before dawn and masked men with guns and grenades move building by building, searching all apartments and homes. In the first years these operators often demanded gold jewelry and money from the family in order not to take their sons away. Night raids on homes are still frequent and are carried out by Russians in masks who can refuse to even identify which service they are representing. In many cases this is because they are not searching for a real fugitive but simply have come for money. Now instead of demanding money outright for leaving the young man at home, the forces take their official “hostage” and wait until the family comes having assembled their lives’ savings to ransom him out of the holding prison. Often the young men are tortured and beaten during the interim. A Chechen university student who faced such a night raid in Spring of 2004 asked the masked men which service was taking him from his home and received blows for the question instead of the truthful answer he surely merited.

In addition to daily fear and daily humiliation every person in Chechnya has suffered multiple traumatic losses. The Chechen population was decimated by the two wars with 180,000 Chechens killed and 300,000 fleeing as refugees. One in two Chechens were either killed or ran away as the result of the wars and Chechnya’s cities still lie in rubble.⁴⁴

Chechens believe that their Russian occupiers are capable of anything including mass genocide. Rumors abound about poisoned water and so on. Indeed in Spring 2006 approximately one hundred children were hospitalized with unexplained symptoms including trouble breathing, fainting spells and losing consciousness. It appeared that a small group of the children had been in advertently exposed to a real noxious substance but that the others were responding with a mass psychological contagion response. This demonstrated how strongly inherent in Chechen society the fears are that the Russians want to poison the population and how easily children and their parents believed this had occurred in reality. Previous to this incident, but in response to rumors that the Russians have poisoned the water, that the women are receiving injections to make them infertile and so on Basayev felt justified to state, “We will, to the extent possible, bomb, blow up, poison, set ablaze, and organize natural gas explosions and fires on everything else on Russian territory... [W]e reserve the right to use chemical and toxic substances and the same poisons against Russia (as Basayev claims the Russians are using in Chechnya).”

While the Russian forces daily commit assaults on human dignity the Wahhabis respond in moral outrage and feel justified in using terrorism as a response. Even after having executed the most heinous terror acts they still claim moral superiority to their Russian occupiers. Basayev for instance always attempts to justify his actions in claiming responsibility for terrorist operations by pointing out the Russian atrocities committed in Chechnya. For instance in his communiqué after the Dubrovka Theater/Nord Ost hostage taking event he wrote, “Thank God, today we managed to take this war back to where it came from. We brought the war back to the enemy's lair.” Acknowledging that he had

targeted innocent civilians he rhetorically asks in his own defense about the innocent Chechens victims of the war, “who are the more than 3,000 children aged under 10, who died during the three years of the brutal and bloody war in Chechnya? Who are the more than 4,000 children who lost their legs, arms, eyes, who ended up paralyzed? Who are the missing 3,500 people who have been abducted from their homes or detained in the streets by the Russian occupiers and whose fate remains a mystery? Who are the 200,000 slain women, elderly, ill, children and men? Who are they?” He goes on to justify his actions pointing to his enemy as worse than himself stating, “This military sabotage action manifested not only the slavish and brutal indifference of the Russian population, but also the despicable hypocrisy of the so-called world community. The whole world condemned this action for three days. The whole world offered its condolences to the Russians. This war would have ceased long ago if they had shown at least one tenth of this condemnation to the innocent victims of the bloody war in Chechnya, and what happened in Moscow would not have happened.”

When it came to Beslan the terrorists shouted to their hostages, “Your government doesn’t care about you, your lives are worthless to them.” And holding up money in both hands to indicate the sums they had to pay to bribe their way past corrupt officials to get to Beslan they cried out, “For these greens (dollars) you were sold.” The Dubrovka/Nord Ost hostage takers said the same to their hostages – that the Russian government cared little for their fates, just as they cared little for the Chechens. In an interview nearly a year after Beslan, Basayev told reporters that he was shocked by what had happened but again he blamed the brutality on Putin and did not take responsibility for the deaths of the children there. In a public announcement Basayev told Maskhadov who always publicly disapproved of terror acts against civilians that after the war he was ready to stand before a sharia court and plead his innocence for what had occurred during the Beslan siege. Clearly in response to the Russian aggression in Chechnya, Basayev as the current leader of the terror groups in Chechnya has fully assimilated the Wahhabi jihadist mentality – he is able to demonize and dehumanize his enemy, and justify killing civilians in behalf of fighting the Chechen jihad against Russia.

Networking through family and religious ties

Like al Qaeda and other terrorist organizations Chechen terrorist organizations make use of familial ties and relationships for recruitment. The following are cases of family members participation in suicide attacks: two pairs of sisters were present in the Moscow theater takeover; one sister exploded herself on a plane in August of 2004 and a short while after her sister participated in the Beslan school takeover in September 2004; and a father, son and daughter exploded themselves in a truck bomb delivered into a governmental complex in Grozny on December 2002.

Also in those cases where the married suicide terrorist’s husbands or wives were Wahhabits we see that the spouse deepened the investment into the Wahhabit ideology as a result of trauma. The rule of the Wahhabit’s is that when marrying, the wife should accept the religious beliefs of her husband. This does not mean it will continue this way forever though, as wives in Chechen society have a huge emotional influence over their husbands and the affairs of the family including religious adherence. If the wife harbors opposite views she could destroy the Wahhabit orientation of her husband. Unfortunately the social realities of war and occupation created the opposite behavior intensifying the Wahhabit orientation of spouses married into it.

Chechen leaders Basayev and Udugov married more than one wife choosing their wives strategically between regions and republics and clans which enabled them to later take advantage of Chechen, Dagestani and Ingush cultural norms in which the spouses family must not refuse requests of assistance from the spouse – hence a greater network of safe houses, couriers and so on were opened to them through marriage.

Atypical cases of Chechen suicide terrorism

We also studied two cases of the would-be-suicide terrorists that were aberrant from the typical pattern of Chechen suicide bombings. Zarema Mujukhoeva who is famous in the Russian press as a “Black Widow” (i.e. a female bomber) because she is the only bomber who refused her mission (twice actually) and was arrested. She is well known in Russia and beyond because of the many fantastic lies she told reporters after being apprehended and jailed following abandoning her bomb filled bag on a Moscow Street. Unfortunately many “experts” on Chechen suicide terrorism have modeled their ideas about female bombers on Zarema who later admitted the stories she told were all designed to cover her guilt and were all false. The greatest of these lies was that she and others were coerced into becoming bombers and that a woman named “Black Fatima” followed the bombers to make sure they detonated and if not she was ready to detonate their bombs by remote. If this was true, which Zarema later admitted it was not – Black Fatima would surely have detonated Zarema’s bag when she bent down to leave it on the street.

Zarema unlike all the other bombers we studied was not ideologically motivated by personal trauma. Unlike all the others, she did it to gain monetary recompense although it is unclear if she actually achieved money for her act. Also totally unlike the others in our sample she was a criminal who had been previously involved in drugs and had reportedly stolen money and jewelry from her estranged in-laws and was about to be arrested for it. In order to escape she offered herself as a potential “shahida” and was admitted to a Wahhabit training camp where she eluded arrest. At first she prepared herself to suicide bomb the military bus in Mozdok in 2003, but when she was brought there by her recruiter she couldn’t carry through with exploding herself because of fear. (Later Lida Khildekhoroeva carried out the military bus bombing). Zarema lacked the same conviction of the others who were religiously convinced of the righteousness of their mission, the necessity of carrying out an act of vengeance, and the hope in an afterlife and the promises that came with it. Zarema Mujukhoeva then prepared for carrying out a terrorist act in Moscow. She again lost her nerve and abandoned her bomb-filled bag on the street. She was captured trying to flee from the café on Moscow’s Tverskaya Street. Later the detective who tried to defuse her bomb was killed by it.

According to Berman and Laitin recruitment of martyrs does not require appeals to irrationality or utter fanaticism. Instead they argue that the real task for the success of suicide attacks is not recruitment per se, but rather recruitment of a type of martyr who is unlikely to defect.⁴⁵ We find that traumatized and fanatical suicide terrorists carry out their human bomber functions the most successfully because they are completely ideologically committed to their goal of revenging and giving their lives to do so. Those who are not committed in this same way due to experiences of traumatic bereavement act differently, as did Zarema Mujukoeva.

The second atypical case in our sample (and as far as we know these are the only two atypical acts in the entire sample of Chechen suicide acts – we count them only as “would be” bombers), Zarema

Inarkaeva, was 16 years old at the time of her terrorist act in February 2002. Her boyfriend who worked in the pro-Russian Chechen militia in Grozny asked Zarema to pass a bag to the chief of Zavodskoy district police (ROVD). He wanted to make revenge on him as a personal enemy. When she asked what was in the bag and why he didn't pass it himself, her boyfriend lied and said that it was something necessary for his job. He drove her to the ROVD police building and told her, "Tell them my name and they will let you in, then go to his office and say this bag is for him and leave at once." She went to the building and entered without problem. When she said her boyfriend's name they didn't check her bag despite it being large. When she went to the corridor she put it on the floor because it was heavy. At that moment her boyfriend, perhaps lacking the nerve to wait for her to exit the building exploded the bag with a remote control device. Zarema was wounded but not killed.

Both cases differ completely from the other "real" Chechen suicide acts. The first Zarema differed in motivation, the second did not even know she was carrying a bomb. Each was not acting from personal trauma, ideas of revenge, or the desire to join the jihad as a martyr. They were indifferent to religion and not motivated by the imported militant Wahhabi ideology supporting suicide acts in behalf of the Chechen jihad.

Difficult Choices for Ordinary Chechens

Ordinary Chechen people are caught between two harsh choices. The pro-Russian backed government has not managed to end corruption and to offer safety to the people. The Wahhabites on the other hand incite a jihad out of which each terror act against Russia results in more crackdowns, more "cleansing" operations, and more disappearances of innocent civilians at the hands of the Russians. Ordinary Chechen find themselves caught in the middle of two forces: the Russians who by their sheer brutality can make Chechen citizens feel demoralized and dehumanized and terrorists that cause even normal Chechen citizens to find that they are as a group identified with terror, barred from travel and suspect when they can. Many Chechens feel completely lost and uncertain of their future.

It is important to understand that the majority of Chechens still today have nothing to do with terrorism and do not endorse it in any way. Wahhabi groups infiltrated into Chechnya during the war years but still have not won widespread support either for their ideas or their tactics among the general population. The majority of Chechens are weary from war. They simply want a return to normal life, peace and are not too concerned whether or not that comes in the form of an independent national state or if they continue as a state within the Russian federation. However as the cycle of violence continues between the two sides those Chechens who suffer losses are vulnerable to be pulled into the Wahhabi terror groups way of thinking.

The Fight Against Terrorism

Main views of suicide terrorism

There are two main views of Chechen suicide terrorism in Russia and Chechnya. The Russian government and other officials propagate the first view in the mass media. This view attempts to diminish the power of suicide terrorism; denying that there are persons in Chechnya who want to die as martyrs for revenge. Instead they claim that there are organizers of terrorist acts who use feeble and

conformist individuals to perpetrate terrorist acts using drugs, violations of women, coercion, fear, etc. to make them do it.

Sergei Yastrzhembsly, Putin's senior advisor on Chechnya claimed for instance in the newspaper *Sobesdenik* that female bombers had been coerced against their will into acting. "Chechens are turning these young girls into zombies using psychotropic drugs...I have heard that they rape them and record the rapes on video. After that, such Chechen girls have no chance at all of resuming normal life in Chechnya. They have only one option: to blow themselves up with a bomb full of nails and ball bearings."⁴⁶

We have found no support whatsoever for this statement in our research.⁴⁷ One woman we know of was pushed by her brother to become a bomber but she refused. Zarema Mujukoeva was involved in drugs and self recruited, but she also ultimately refused to carry out her mission – hence we have no evidence that drugs or coercion is active with committed bombers. All of the female bombers in our sample were highly motivated but by what they had experienced at the hands of Russians, not Chechens and the entire sample as far as we could tell self-recruited to terror groups (where of course they were further motivated and equipped for their missions). We learned of deaths of family members, but did not learn of any rapes among these women. But if there were any rapes in our sample it's much more likely that the rapes were at the hands of Russian soldiers and not the reverse, as human rights organizations report rape as a systematic form of torture of both male and female detainees and rapes of women in their homes (or after abduction) by Russian forces have also been reported⁴⁸. After the Beslan takeover Russian news also claimed that the terrorists raped young girls. The hostages that we talked to however stated that the Chechen terrorists were very careful, sexually respectful and strict with their female hostages, forcing them to observe their customs for modesty by telling them not to take their clothes off even when the heat was unbearable⁴⁹. It's simply propaganda to claim that the Chechens terrorists rape their own women to force them to be terrorists and this view refuses to acknowledge the real motivations of the female suicide terrorists and their experiences of traumatic bereavement at the hands of Russians. It's clear that as long as the government will adhere to such a point of view it never will cope successfully with suicidal terrorism.

The organizers of the terrorist acts propagate a second view. This view claims that corrupt politics and undeserving heads of states have unleashed wars killing many civilians and that social injustice moves proud and highly moral people to perpetrate suicide acts for the sake of peace and justice.

Both of these points of view are extreme and conceal the true motivation of suicide terrorists. The truth of the matter falls somewhere between the two. On the one hand terror groups are guilty of manipulating and equipping vulnerable individuals for suicide terrorism – especially those who have been unjustly traumatized - to take on martyrdom as a means of fighting back and for social justice. But on the other hand the individuals that come to terror groups come as a result of the numerous human rights abuses, war losses and the conditions of the continued brutal occupation. The war that was officially declared as over in September 1999 continues unofficially via the rebels who continue to fight with military targets and the Wahhabi terror groups who in their case take the war into its new form: as the new Chechen jihad. This jihad from the Wahhabi point of view is being fought against an enemy occupier for independence, human dignity and the right to declare an Islamic state. The suicide terrorists in Chechnya are thus the product of a marriage of ideology promulgated by terror groups that interacts with the psychological needs of vulnerable traumatized individuals that once achieved

motivates these individuals to act as martyrs for revenge and in the hope of instilling a new order in Chechnya. These individuals are not simple criminals. They generally act out of a higher calling and desire for social justice, although they act mistakenly due to the misguided ideology they have adopted in a traumatized state of mind.

While the Russian forces if bent on keeping Chechnya within the federation must quell both the insurgency occurring through the new jihad and the terrorists, the terrifying counterterrorism operations aimed at civilians suspected of links to or activities with terrorist groups which still take place today⁵⁰ and the widespread corruption within the Russian forces on the ground within Chechnya likely give fuel to, rather than are effective in accomplishing either. We conclude that in the current situation, the terror groups find increased social resonance in the population for their ideology and shared goal of driving the Russian forces out of Chechnya and there may be many more self recruits when the population lives in a fear state and has had many traumatic experiences at the hands of Russian forces. Our data support this argument. All thirty-four of the suicide terrorists who were studied had self-recruited to the terror groups all in direct response to traumatization and one even directly revenged upon the exact person who had tortured and killed her family members.

Governmental Measures Used in the Fight Against Terrorism

The governmental measures used in the fight against terrorism in Chechnya are extremely repressive and severe. This can be explained on the Russian side by taking into account the gravity of this problem: military, government and civilians (even children) have all been targets. Yet the harsh measures until now do not resolve the problem and perhaps even worsen it because very often the antiterrorist actions are directed to innocent civilians and terrorists without careful distinction.⁵¹ This mistake in policy occurs for the following reasons.

The governmental leaders in the struggle against terrorism give commands and demand that the military and police show results of this struggle – the leaders want to see caught or destroyed terrorists. The lower level executors are often afraid to catch the true terrorists because terrorists severely revenge against those who have arrested or killed someone from their members. Therefore these executors often arrest innocent young people and using torture demand that they name terrorists. Under pressure of torture many of these victims tell any names - usually neighbors, friends or relatives. Named people are arrested because usually no one will revenge for them with the same brutality of the terrorist groups. If these victims of torture are left alive and freed after torture they frequently go in only one way – they become terrorists because they do not see other ways to cope with the traumas, humiliations and injustice that they survived. Thus the brutal, corrupt and ineffective counter-terrorism measures stops few real terrorists and often creates more.

At the same time using widespread corruption in governmental structures engaged in the struggle against terrorism, terrorists actively take root in them thus using these structures for achievement of their purposes. They get jobs in these structures, giving large bribes. They receive the right to carry weapons, documents that allow them to pass freely through any checkpoints and so on. They have lawyers, who giving huge bribes to judges can release from arrest members of the Wahhabit organization. Just as the Beslan hostages told of their ordeal – the terrorists made clear that corrupt Russian government officials had made possible their capture. Holding up dollars they shouted in contempt, “For this money you were sold. Your government cares nothing for you.”⁵²

For those who die as actual or suspected terrorists, the families suffer not only their death but the inability to properly bury them as the Russian government has adopted a controversial policy of refusing to turn over to families the bodies of those considered to be terrorists. This creates conflict and additional grief for family members as Muslim rites require proper burial of the dead.

Counter-terrorism efforts against the family members of suicide terrorists also include destroying the communal home, creating fear so that the family fled their home, and interrogations. In our sample we found that over half the family members had been interrogated (some eluded this by fleeing to villages), one quarter left their homes for fear of retaliation and about fifteen percent had their communal home destroyed as a result of the terrorist's actions. Table sixteen shows these results.

Table 16.

REPRESSIONS OF FAMILY MEMBERS OF SUICIDE TERRORISTS IN OUR SAMPLE

	Repressions to family members	Frequency	Percent
1	Destroy house	5	14.7
2	Left home	9	26.5
3	Interrogation	20	58.8
	Total	34	100.0

Communal punishment of terrorists – that is targeting their family's home or worse yet family members - is a tactic used by Russian forces as was acknowledged recently by an official in the pro-Russian Chechen government who admitted in August of 2005 that Natasha Khumadova sister of Chechen rebel commander Doku Umarov was seized from her home in the town of Urus-Martan by six masked men in camouflage uniforms. Aleksandr Cherkasov of the Russian rights group Memorial states that such abductions are not uncommon but on the contrary "very much a part of the tactics of federal forces," and that relatives of well-known rebel leaders have been kidnapped in the past.⁵³ In these instances the Russian forces let it be known that the family member hostage will be released only if the rebel leader turns himself in. Certainly this could be seen as a type of state sponsored terrorism.

When asked about these tactics and their potential deterrent effect on young recruits to the rebel forces, rebel leader Doku Umarov answers, "Actually this has exactly the opposite effect on young people. Now I face this issue myself. This winter, my aunt and my wife's brother went missing. I don't know -- maybe they were killed, maybe they weren't. And two relatives from Itum-Kalinskii Raion. They took someone's wife and six-month baby. They took someone's father or brother. Because they have been taken, I don't see fear, neither in words or conversation. On the contrary, I see aggression."⁵⁴ His words probably reflect the sad reality that when one loses family traumatically to injustice it can motivate them to be willing to die as there is not much more to lose. A similar effect was found by researchers studying targeted assassinations by Israeli forces in attempt to deter suicide bombings among Palestinians – that the Israeli aggression could statistically be linked with an increase rather than a decrease in suicide bombings.⁵⁵ Our data studying the suicide bombers support this view leading one to believe that trying to deter terrorism by aggression against family members of terrorists is only likely to increase rather than decrease the pool of recruits.

Measures necessary for the successful fight against suicide terrorism.

As far as successful measures necessary for the fight against suicide terrorism in Chechnya we agree with Scott Atran that the first and most important line of defense is to prevent people from becoming terrorists⁵⁶. To do so we must see changes on three levels:

On the governmental level

First, there must be an effective struggle with corruption in the law enforcement, government and military structures. Currently Wahhabits can bribe their way through law enforcement structures, avoid arrest and prosecution, and buy not only protection but important posts. Likewise arms are bought directly from the Russian military, and innocent civilians are often targeted in exchange for protection of Wahhabit groups who pay to be left alone or who so strongly revenge that military and police forces fear touching them in favor of targeting innocents just to show some results. The war and lawlessness in Chechnya has been a dirty business from which many Russians have financially benefited. Moscow must show the resolve to be willing to clamp down on the business interests, corruption and money making that is occurring in regard to illegal sales of oil, arms and corrupt dealings with terrorists.

Secondly, there must be an effective suppression of terrorism financing both through external sources and more importantly through halting criminal activities within Chechnya which currently are supported, as much as hindered, by Russian interests and forces. Third human rights must be observed during carrying out of antiterrorist actions so as to not incite further recruits to Wahhabits groups and increase popular support for their ideology.

Fourth effective political solutions must be sought after. In Fall of 2004 the Russian Mothers of Soldiers groups weary of losing their sons to the senseless and corrupt war actively sought a meeting with Ahkmed Zakaev who was at the time Maskhadov's London based spokesman. Zakaev in a public meeting in October of 2004 spoke clearly of wanting a peaceful negotiated settlement with Moscow, of Maskhadov's willingness to compromise on the issue of national independence and of the necessity of both sides to recognize their mutual interdependence. Despite the fact that Maskhadov was the last free and fairly elected president in Chechnya, Moscow resolutely refused to negotiate with him branding him a terrorist alongside Basayev. On March 8th 2005 Maskhadov was caught and killed by Russian forces damping out the spark of a potentially negotiated settlement to end the war for which the Russian Mothers of Soldiers had hoped. Now it is unclear if there is anyone with whom the Russian government could negotiate. Rebel leader Abdul-Khalim Sadullaevll who succeeded Maskhadov continues in Maskhadov's policy of denouncing terrorism against civilians though he does not rule out targeting military and he reverses Maskhadov's policy of containing the war within Chechnya, preferring to encourage its spillover into neighboring republics as it did in Nazran (capital of Ingushetia) in June 2004 and in Nalchik (capital of Kabardino-Balkariya) in October 2005.⁵⁷

On the psychological level

First there must be timely psychological help given to traumatized people to help them to cope successfully with the traumatic bereavement of two wars and continued skirmishes and counter-terrorism operations. There must be programs to help in the development of mental stability of

adolescents, widows, and those whose family members who are disappeared, all of these whom are especially vulnerable to recruitment to the Wahhabit organization. There should also be research aimed at finding efficacious means to stop the involvement and allure of traumatized people into terrorist organizations. We were struck by the high level of psychological contagion that existed in our sample – two of our respondents out of the thirty two interviewed wanted to follow their family members decision and become martyrs. Likewise we also interviewed two others who were seriously radicalized in response to their traumatic experiences. In all of these cases psychological intervention put them back on the path of normalcy demonstrating that it is possible to intervene and thwart the radicalization of vulnerable individuals.

On the religious level

Religious leaders must explain the differences between militant Wahhabism and Sufi Islam as it is practiced traditionally in Chechnya and elsewhere. Religious leaders should propagate human values and resist those who try to use religion for terrorist goals. Religious leaders and institutes must also understand that people often turn to religion for answers to psychological and emotional pain – caused by traumatic bereavement, shattered world assumptions, survival guilt and so on. They should aim to give consolation in bereavement, help people to regain their healthy psychological state by helping to reconstruct cognitive models that help to hold the pain and despair often attached to times of war and help people to prevent the wish of revenge, especially generalized revenge.

Conclusions

The importation of militant Wahhabism to Chechen culture has made a negative intervention in Chechen society. The fall of the Soviet Union which traditionally suppressed religious expression and the return of many to embracing more fully their Islamic roots, while lacking training in it, at the same time as the outbreak of war created a ripe field for Wahhabism to take root in Chechnya. Wahhabism is alien to Chechen culture and traditional Chechen experiences of Islam, yet it found fertile ground especially among those who had been traumatized and bereaved in war. Wahhabism is a very extreme movement and has brought a lot of harm to Chechen society. Wahhabists use traumatized people for suicide bombing while at the same time providing to these people an extremely short-lived psychological first-aid. As result there has been many hundreds of killed and wounded people, both Chechen and Russian, due to suicide terrorists.

Sadly the Wahhabists who claim to preach a creed of justice and freedom for Islamic people have contributed to a situation in which Chechen civilians have suffered the most of all in this war from both sides – from both the Russian forces and from Wahhabism. Chechens who are a proud and educated people and who have always pushed their children to higher education and embraced higher culture have begun to be perceived in their entirety as terrorists. Many Chechens feel alienated and barred from other societies, because they are perceived as wild murderers. And in other societies, especially in the Russian-speaking world, there exists a fear and hate of Chechens as a whole, while in reality it is only a very small minority of the population that follows the imported Wahhabi ideology and endorses suicide terrorism. It has led to a deep isolation of Chechen society from the other societies of the world.

The two wars of independence, Russian policies, corruption in the forces, and widespread human rights violations in Chechnya have created widespread traumatization among the population. Yet the majority of the population continues to favor peaceful solutions and do not embrace Wahhabi ideas nor the new Chechen jihad led by Shamil Basayev that favors targeting civilians and spreading the conflict throughout the Caucasus. While conditions exist in which Chechen civilians continue to be abducted, killed and submitted to terror, rebel leaders such as Abdul-Khalim Sadullaevll and Doku Umarov refuse to give up the fight for Chechen independence. Yet while continuing the war of independence they also call for a negotiated peace settlement and are willing to negotiate with Moscow. Likewise they refuse to buy into the new Chechen jihad, refusing to endorse a religious war or terrorist tactics. They fight as rebels a nationalistic war with the Russian military. Moscow would be wise to understand this difference and rather than claiming that they are all terrorists, respond in a way that can bring peace to the region. Otherwise the militant Wahhabi groups are likely to continue their terror campaign unabated, and continue to spread the conflict within the region and by doing so continue to bring the Russian failures – corruption and human rights abuses to public attention, and through terror try to bend the will of the Russian people to give into their demands to end the war in Chechnya. In this case both sides are losers in an unremitting battle - a war of attrition rife with corruption that neither may win.

Not only Russians, and the wider world, but Chechen society itself needs to fight against terrorism. It is important to understand that Chechens must also take responsibility to stop the recruitment of youth to the Wahhabit organizations by giving them better psychological help to cope with their traumatization. While the Russians must work to stop the continued traumatization and bereavement in Chechen society from harsh counter-terrorism measures and continued conflicts, Chechen themselves must also resist in whatever ways possible the Wahhabit ideology that manipulates the emotions and cognitions of traumatized people. Only this way can we all be winners in the war on terrorism.

¹ See Marc Sageman *Understanding Terror Networks* University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004. pgs 8, 58 for a discussion of this history and John Esposito *Unholy War: Terror in the Name of Islam* New York: Oxford University Press, 2002. pgs 446-49 and 114-116 for a discussion of how Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab built upon the ideas of Ibn Taymiyya whose fatwa allowing jihad against the warring Mongols (who claimed to be Muslims) opened the door for warfare against unIslamic or unbelieving Muslims.

² For an excellent discussion and definition of the global Salafi jihad see Marc Sageman *Understanding Terror Networks* University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004.

³ Keeping in mind that terror sponsoring organizations made use of Hinduism (the Aum Shinrykyo in Japan to poison the subways with sarin gas), Christianity (abortion clinic terrorists who bombed clinics and assassinated abortionists and radical Jewish Zionism (Baruch Goldstein for instance on his shooting spree in a Mosque) each to further its violent pursuits.

⁴ J. Dudayev and Y. Zarakhovich, "Terms of War and Peace" *Time*, March 4, 1996.

⁵ Speckhard, Anne Unpublished research interviews of Beslan Hostages August 2005.

⁶ Ruslan Khazbulatov, *Vzorvannaya Jizn: Kreml' I Russisko-Chechenskaya Voyna* Moscow 2002.

⁷ Ruslan Khazbulatov, *Vzorvannaya Jizn: Kreml' I Russisko-Chechenskaya Voyna* Moscow 2002.

⁸ For a more in-depth discussion of this topic of fictive kin see Scott Atran, *Genesis of Suicide Terrorism*. Science, 7 March 2003, Vol 299.

⁹ See Cerwyn Moore "Introductory Chapter: The Russo-Chechen Conflict and Contemporary Ethno-Political Violence: Chechnya and Suicide Attacks – Chechnya" for an indepth discussion and analysis of the politics of this time period. Unpublished manuscript. 2005.

¹⁰ See Nick Paton Walsh "Former Russian officer accused of being MI5 spy in Moscow" *The Guardian* Friday January 16, 2004; Testimony of Chris Smith, co-chairman of the Helsinki Commission October 28, 2005 before the U.S. Congress reported on <http://eng.trepashkin.ru/reaction/97664.html>; Trenin, Dmitri; Malashenko, Aleksei and Lieven, Anatol (2004) *Russia's Restless Frontier: The Chechnya*

¹¹ This territory traditionally had been part of Chechnya but the map was redrawn during Soviet times. Likewise in Dagestan there existed a group of Wahhabists who were being persecuted by the Russians. The hope was to reunite the two groups but the traditional Wahhabists in Dagestan wanted no part of it.

¹² See Ted Koppel *Reign of Terror* ABC News Nightline July 28, 2005 in which Shamil Basayev admits to interviewer Andrei Babitsky, that other events like Beslan can be in the offing, "Of course, they can. As long as the genocide of the Chechen nation continues, as long as this mess continues, anything can happen. Okay, I admit, I'm a bad guy. A bandit, a terrorist. Okay. So, I'm a terrorist. But what would you call them?"

¹³ Andrei Babitsky, Russia: RFE/RL Interviews Chechen Field Commander Umarov July 28, 2005.

¹⁴ We have classified suicide bombers as anyone who goes so far as to strap on a bomb, drive a vehicle filled with explosives to a target or who otherwise attempts to detonate an explosive device on an airplane, in a subway or train car, or elsewhere with the aim of dying to kill - irrespective of whether or not the bomber actually died in the attack or was successful in detonating - as that is often not within the bomber's control. We take the fact of being to the point of willingly strapping on a bomb or other type of improvised explosive device or driving a vehicle loaded with explosives to a target as enough evidence of seriousness of the intent to suicide and see the end result which is often out of the hands of the bomber as less meaningful than the intent implied by these actions. There is some controversy as to whether or not the Dubrovka bombers were suicide bombers as they did not die by exploding themselves as their plan to do so was interrupted by the Russian special forces gassing and storming the building. Since we have strong confirmation from many family members, close associates and hostages of these terrorists to dies by self-explosion and the fact that the women were already in suicide belts we take their intent and behavior of strapping on bombs as strong enough evidence to classify them as suicide bombers for this analysis. To leave them out of the analysis would, in our opinion, be a mistake as clearly they were intending to carry out their suicide mission if the Russian Special Forces had not thwarted it. We consider this analogous to the many now incarcerated Palestinian bombers who have been thwarted in the last moments before their attempts but who are also closely studied to understand the psychology and psycho-social aspects of suicide bombers.

¹⁵ Regarding corruption of the Russian forces see Anna Politkovskaia *A Small Corner of Hell: Dispatches from Chechnya* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003. Basayev and the other terrorists regularly publicly state that they operate by bribes crossing checkpoints in their first foray into Russia for terrorism (Budyonnovsk) to taking over the school in Beslan.

¹⁶ These numbers are based upon our database of attacks attributed to Chechens as of the article's writing in late August of 2005. Quantifying the exact numbers of those killed and wounded in attacks, the gender of bombers and so on is difficult as reports vary by government and news source and specifics about the accomplished bombers are not always evident after an attack. We have in every case used the more conservative estimates, as our experience with journalists reporting in and about Chechnya is that they have difficulty getting reports and sometimes rely on rumors.

¹⁷ As of August 2005.

¹⁸ For a more complete analysis of this event see Anne Speckhard, "Soldiers for God: A Study of the Suicide Terrorists in the Moscow Hostage Taking Siege," in *The Roots of Terrorism: Contemporary Trends and Traditional Analysis*, Edited by Oliver McTernan, NATO Science Series, Brussels, 2004. Anne Speckhard, Nadejda Tarabrina, Valery Krasnov & Khapta Akhmedova, "Research Note: Observations of Suicidal Terrorists in Action," in *Terrorism and Political Violence*, Vol. 16(2), Summer 2004, pp. 305-27. Speckhard, A., Tarabrina, N., Krasnov, V. & Mufel, N. (2005) Posttraumatic and acute stress responses in hostages held by suicidal terrorists in the takeover of a Moscow theater. *Traumatology*, Volume 11, Issue 1 (March, 2005). Speckhard, A., Tarabrina, N; Krasnov, V. & Mufel, N. (2005) "Stockholm Effects and Psychological Responses to Captivity in Hostages Held by Suicidal Terrorists" in *Traumatology*: Vol. 11, Issue 2. (reprinted in S. Wessely & V. Krasnov eds. *Psychological Responses to the new Terrorism: A NATO Russia Dialogue*, 2005, IOS Press).

¹⁹ In an interesting twist rebel and main terrorist leader Shamil Basayev claims taking over the planes with suicide terrorists but not bombing them, claiming that the terrorists hijacked the planes for media attention but that the Russians themselves downed the planes simultaneously upon learning of the hijackings. See ABC News Nightline July 28, 2005 *Reign of Terror* in which Basayev claims, "They were supposed to hijack the planes and demand an end to the war. And they were not supposed to let them land until there was some response. But they were immediately shot down. Whatever, our hijackers weren't supposed to blow up the planes just like that. And I wonder why both planes exploded at the same time." Basayev it should be noted is a well-known Chechen terrorist leader who nearly always paints himself as the victimized innocent while simultaneously claiming responsibility for very heinous terrorist acts. Nevertheless, while the official line from Russia is that the bombers brought the planes down it must be acknowledged that it is increasingly becoming agreed upon policy by governments that domestic planes overtaken by suicide terrorists intent on using the plane as a weapon may be downed by military means.

²⁰ See John Reuter "Chechnya's Suicide Bombers: Desperate, Devout, or Deceived?" American Committee for Peace in Chechnya, September 16, 2004. pp 19-20.

- ²¹ Bloom, Mia (2005) Dying to kill: The Allure of Suicide Terror Columbia University Press, New York
- ²² See Speckhard, Anne & Akhmedova, Khapta (2005) "Black Widows: The Chechen Female Suicide Terrorists, in Yoram Schweitzer ed. Female Suicide Terrorists Jaffe Center Publication, Tel Aviv, Israel; Anne Speckhard & Khapta Akhmedova, The Making of a Martyr: Chechen Suicide Terrorism (2006) Journal of Studies in Conflict and Terrorism
- Anne Speckhard, "Soldiers for God: A Study of the Suicide Terrorists in the Moscow Hostage Taking Siege," in *The Roots of Terrorism: Contemporary Trends and Traditional Analysis*, Edited by Oliver McTernan, NATO Science Series, Brussels, 2004. Anne Speckhard, Nadejda Tarabrina, Valery Krasnov & Khapta Akhmedova, "Research Note: Observations of Suicidal Terrorists in Action," in *Terrorism and Political Violence*, Vol. 16(2), Summer 2004, pp. 305-27. Posttraumatic and acute stress responses in hostages held by suicidal terrorists in the takeover of a Moscow theater. *Traumatology*, Volume 11, Issue 1 (March, 2005). Speckhard, A., Tarabrina, N; Krasnov, V. & Mufel, N. (2005) "Stockholm Effects and Psychological Responses to Captivity in Hostages Held by Suicidal Terrorists" in *Traumatology*: Vol. 11, Issue 2. (reprinted in S. Wessely & V. Krasnov eds. Psychological Responses to the new Terrorism: A NATO Russia Dialogue, 2005, IOS Press).
- ²³ Speckhard unpublished Beslan interviews August 2005.
- ²⁴ See Mia Bloom Dying to Kill: The Allure of Suicide Terror, Columbia University Press, 2005.
- ²⁵ See Robert Pape Dying to Win: The Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism Random House, New York, 2005.
- ²⁶ See Alex P. Schmidt and Albert I. Jongman et al., Political Terrorism (SWIDOC), Amsterdam and Transaction Books, 1988), p. 5.
- ²⁷ These fatwas continue to this day with respected Islamic philosopher Yusuf Kardavi publishing the following fatwa in support of the Chechen jihad, although he is unclear as to whether or not he supports terrorism as part of that jihad. His words are as following, "To support oppressed Muslims anywhere on the planet is a duty of every true believer. There is no doubt that Chechens lead a just fight in an attempt to protect their country, their religion and their dignity. By doing so, they demonstrate the best type of Jihad in the eyes of Allah." See Pravda "Chechens are promised Heaven for killing Russians" 04/22/2004.
- ²⁸ See *The Suicidal Mind*, Edwin S. Shneidman Oxford University Press, 1996 in which he discusses the concept of a psychological autopsy following a normal suicide..
- ²⁹ See Scott Atran, Genesis of Suicide Terrorism. Science, 7 March 2003, Vol 299. pg 534
- ³⁰ See World Health Organization
- ³¹ deJong, Kaz; van der Kam, Saskia; Ford, Nathan; Hargreaves, Sally; van Oosten, Richard; Cunningham, Debbie; Boots, Gerry & Andrault, Elodie The Trauma of ongoing war in Chechnya Medecins Sans Frontieres Report August 2004.
- ³² Akhmedova, K. (2003) Fanatism and revenge idea of civilians who had PTSD. Social and Clinical Psychiatry. Volume 12, Number 3. PP 24-32s
- ³³ See also Speckhard & Akhmedova, "Mechanisms of Generating Suicide Terrorism: Trauma and Bereavement as Psychological Vulnerabilities in Human Security – The Chechen Case," in Jill Donnelly Ed. NATO Science Series, Brussels, 2004. Speckhard, Anne & Akhmedova, Khapta (2005) "Talking to Terrorists" Journal of Psychohistory, Fall; and Speckhard, Anne. "Understanding Suicide Terrorism: Countering Human Bombs and Their Senders" in *Topics in Terrorism: Toward a Transatlantic Consensus on the Nature of the Threat* (Volume I) Eds. Jason S. Purcell & Joshua D. Weintraub Atlantic Council Publication 2005.
- ³⁴ See Anna Politkovskaya, "Smert' Voenovo Kommendanta. Pochemu pogib General Gadzhiev?," Novaya Gazeta, 14 January 2002 www.novayagazeta.ru , Accessed August 9, 2004 and Yuliya Yuzik, Excerpt from Nevesti Allaha. Komsomolskaya Pravda, 22 October 2003.
- ³⁵ Researcher Janoff-Bulman posits that in normal times and given nurturing upbringings most individuals hold what she calls world assumptions. Three fundamental assumptions that according to Janoff-Bulman³⁵ generally go unquestioned and unchallenged are: benevolence, and meaningfulness of the world and a sense of self worth. Whereas the experience of a psychological trauma (i.e. an inescapable, horrifying and terrifying experience which is life threatening or threatens serious injury, or in which a person witnesses or learns of the death or serious injury of another) often so challenges these assumptions that they are completely shattered, and unable to be rebuilt. Indeed reparative psychological work with trauma victims often involves rebuilding a cognitive frame capable of "holding" the emotional and cognitive aspects of the traumatic event. For further explanation of this concept See Janoff-Bulman, R. (1992). Shattered Assumptions: Towards a New Psychology of Trauma. New York: The Free Press and Speckhard & Akhmedova, "Mechanisms of Generating Suicide Terrorism: Trauma and Bereavement as Psychological Vulnerabilities in Human Security – The Chechen Case," in Jill Donnelly Ed. NATO Science Series, Brussels, 2004.
- ³⁶ See Janoff-Bulman, R. (1992). Shattered Assumptions: Towards a New Psychology of Trauma. New York: The Free Press and Speckhard & Akhmedova, "Mechanisms of Generating Suicide Terrorism: Trauma and Bereavement as

Psychological Vulnerabilities in Human Security – The Chechen Case,” in Jill Donnelly Ed. NATO Science Series, Brussels, 2004.

³⁷ See Anne Speckhard & Khapta Ahkmedova, *The Making of a Martyr: Chechen Suicide Terrorism* (2006) *Journal of Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* Anne Speckhard, “Soldiers for God: A Study of the Suicide Terrorists in the Moscow Hostage Taking Siege,” in *The Roots of Terrorism: Contemporary Trends and Traditional Analysis*, Edited by Oliver McTernan, NATO Science Series, Brussels, 2004. Anne Speckhard, Nadejda Tarabrina, Valery Krasnov & Khapta Ahkmedova, “Research Note: Observations of Suicidal Terrorists in Action,” in *Terrorism and Political Violence*, Vol. 16(2), Summer 2004, pp. 305-27., and Anne Speckhard unpublished Beslan interviews August 2005.

³⁸ See Post, Jerrold, Sprinzak, Ehud and Denny, Laurita (2003) *The terrorists in Their Own Words: Interviews with 35 Incarcerated Middle Eastern Terrorists*. *Terrorism and Political Violence*, volume 15, number 1, pp. 171-184.

³⁹ See Laqueur, Walter (1999) *The New Terrorism: Fanaticism and the Arms of Mass Destruction*. Oxford University Press. P.98.

⁴⁰ Akhmedova, K. (2003) *Fanatism and revenge idea of civilians who had PTSD*. *Social and Clinical Psychiatry*. Volume 12, Number 3. PP 24-32s

⁴¹ Psychic pain meaning deeply felt emotions that are painful to the individual. See *The Suicidal Mind*, Edwin S. Shneidman Oxford University Press, 1996. Shneidman coined the term “psyche ache” stating that the best predictor of an individual’s propensity to suicide is when emotional pain is experienced as overwhelming and inescapable

⁴² Personal communication with female Chechen war survivor September 2005.

⁴³ For more on this see Rape and Other Torture in the Chechnya Conflict: Documented evidence from asylum seekers arriving in the United Kingdom Medical Foundation for the Care of Victims of Torture London, April 2004; Human Rights Watch Russia/Chechnya Report “No happiness remains” Civilian killings, Pillage, and Rape in Alkhan-Yurt, Chechnya April 2000, Vol 12, 5(D). Chechnya Weekly “Mass rape of Chechen men by Federal Forces” Volume 2, Issue 28 (July 24, 2001.

⁴⁴ See John Reuter (2004) “Chechnya’s Suicide Bombers: Desperate, Devout, or Deceived?” The American Committee for Peace in Chechnya publication. <http://www.peaceinchechnya.org/reports/SuicideReport/> accessed June 1, 2005.

⁴⁵ Berman, Eli and David D. Laitin *Rational Martyrs: Evidence from Data on Suicide Attacks*. Ed. *Suicide Bombing from an Interdisciplinary Perspective*. Princeton University Press.

⁴⁶ Myers, Steven Lee “Female Suicide Bombers Unnerve Russians” August 7, 2003 *New York Times*

⁴⁷ See Speckhard, Anne & Akhmedova, Khapta (2005) “Black Widows: The Chechen Female Suicide Terrorists, in Yoram Schweitzer ed. *Female Suicide Terrorists* Jaffe Center Publication, Tel Aviv, Israel and See Anne Speckhard & Khapta Ahkmedova, *The Making of a Martyr: Chechen Suicide Terrorism* (2006) *Journal of Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*

⁴⁸ Reports of rape by Russian forces of Chechens abound – including rapes of both males and females. For instance in 2001 it was reported that seven hundred men were forced to watch the rape of a female by Russian forces. The men were taunted to come to her defense, which sixty-five did. They in turn were handcuffed to an armored personnel carrier and raped. Forty-two of these reportedly asked Aslan Maskhadov to allow them to become human bombers (a request which he refused) and two later attempted suicide – one successful. Likewise human rights groups have documented cases of rapes of Chechen women by Russian soldiers. These groups claim that Chechen society does not allow women to admit to rape and that families no longer accept rape victims and they cannot marry. (Our experience with this is that when rape occurs in a manner in which the girl has absolutely no fault the family often does not reject her and she can still marry.) See Rape and Other Torture in the Chechnya Conflict: Documented evidence from asylum seekers arriving in the United Kingdom Medical Foundation for the Care of Victims of Torture London, April 2004; Human Rights Watch Russia/Chechnya Report “No happiness remains” Civilian killings, Pillage, and Rape in Alkhan-Yurt, Chechnya April 2000, Vol 12, 5(D); Chechnya Weekly “Mass rape of Chechen men by Federal Forces” Volume 2, Issue 28 (July 24, 2001 and *Politskovsakaya*, Anna no. 49 (July 16) issue of *Novaya Gazeta*

⁴⁹ Anne Speckhard Beslan Unpublished hostage interviews August 2005.

⁵⁰ See John Reuter (2004) “Chechnya’s Suicide Bombers: Desperate, Devout, or Deceived?” The American Committee for Peace in Chechnya publication. <http://www.peaceinchechnya.org/reports/SuicideReport/> accessed June 1, 2005, pg 23.

⁵¹ See Andrew Silke “Retaliating against terrorism” in *Terrorists, Victims and Society: Psychological Perspectives on Terrorism and its Consequences*. Wiley, 2003 and Bloom, Mia (2005) *Dying to kill: The Allure of Suicide Terror* Columbia University Press, New York pp 82.

⁵² Anne Speckhard Unpublished Beslan Interviews August 2005.

⁵³ Sister of Chechen Rebel Leader Abducted, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, Friday August 12, 2005.

⁵⁴ Andrei Babitsky, Russia: RFE/RL Interviews Chechen Field Commander Umarov July 28, 2005.

⁵⁵ Kaplan, Edward H. & Mintz, Alex “What happened to Suicide Bombings in Israel: Insights from a Terror Stock Model” *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, 29:225-235, 2005

⁵⁶ See Scott Atran, *Genesis of Suicide Terrorism*. *Science*, 7 March 2003, Vol 299. pg 534.

⁵⁷ In an interview for Radio Free Europe on June 3, 2005 the new Chechen resistance leader Abdul-Khalim Sadullaev announced that he intends to promote unity and stability within the resistance and following in Maskhadov's footsteps he also denounced terrorist attacks on civilian targets. Although he did not rule out further attacks on Russian territory but said such attacks would not target civilians and be limited to targeting the Russian military. For more on this see Chechnya Page, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty <http://www.rferl.org/specials/chechnya/> accessed November 12, 2005.