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CE AMIR ACCUSES MUHAMMAD IN THE NOKCHICHO SCHISM

CE amir ‘Abu Usman’ Dokku Umarov has blamed the Jordanian mujahed Abu Anas Muhammad (Al Qa’ida’s emissary in the Caucasus and
former naib or deputy of the CE’s military amir), for the split among the CE’s Nokchicho Vilaiyat mujahedin and the separation of several leading Chechen (Nokchicho) amirs from the CE jihadi network’s command.\(^1\) In a videotape later transcribed by and posted on various jihadi sites, Umarov appeared to be appealing to the elite of the global jihadi revolutionary movement – that is jihadi sheikhs like Osama bin Laden and scholars like Syrian sheikh Abu Basyr at-Tartusi – in his condemnation of Muhammad. He stated he had been forced to appeal to them through the internet because of the actions of “your brother Muhammad” “who represents you among us,” noting: “There are many sheikhs among you. There are many mujahedin among you. There are many scholars among you.”\(^2\)

In his appeal, Umarov charged Muhammad with opposing the formation of the Caucasus Emirate from its beginning and constantly lobbying for his point of view among the Caucasus mujahedin, arguing that it was when emirates were declared in Iraq and Afghanistan that the jihad “came to a dead end.” At the “last Madzhlisul Shura” before the split, according to Umarov, Muhammad had insisted that the Shura not the amir has the last word. Umarov sought to settle this dispute by referring to CE naib Supyan Abdullaev, who sided with Umarov by reaffirming as correct his view that the amir and not the Shura has the last word in all matters. Muhammad then told leading Nokchicho amir Tarkhan Gaziev that it was now “\(\text{farrz ‘ain}\)” (Arabic for ‘obligatory’) for them to remove Umarov from the position of amir.\(^3\)

Umarov also indicated that Muhammad had been sewing discontent within the CE for a long time. He said he had received “signals” from the Dagestan Vilaiyat’s mujahedin and now captured Ingush Vilaiyat amir and CE military amir ‘Magas’ Ali Taziev (aka Akhmed Yevloev) a year ago, and that when he first met with Muhammad for the first time this year, the later called Magas a “bad brother.” He added that Muhammad was continuing to sew discord “fitna” among the mujahedin by reiterating his claim that it was now farrz ‘ain to remove Umarov from the position of CE amir, and he closed by saying that as soon as he appoints a new CE qadi to replace the recently killed

CE qadi and Dagestan Vilaiyat amir Seifullah Gubdenskii (born as Magomedali Vagabov) Muhammad’s case will be brought before the CE’s Shariah Court.4

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SYRIAN GLOBAL JIHADI SHEIKH ABU BASYR AT-TARTUSI BACKS UMAROV

Subsequent to Umarov’s September appeal, a missive from one of the global jihadi revolutionary movement’s leading theologians and ideologists, the Syrian sheikh Abu Basyr at-Tartusi, called on Muhammad to subordinate to Umarov, who as amir constitutes the final authority in the Caucasus jihad: “You must either acknowledge your guilt, cease this dissent, request forgiveness and repent or be removed and isolated, returning to your country and going home.”5 Tartusi’s missive, coming after Umarov’s appeal to unidentified sheikhs, suggests that Tartusi was the lone or one of several sheikhs to whom the CE amir had addressed his appeal.

Soon after the CE split in August, supporters of CE amir Abu Usman Dokku Umarov at the website IslamUmma.com appealed to Arab sheikh and Islamic scholar Sheikh Abu Basyr At-Tartusi to issue a judgement on the schism in the CE. In less definite terms than in the recent missive Tartusi endorsed the CE amir in a brief Arab- and Russian-language fatwa, writing: “The mujahedin under Dokku Umarov’s leadership are the legal rulers of their countries and their people according to Shariah law, and people are obliged to enter into subordination to them and uion with them.” According to the introduction to fatwa written by the site’s manager(s), Tartusi is cited in discussion (verbal or email is not indicated) as saying that he “loves” and “supports” the Mujahedin in the Caucasus”, “is together with them”, and

“values Amir Dokku Umarov” as “a major Mujahed.”

Tartusi’s new missive is a more clear and precise statement of unequivocal support for Umarov against Muhammad and the Nokchicho dissenters than his August statement. Tartusi weighed in with similarly clear statements supporting Umarov in the form of a reported conversation with him and a subsequent fatwa in September (See IIPER, No. 24).

CE WEBSITES CONTINUE TO PUBLISH GLOBAL JIHADI TRACTS


CE CONTINUES TO ATTRACT RECRUITS FROM MUSLIM AND NON-MUSLIM REGIONS OUTSIDE OF THE CAUCASUS

The CE continues to attract recruits from both Muslim and non-Muslim regions and peoples outside the North Caucasus. An ethnic Yakut sniper, named Abd ad-Darr, was fighting within the ranks of the CE’s Dagestan Vilaiyat mujahedin in 2010 and was featured in a July 28, 2010 video on the CE website Kavkaz tsentr website. The FSB reported on July 26, 2010 that a 26-year-old mujahed killed days earlier in Chechnya in a special operation was from Bashkortostan and had been active in Chechnya’s Shatoisky District. He was identified as Rustam Rahmatullin from the village of Zirgan, Melyeuozovsky District, Bashkiria and a former member of and recruiter in Bashkiria for the Hizb ut-Tahrir al-Islami international Islamist organization from 2007 before coming to the North Caucasus at the end of May 2010. It is unclear whether Rahmatullin was an ethnic Bashkir or an ethnic Tatar from Bashkortostan. Kavkaz tsentr also reported that three Slavic young men from Karachi-Cherkessia were arrested and charged with engaging in terrorism for the mujahed. It also reported, citing Russian sources, that an ethnic Georgian mujahed, Roland Machalikashvili, was killed by Russian forces in mid-August, 2010 in Achkhoi-Martan, Chechnya.

CE KEEPS ITS EYE ON ADYGEYA AND SIBERIA

The CE continues to focus on areas beyond its present reach including territories far outside the North Caucasus in its agitation and propaganda materials. Summer 2010 saw several articles devoted to the Republic of Adygeya and Siberia. On July 27th Kavkaz tsentr posted a letter from a Muslim in the resort city of Tuaps in the Republic of Adygeya titled “If It Is Necessary To Fight, Then We Will Fight.” Adygeya is a Russian republic

12 The video is titled “Snaiiper Abd ad-Darr: Dzhikhad modzhakheda is Yakutii, Vilaiyat Dagestan, 1431 goda (2010 g.),” was filmed in winter, is 27 minutes in duration and was accessed on Kavkaz tsentr on 28 July 2010.
embedded inside Russia’s Krasnodar Krai and thus it has no border with any other territorial-administrative unit or region but Krasnodar. Russians compose the majority of Adygeya’s population, with the Muslim Adyg – a Circassian sub-ethnic group like the KBR’s Kabardins and the KChR’s Cherkess – making up 27 percent. The author condemned the Russians who visit the resort city every summer for turning it into “a bordello with perversions.” He also declared Tuaps and Adygeya “purely Adyg lands,” spoke of talk that combat jamaats had been organized in Adygeya, and appealed to the Caucasus Emirate “not to forget about” the Adygs and Adygeya. On the same day, Kavkaz tsentr also published an article opposing the Adygeya authorities’ ostensible attempts to strengthen Sufism in the republic, which the article called traditionally weak in Adygeya. It condemned an offer to students posted on the walls of a mosque in Adygeya’s capitol Maikop to study in the Seifullah Kadi Dagestan State University and receive a waiver from serving in the Russian army as a deception, since after graduation the students would still be required to serve.

On July 30, the website of the CE’s G’alg’aiche Vilaiyat (Ingushetia) mujahedin published a long article by CE-GV ideologist Abu-t-Tanvir Kavkazskii condemning Russia’s taking of the Muslim Tatar Siberian Khanate in the 16th century.

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**MARTYR’S FAREWELL VIDEO SHEDS NEW LIGHT ON DECEMBER 2009 ‘DZHANIEV AFFAIR’**

The Riyadus Salikhin Martyrs’ Battalion has issued a video in its name of the December 2009 martyrdom attack carried out by Batyr Dzhaniev in Nazran, Ingushetia on a road checkpoint or blockpost and a column of military vehicles. The video shows the bomb-making process Dzhaniev’s farewell statement, and the explosion in the center of Ingushetia that killed and wounded over 30. The video appeared on Kavkaz tsentr, accessed 1 October 2010. It will be recalled (see IIPER, No. 6, January 8, 2010) that on December 17, two car bombs exploded in Nazran, Ingushetia. The first killed three relatives of deceased Ingush human rights champion Maksharip Aushev. His pregnant widow, Fatima Dzhanieva, was wounded in the bombing. Her mother, Leila Dzhanieva, and one brother, Muslim Dzhaniev, were killed.

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instantly; Muslim had studied at an officers’ academy in St. Petersburg. A
second brother, Amirkhan Dzhaniev, died four days later from serious wounds
suffered in the explosion. Aushev himself was murdered on 25 October when
unknown assailants fired on his car driving from Kabardino-Balkaria to
Ingushetia.

The second car bomb explosion on 17 December 2009 was detonated
by a RS suicide martyr, marking the 21st and last suicide bombing of 2009. A
December 23 press release from the RS’s command claimed responsibility for
this second car explosion in Nazran, which occurred just hours after the
Dzhanievs’ car exploded. The statement claimed that another Dzhaniev
brother, Batyr, was the suicide martyr in the RS attack, which killed at least ten
MVD servicemen and injured 23. The RS release notes that the car of the
Aushev’s relatives exploded just as the last preparations for the RS suicide
attack on the MVD were being completed. Russian and local security organs
also have identified Batyr Dzhaniev as the suicide martyr. However, two days
before the RS statement appeared, Aushev’s mother claimed that Batyr
Dzhaniev had been in, on his way to, or returning from Astrakhan when the RS
attack occurred and might have been abducted by law enforcement elements
and then falsely accused of being the suicide martyr.

According to the RS statement, Batyr Dzhaniev commandeered the
vehicle and “long ago expressed the wish to take part in a martyrdom
operation.” It adds that on the morning of December 16 Batyr had prayed not
only for his own martyrdom but for that of his relatives, but it emphasizes that
the bomb that killed the Dzhanievs was planted in the vehicle after FSB
officers searched it, suggesting that the FSB agents had planted the bomb.

Some reports from the region claim that law enforcement personnel fired on
the Dzhanievs’ car for failing to stop at a checkpoint, and as a result the car
exploded. Others hold that the car exploded some 50 meters from where it had
been checked by law enforcement agents as it drove away. Law enforcement
officials claim that an IED the Dzhanievs were carrying detonated in the car.

The U.S. State Department commented on the December killing of
three Dzhanievs related to human rights champion Aushev. The attack on
Aushev’s family occurred weeks after he received a posthumous award from

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18 “Operatsiya batal’ona ‘Riyadus-salikhin’ v vilayate G”alg”aiche, Hunafa.com, 23
19 “Mar’yam Dzhaniev: Ob”yavlennyi terrorizom Batyr Dzhaniev uekhal iz Nazrani
nakanune terakta,” Kavkaz uzel, 21 December 2009, 9:10, www.kavkaz-
uzel.ru/articles/163342/.
20 “Operatsiya batal’ona ‘Riyadus-salikhin’ v vilayate G”alg”aiche, Hunafa.com, 23
21 “Mar’yam Dzhaniev: Ob”yavlennyi terrorizom Batyr Dzhaniev uekhal iz Nazrani
nakanune terakta,” Kavkaz uzel, 21 December 2009, 9:10, www.kavkaz-
uzel.ru/articles/163342/.
the State Department for his struggle for human rights in Russia’s Republic of Ingushetia.\(^{22}\)

As I noted at the time of these two incidents, “(i)t is not State Department practice to comment on every death in the North Caucasus. The State Department officials and Western media comment only when mass, high-profile terrorist attacks kill and wound hundreds or when individual human rights activists are killed in the region, especially as local officials like Chechen President Ramzan Kadyrov are suspected of being involved in extrajudicial killings in and outside the region. Neither the U.S. government or the Western media pay much attention to the almost daily killings in Ingushetia as well as Chechnya and Dagestan of local police and civilian officials, Russian servicemen and officers, as well as civilians in the ongoing civil war in the republic between the extremist jihadi mujahedin of the self-declared Caucasus Emirate (CE), on the one hand, and Moscow, the local state apparatus, and official Islamic clergy, on the other hand. Therefore, it is safe to assume that the State Department is concerned that the attack on the Aushev-Dzhaniev family was perpetrated by elements of the state siloviki and will be covered up civilian official allies. Although this certainly occurs in the region and throughout Russia all too frequently, there is some reason to believe that in this case, the answer may not be so simple.

“The CE jihad often leads to civilian casualties inflicted by both sides, but in April the CE justified civilian killings during jihad and announced it had revived the ‘Riyadus Salikhin’ battalion. The CE perpetrates the overwhelming majority of killings in the North Caucasus. Some one thousand casualties in the North Caucasus annually over the last few years have come at the hands of the CE mujahedin in attacks on state agents, whether they be civilian officials or servicemen or officers of the military, police, and intelligence. It would be within the CE’s ‘moral code’ to kill relatives of a man who received a reward from the main target in the global jihad, the U.S., against which the CE has declared jihad, calculating that the West would assume that Russian or local state agents were behind the attack. It is certainly within the CE’s technical and intelligence capacities to plant a remotely detonated IED on the Dzhanievs’ vehicle knowing where and when they would be stopped by law enforcement at a checkpoint in the ongoing campaign in Ingushetia to ban tainted glass on unofficial vehicles and stop and search such vehicles. The mujahedin could then detonate the bomb after the car had been searched as the law enforcement personnel walked away, producing the desired impression; one that would drive the wedge even deeper between the Ingush authorities and people, improving the CE’s recruitment potential.

“There are numerous other possible scenarios. Some would lead to the conclusion that one or more of the Dzhanievs’ were engaged in terrorism.

Could the military-trained Muslim Dzhaniev, who was driving the Dzhaniev vehicle and was killed instantly with the explosion, have been transporting another IED using his family as cover? One can imagine other scenarios that would suggest the authorities were behind the killing of the Dzhanievs. Several things are certain: the temporal proximity of two separate deadly explosions involving one family would be an extravagant coincidence; the CE mujahedin have claimed responsibility for one of the attacks and Batyr Dzhaniev’s involvement in that attack and their ranks. Given the intricacies and complex nature of Caucasus and Russian politics, various scenarios are still in play. Therefore, the State Department should be cautious in its assumptions at this point (IIPER, No. 6).

The December 23 RS press release is now backed up by this new videotape of Batyr’s martyrdom farewell statement which proves conclusively that at least one Dzhaniev brother was involved with the jihadists for a significant period of time before the car bomb explosions of December 17, 2009. It corroborates the claim by Russian and local security organs that Batyr Dzhaniev was the suicide martyr and refutes the claim made by Aushev’s mother that Batyr had been on his way, in, or returning from Astrakhan when the RS attack occurred and might have been abducted by law enforcement elements and then falsely accused of being the suicide martyr. Mujahedin are instructed to keep their involvement in the jihad completely secret, even from their closest relatives, and it is natural for parents of deceased mujahedin to deny their child’s involvement because of fear of retribution by the authorities and/or a state of denial and shock that occurs over a lost loved one. Sometimes these relatives may also be accomplices of the mujahedin or mujahedin themselves. Whatever the case here, it is clear that at least one member of the Dzhaniev family was a mujahed, and the State Department must be careful when it steps into the whirlwind and complex set of interwoven relationships one frequently finds in the North Caucasus.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Gordon M. Hahn Interviews in The Caucasus Times and RosBalt


The Russian news agency ‘RosBalt’ also carried an interview with Dr. Hahn

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ABOUT IIPER

Islam, Islamism and politics in Eurasia report (IIPER) is a project of the Monterey Terrorism and Research and Education Program (MonTREP) at the Monterey Institute for International Studies (MIIS), Monterey, California. It focuses on all politically-relevant issues involving or bearing on Islam and ethnic Muslim communities in Russia and Eurasia writ large. All issues of IIPER can be found at http://www.miis.edu/academics/faculty/ghahn/report.

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IIPER welcomes submissions of 1,500-6,000 words on any aspect of Islamic politics in Eurasia and financial contributions to support the project. For related inquiries or to request to be included on IIPER’s mailing list, please contact gordon.hahn@miis.edu or gordon-hahn@sbcglobal.net.

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