

# Crossing the Rubicon: The Limits of Insurgent Violence in Kabardino-Balkaria

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## Abstract

*In the 2000s, relations between an overt Islamic social movement and religious and political authorities in the southern Russian republic of Kabardino-Balkaria became increasingly antagonistic. Eventually, the movement's leadership and a significant part of its membership transitioned to full-blown insurgency. Most assessments of these developments focus on the embrace of violence, placing it in the context of the regionalisation and radicalisation of conflict in Chechnya. Equally important, however, are the limits of this violence. For many years, the movement's leaders publicly opposed the idea of armed struggle and, even when they finally embraced it, violence for several years remained more restrained than seen elsewhere in the region. Drawing on the theoretical work of Busher, Holbrook and Macklin, this article argues that a series of intra-movement factors acted as internal brakes on violent escalation and contributed to this relative restraint and its eventual breakdown. Four closely related brakes are particularly important: the movement's social origins and ties; attitudes regarding the moral permissibility of violence; views on the strategic benefits of violence; and the personal authority of leaders. This case illustrates how internal dynamics can limit as well as facilitate violence, and how disrupting these dynamics can exacerbate instability.*

**Keywords:** North Caucasus, Kabardino-Balkaria, Russia, insurgency, leadership, terrorism

## Introduction

It is easy to treat political violence in binary terms, classifying actors as either violent or non-violent. The decision to employ violence then becomes of great significance, with actors crossing the proverbial Rubicon and taking a critical, irrevocable step. Much like the Rubicon river in Italy, however, the threshold to violence is a symbolic and psychological barrier, not a practical one. Actors can move backwards and forwards across it, and they can differ in how far beyond they are prepared to travel. We therefore need to differentiate between violent groups and examine both how they came to cross their particular Rubicon and how they behave on the other side. Part of this, as this Special Issue recognises, involves examining why groups impose constraints on violence even after they have accepted its legitimacy.

Developments in Kabardino-Balkaria, a republic in Russia's North Caucasus, provide us with an ideal opportunity for examining this important topic. In the 2000s, conflict escalated between an overt Islamic social movement, the Kabardino-Balkarian Jama'at (KBJ), and local religious and political authorities. Eventually, the KBJ's leadership and much of its membership transitioned to insurgency, forming part of a regional jihadist front. To date, this process has predominantly been viewed through the prism of the spread of conflict from nearby Chechnya.[1] This focus, while logical, tells only part of the story. Even after the transition, insurgent violence remained relatively restrained. Only after the insurgency had operated for several years did apparent restraints deteriorate and did violence escalate.

This article seeks to understand the reasons for restraint and its eventual erosion. Drawing on the theoretical contribution of Busher, Holbrook and Macklin that has inspired this Special Issue,[2] it argues that intra-movement factors acted as internal brakes on violent escalation. Four closely related brakes were particularly significant: the movement's social origins and ties; articulated attitudes on the moral permissibility of violence; views on the strategic benefits of violence; and the personal authority of individual leaders. This case illustrates how internal dynamics can limit violence even after a movement has crossed their Rubicon, and how disrupting these dynamics can negatively impact stability.

The article is structured as follows. The first section profiles the religious dynamics of Kabardino-Balkaria and the escalating conflict between the KBJ and religious and political authorities. The second section details the character of insurgent activity, contextualising violence against evidence of restraint. The final section introduces the concept of internal brakes and the data informing this analysis, before examining in turn each of the brakes that appeared to shape political violence in Kabardino-Balkaria. The article concludes by considering the implications and limitations of these findings.

### ***Religion and Conflict in Kabardino-Balkaria***

The rise of jihadism in Kabardino-Balkaria needs to be placed in the context of the republic's unique socio-political and religious dynamics. In the 1990s, the penetration of Islam remained limited and ethnic competition rather than religion provided the primary political cleavage.[3] There were few functioning religious institutions in operation when the Soviet Union collapsed, and cultural practices often did not align with core Islamic principles.[4] As late as 2012, only 54.6% of survey respondents identified as Muslim, a much lower figure than elsewhere in the region.[5] Nevertheless, religion gradually assumed an increasingly important role in social and political life, as evidenced by the growing number of functioning mosques – 11 in 1987, 96 in 1999 and 132 in 2007 – and people travelling abroad for a religious education.[6] To a certain extent, as ethno-nationalism declined as a political force, it was supplanted by religion.[7]

As this process developed, a divide emerged between the old religious establishment and a new generation of believers.[8] On one side, the local coordinating religious body, the Spiritual Board of Muslims of the Kabardino-Balkarian Republic (DUM KBR, hereafter DUM), aligned itself closely with the political establishment on a broad range of social and political issues. In return, it was allowed to gradually establish a de jure monopoly over officially sanctioned Islam.[9] On the other side, this new generation, sometimes referred to as New Muslims, sought to bolster the socio-political role of Islam. They criticised deviations from 'true' Islam, the evident religious ignorance of older imams, and shortcomings in the realm of da'wa (proselytization) and social activism.[10] Indeed, the leaders of the New Muslims often surpassed their DUM counterparts in religious learning, having obtained a theological education either in the republic, elsewhere in the region, or abroad.[11] This mirrored a process seen across the region, whereby a group of young Muslims challenged an established religious community, arguing that the latter's way of believing as well as the way of living were not correct according to Islamic norms.[12]

At the same time, New Muslims became deeply disillusioned with the state, questioning the widespread corruption, clientelism, and lack of opportunities that spread into all spheres of life.[13] The DUM's close association with the authorities made it, for many, part of the problem. By contrast, Shari'ah law came to be seen as offering "a magic solution".[14] By the late 1990s, these challengers had coalesced into a broad social movement known as the Kabardino-Balkarian Jama'at (KBJ), led by Musa Mukozhev and his deputy, Anzor Astemirov. The KBJ called on people to embrace a 'genuine' Islamic identity and morality and sought to regulate members' lives through its interpretation of Shari'ah.[15]

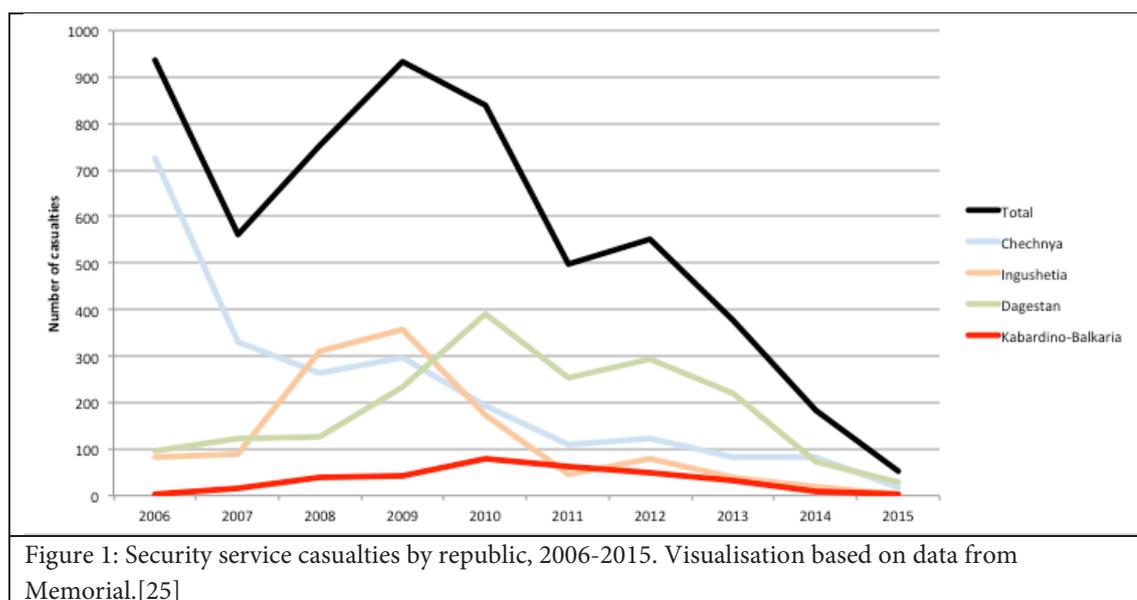
Relations between the KBJ and the political and religious authorities became increasingly antagonistic. Generally hostile to dissent, state authorities adopted increasingly repressive measures towards religious believers in general and the KBJ in particular. The DUM openly collaborated with such repression, which was conducted under the guise of combatting Islamic extremism.[16] In 2000, prosecutors closed numerous religious institutions, including an Islamic Centre that served as one of Mukozhev's main platforms.[17] The DUM simultaneously attempted to shut down the mosque where he preached and curtail the autonomy and rights of any actors not under its direct control.[18] Between summer 2003 and summer 2005, repression escalated as the authorities launched an 'anti-Wahhabism' campaign[19] – 'Wahhabism' being the ill-defined regional nomenclature for all Salafi and non-traditional religious believers. KBJ-affiliated mosques and prayer houses were closed, while other mosques operated restricted opening hours and endured the monitoring of employees and attendees.[20] Although almost all practicing Muslims experienced some discrimination, the weight of these repressive measures targeted a small number of KBJ groups in particular.[21]

The campaign against Islamic extremism occurred against the backdrop of conflict in Chechnya and sporadic jihadist violence linked to Kabardino-Balkaria. Senior rebels from the self-proclaimed Chechen Republic of Ichkeria (ChRI), most notably Shamil Basayev, repeatedly sought to extend conflict beyond Chechnya to the broader region. Some people travelled from Kabardino-Balkaria to Chechnya to fight, while Basayev travelled in the opposite direction in autumn 2003 to persuade locals to open up a jihadist front in the republic.[22] Prior to the emergence of a full-blown insurgency, Zhukov identifies four groups of varying sizes as being briefly active between 1997 and 2005 (see Appendix). Some were implicated in terrorism outside the region, others in preparing to wage jihad in the republic; one reportedly arranged Basayev's visit.[23]

In 2004-2005, these parallel stories of religious conflict and insurgent activity became fully intertwined. In late 2004, Mukozhev and Astemirov disappeared underground. On 13-14 October 2005, they resurfaced as leaders of a major insurgent attack on the republican capital, Nalchik. The attack was claimed by Basayev and co-led by Ilyas Gorchkhanov, head of the Ingushetian Sector of the ChRI's recently created regional military structure, the Caucasus Front. It was a seminal event in the history of the republic, the repercussions of which traumatized the republic for many years. It also signalled the emergence of a full-scale insurgency, with Astemirov and Mukozhev declaring themselves, respectively, to be emir and deputy emir of the Caucasus Front's new Kabardino-Balkarian Sector – the cadres of which were comprised in large part of former KBJ members. In October 2007, the regionalization and Islamization of the North Caucasus insurgency was completed with the replacement of both ChRI and Caucasus Front with the explicitly jihadist proto-state, the Caucasus Emirate (Imarat Kavkaz, IK). Kabardino-Balkaria – or, in the language of the insurgency, the United Vilayyat of Kabarda, Balkaria and Karachay (OVKKBK) [24] – became one of the IK's four key provinces.

### ***The Character and Limits of Insurgent Violence***

The members of the KBJ who transitioned to insurgent activity crossed a Rubicon in engaging in armed violence against the state. At the same time, they differed significantly from regional counterparts in how far beyond that Rubicon they travelled. Data from prominent human rights organization Memorial illustrates that security service casualties were lower in Kabardino-Balkaria than elsewhere, including during the IK's peak years of 2008-2010 (see Figure 1).



Nor was it the case that violence was focused elsewhere: An author-compiled dataset of reporting by local news outlet Caucasian Knot [26] shows that the majority of casualties of violent incidents were either insurgents or security services (see Figure 2). The republic did not witness any suicide attacks,[27] and there were few attacks with a clear religious or ethnic dimension, particularly in the insurgency's early years. Thus, while political

violence was undoubtedly present, there were distinct limits to that violence.

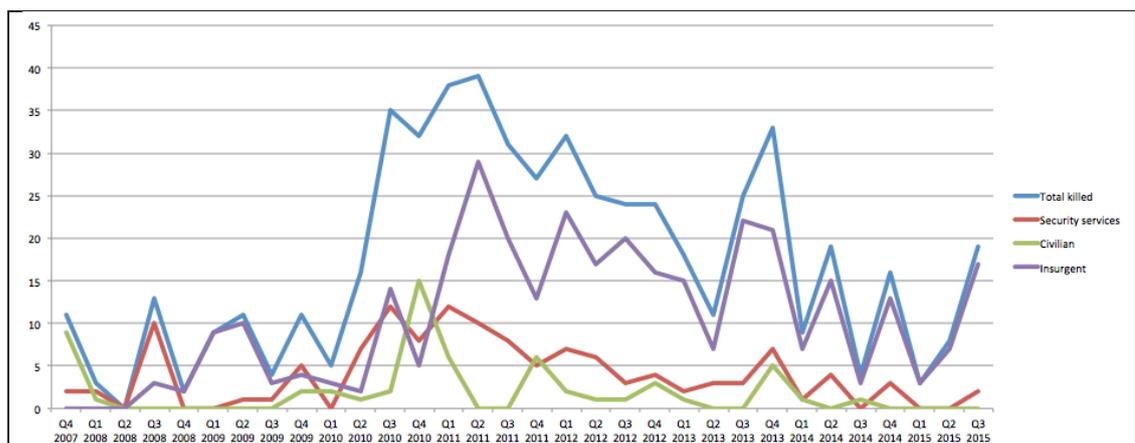


Figure 2: Number of people killed by category per quarter (Oct 07-Aug 15) in Kabardino-Balkaria. Visualisation based on author-compiled incident database of *Caucasian Knot* reporting.

Attitudes to violence did not cease to evolve with the transition to insurgency. Astemirov led the OVKBK until his death in March 2010, and violence until that point remained low. Under his successor, Asker Dzhappuyev (killed April 2011), both the levels and scope of violence increased considerably (see Figure 3), with a broader range of actors designated as accomplices of the infidel state. Religious and ethnic attacks increased – including the December 2010 murders of the republic’s mufti, Anas Psikhachev, and prominent Circassian nationalist and historian Aslan Tsipinov – and there was a geographic expansion of violence beyond Nalchik.[28]

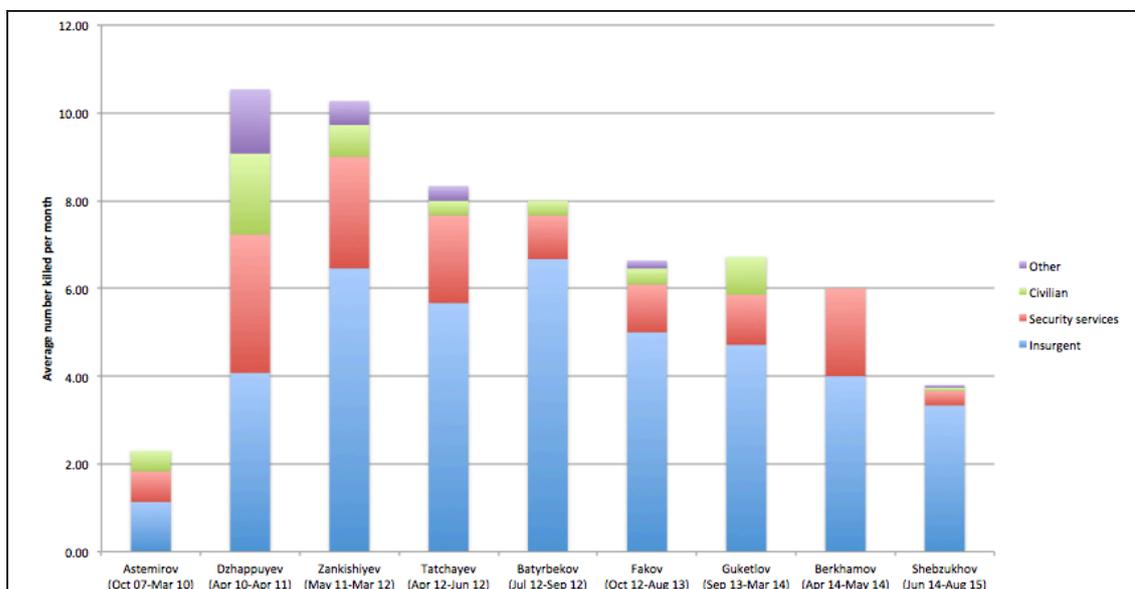
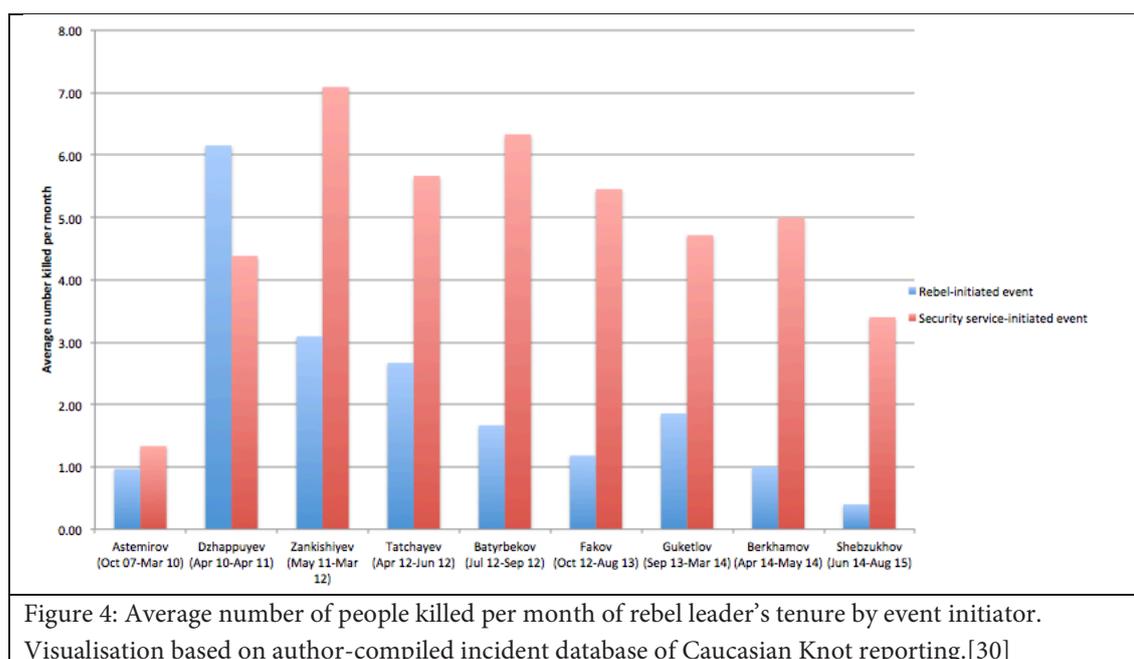


Figure 3: Average number of people killed per month of rebel leader's tenure. Visualisation based on author-compiled incident database of *Caucasian Knot* reporting.[29]

These trends continued during the tenure of subsequent leaders: Alim Zankishiyev (killed March 2012); Timur Tatchayev (killed June 2012); Ruslan Batyrbekov (killed September 2012); Khasanbi Fakov (killed August 2013); Tengiz Guketlov (killed March 2014); and Astemir Berkhamov (killed May 2014). Only under the last recognized leader, Zalim Shebzukov (killed August 2016), did violence return to close to its Astemirov-era levels, although by this point the insurgency’s capacity was significantly diminished. Indeed, arguably post-Astemirov and definitely post-Dzhappuyev, violence was largely security-service driven, and insurgent losses accounted for the single largest category of casualties (see Figure 4).



### ***The Internal Brakes on Political Violence***

Kabardino-Balkaria poses a triple puzzle to efforts to understand the limits of political violence. Why did the KBJ's leadership resist calls to engage in armed struggle for so long, only to then reverse its position and switch to insurgent activity – along with large parts of the membership? Why did the insurgency, having embraced violence, nevertheless exercise considerable restraint? And why did that restraint ultimately disappear? To answer these questions, this article draws on Busher, Holbrook and Macklin's concept of internal brakes on violent escalation, which seeks to understand why "most groups do less violence than they are capable of." They define such brakes as,

The practices through which actors who are recognised as group members seek either: (a) to inhibit directly the adoption or diffusion of more violent tactics by other group members; or (b) foment strategic decisions and (sub)cultural practices the logical consequences of which are to inhibit the adoption or diffusion of more violent tactics.[31]

Applying and extending their typology of five internal brakes or logics (strategic, moral, ego maintenance, outgroup definition, and organisational) provides us with a mechanism for resolving the triple puzzle raised by political violence in Kabardino-Balkaria. We can, after all, point to the important role played by internal factors in shaping KBJ and OVKBK attitudes to violence. On the one hand, the leadership articulated changing positions on violence, and patterns of violence correlated with changes in both those views and the leadership itself. On the other hand, changes cannot be adequately explained by capabilities: there is no evidence for an increase in insurgent capacity under Dzhappuyev, and the smaller insurgency in neighbouring Ingushetia perpetrated much higher levels of violence, including a sustained suicide attack campaign. While inherent to the concept of internal brakes is the recognition that these are not the only important factors – in this case, security service activity was at least as important – consideration of them is necessary to develop a complete picture of political violence in the republic.

In order to assess these internal brakes, this article draws on several sources. First, due acknowledgement needs to be offered to existing literature on the KBJ and OVKBK, most notably rich ethnographic studies by Zhukov, and Shterin and Yarlykapov. The aim in this article is not on the whole to challenge these authors' findings, but rather to bring this work into conversation with the emerging and important literature on restraint. Second, Busher, Holbrook and Macklin's typology has been used as a coding schema to assess 73 statements issued by

the movement's leaders between 2003 and 2015. Finally, it draws on the author's PhD research into the ideology of the IK, which, in addition to examining many of these statements, investigated the internal movement dynamics and external operating environments that shaped this ideology. Analysis of these sources identifies four internal brakes that were key to explaining the evolving manifestations of restraint and its eventual disappearance, and several areas where the theoretical concept of brakes could be further developed.

*Brake One: The Social Embeddedness of the KBJ and OVKBK*

The KBJ represented one of the largest post-Soviet social movements to emerge in the region, operating extensive networks at the village, city, and central level. At its peak, it boasted a membership of several thousand, out of a population of just over 850,000.[32] It was simultaneously integrated into and separated from society, engaging in social activism while seeking to create separate, self-governed spaces. This duality defined the movement, creating “complex relationships of inclusion and exclusion” [34] – something aptly illustrated by the paradox of the KBJ being a significant socio-political actor, but little being known about its internal life.[33]

These social ties arguably conditioned the KBJ's attitudes to violence. As Shterin and Yarlykapov argue, its partial integration into society “contributed to the leadership's desire for legitimacy” in that society.[34] The KBJ's leadership based their claim to legitimacy in part on disassociating the movement from violence and claiming to act within the law. The authorities' attempts to delegitimise the movement, by contrast, centred on establishing a link to violent movements elsewhere and the broad threat of Islamic extremism. However, as the KBJ moved towards embracing violence, these ties to external actors began to be eroded. For example, in an environment of increasing repression, the KBJ's leaders banned its members from contact with the DUM and attending DUM mosques.[35] At the same time, the web of social ties was too complex to be simply cut. Members of the KBJ and DUM continued to attend each other's ceremonies, and the closure of KBJ prayer rooms forced many members to violate the ban and thus maintain social contact with the DUM.[37] The KBJ was also a diffuse movement, with some parts policing their boundaries more strictly than others.

The Nalchik attack illustrates how social ties, while weakened, persisted until the transition, and how violence could reverberate through them. As Zhukov notes, Kabardino-Balkaria is a place, ‘...where familial ties are traditionally strong, [and] hundreds of people who are linked by blood ties in a short period of time found themselves ‘on different sides of the barricades.’[38]

Both Circassian and Balkar culture have detailed norms of conduct that govern social relations that were not easily broken.[36] Shterin and Yarlykapov argue for treating the KBJ and OVKBK as separate movements, distinguished in part by their degree of social separation.[39] This argument has clear merits in rejecting the move to violence as linear and inevitable, but risks obscuring how pre-insurgent ties continued to exert an influence on the movement post-transition to violence. Due to its overt origins, the Kabardino-Balkarian insurgency had more ties to broader society that could be strained or broken compared to its clandestine-from-inception regional counterparts. Moreover, kinship ties that cross political and ideological boundaries can reasonably be argued to exercise greater influence in cultures that place high value on them, compared to more individualistic ones. The transition to violence also involved a fundamental redefinition of in- and out-groups, and personal ties between KBJ members who did and did not make the transition were, if they did not persist, broken only recently. Since the psychological shadow of ties can persist well beyond their practical termination, the OVKBK's origins appear significant to understanding its attitude to violence.

Evidence for the ongoing influence of these social ties comes from the OVKBK's articulated position on violence. During Astemirov's tenure, insurgent statements consistently distinguished between the federal enemy and those who came from local communities. However they were characterized, these two categories were never collapsed into a single identity, and leaders allowed for the possibility of the local ‘them’ becoming ‘us.’[41] Mukozhev observed that among the local police there were people who “work honestly, fight crime, drug addiction and corruption,”[42] and these people were not the enemy. Similarly, Astemirov asserted that the insurgency did “not have a problem with the infidel's tax inspectorate or their military commissariat,” but was instead fighting Russian special forces.[43] Local service to the ‘enemy’ was sharply criticized, but by itself it did not make someone an enemy.

The longer the insurgency was in operation, the more these distinctions eroded. In one of his last statements, for example, Astemirov was more critical of local law enforcement and officials and claimed their attitude had become increasingly “anti-Islamic” over time.[44] His successor, Dzhappuyev, called on local law enforcers to leave their jobs if they wanted to avoid becoming victims of violence – reflecting a shift in where the burden of responsibility for restraining violence was placed.[45] Dzhappuyev also accused the security services of attempting to sow social disharmony and deliberately targeting the OVKBK’s social ties by targeting the relatives of insurgents – something he claimed would lead to retaliation in kind.[46] Yet both Astemirov and Dzhappuyev were consistent in demonstrating a concern for how their actions were perceived by local communities, extensively justifying individual attacks. Eventually, however, those who had previously maintained social ties were killed and replaced by individuals recruited directly into the insurgency. One illustration of the extent of the OVKBK’s social isolation under later leaders was the lack of explanation offered for attacks, which arguably reflected a loss of and lack of interest in local audiences.

Fully accounting for these social ties, using Busher, Holbrook and Macklin’s framework is challenging, suggesting this is one area requiring further conceptual development. On the one hand, they identify “boundary softening in relation to putative out-groups” as a key brake, part of which involves resisting generalisations about opponents.[47] Astemirov’s and Mukozhev’s statements certainly testify to such resistance. On the other hand, there is something deeper – going beyond the cognitive processes and deliberate strategies that are the focus of the framework and relating to the actual composition of the networks and groups themselves – that also needs to be accounted for to fully capture the role of social ties in restraining violence. Research by Staniland and della Porta shows how pre-conflict networks can shape subsequent behaviours and practices, including recruitment, resources, and movement structure.[48] In the case of the OVKBK, we can see how these also shaped attitudes to violence. At the same time, the erosion of these social ties was manifested not so much in changes in how attacks were justified, as by whether they were justified at all.

#### *Brake Two: Moral Imperatives of Leadership*

Busher, Holbrook and Macklin’s typology draws attention to the potential existence of moral logics about “whether it is right to use violence and, if so, under what conditions,” and how these can work to constrain violence through formal communiqués or informal interactions.[49] A focus on the subsequent embrace of violence can easily obscure the importance of such moral brakes during the KBJ’s existence. After all, as Shterin and Yarlykapov note,

For almost a decade its leaders, Musa Mukozhev and Anzor Astemirov, systematically resisted pressures both from inside the movement and from its opponents, rejecting any extreme ways of expressing their beliefs.[50]

Mukozhev repeatedly rejected the legitimacy of waging jihad in Kabardino-Balkaria, distancing the KBJ from armed groups. As late as September 2004, he insisted that the movement was committed, despite worsening circumstances, to operating within the law:

In recent years we have become more and more convinced: Muslims do not have rights. None. We have tried and to this day we continue to try to resolve our problems through legal means.[51]

There is, moreover, no compelling evidence that physical violence was a group norm at this time, rather than a reflection of individual positions.[52]

The sincerity and strength of this brake has been the subject of considerable debate, given subsequent events. [53] Prior to the transition, there were regular public rejections of extremist elements within the KBJ, and many analysts at the time cast doubt on the KBJ’s links to underground groups. At the same time, of the four violent groups identified by Zhukov as operating 1998-2005, all but one emerged from the KBJ (the first predated it). Moreover, later statements by Mukozhev and Astemirov contradict earlier ones, suggesting links with Basayev predate the open embrace of insurgency. Thus, even if one were to prioritise the voice of actors themselves, the question arises as to which voice to prioritise.

Resolving this debate – were it even possible, given that many of those involved are now dead – is beyond the remit of this article. Yet focusing exclusively on the truthfulness of the disassociation is to miss an important point: the process of disassociation shaped the KBJ's engagement with its operating environment regardless of whether it was truthful or not.[54] The authorities' persecution of the movement despite its rejection of violence influenced public perceptions of its legitimacy, such that blame for the Nalchik attack did not fall exclusively on the insurgents – a fact accepted even by Kabardino-Balkarian President Arsen Kanokov, who admitted police crackdowns could have triggered it.[55] By the mid-2000s, practising Muslims were essentially faced with an unenviable choice: leave the republic, conceal their practice, or fight. Open manifestations of religious belief became incompatible with peaceful participation in socio-political life, and the local authorities did not distinguish between violent and non-violent strands of 'non-traditional' Islam, essentially targeting any rivals to the DUM.[56] While it is often contended that the New Muslims returned from abroad with radical ideas, often it was "the younger Muslims' mere opposition to 'traditional' Islam, after experiencing its normative variant in the Middle East, that was perceived as militant." [57] This likely influenced patterns of recruitment into the KBJ and the emerging insurgency, and with it attitudes to violence. As repression increased, so too did the flow of people underground (both towards armed groups and clandestine religious practice).[58] Any effort to paint illegal action as immoral and illegitimate becomes less compelling when the state itself operates on the wrong side of the law. Whereas in 2001 calls to armed jihad had failed to gain significant traction, by late 2004 such ideas found much more fertile soil,[59] and Mukozhev spoke about how it was becoming increasingly difficult to restrain young people from retaliating.[60]

These moral brakes certainly deteriorated significantly with the transition to insurgency, but they did not evaporate entirely. Astemirov, for example, extensively engaged with the question of the legitimacy of applying the concept of defensive jihad to the circumstances of the North Caucasus and Kabardino-Balkaria.[61] The question of legitimacy was now, of course, being decided in favour of violence, but this nevertheless imposed moral constraints on its application – it was not, in Astemirov's reading, a mandate for unrestrained violence. During Astemirov's tenure, other leadership statements sought to emphasise the targeted nature of violence and efforts to avoid civilian casualties.[62] Although such statements served a clear propaganda purpose, they nevertheless stood in stark contrast to the much more aggressive statements issued by counterparts in Dagestan at this time.[63] Moreover, as Figure 2 shows, the articulated desire to avoid civilian casualties was reflected in patterns of violence.

Dzhappuyev's statements as leader testify to the erosion of this moral brake. Although he continued to insist that insurgents actively avoided civilian casualties,[64] he increasingly placed responsibility for avoiding injury on the civilians themselves, calling on them to avoid places where the security services gathered. He also redrew the line between civilian and enemy as he insisted that "Muslims have today no right to be civilians while war is being fought between the infidels and the Muslims." [65] The increase in civilian casualties during Dzhappuyev's tenure stemmed predominantly from this redefinition, with targeting of those accused of collaborating with the security services and the state and those employed by state bodies other than the security services. As time progressed, the boundaries of what constituted a legitimate target expanded in line with the movement's distance from society.

### *Brake Three: Strategic Imperatives of the Leadership*

Intertwined with moral brakes, it is often possible to identify strategic brakes that focus on the question of "what works?" or "how best can we achieve our objectives?" – indeed, these feature prominently in discussions of radical groups.[66] In the case of Kabardino-Balkaria, the evidence for the existence of a strategic brake is much less contentious than that for a moral one. Both the KBJ's and the OVKBK's position on violence was consistently articulated with reference to evolving strategic calculations. The aforementioned position on legitimacy is both moral and strategic in nature, and Mukozhev and Astemirov were never pacifists: they did not reject the legitimacy of armed struggle in general. Mukozhev, for example, rejected Basayev's repeated calls to arms not because he rejected the legitimacy of the Chechen struggle, but on the basis that "it is not our war." [67] He spoke of banning open discussion of the repercussions of persecution, because this would "be interpreted by the security services as a threat to the current authorities, and repressions will follow." [68]

The KBJ's leadership also "strongly rejected the use of violence for the sake of spreading the Islamic faith and setting up an Islamic state," arguing that the low level religiosity in the republic meant the time was not right to implement *Shariah* law.[69] These were as much strategic rejections of violence as moral ones. They focused on a rejection of jihad not as an abstraction, but as applicable to current circumstances, and they prioritized da'wa rather than force as the best means of reaching people. Speaking at a roundtable in Moscow in 2003, Astemirov warned that discrimination against Muslims could have "unpredictable consequences," but also spoke of how "patience had brought its result: mosques have opened, several court cases have been won." [70] By 2005, in the environment of heightened persecution, this confidence by the KBJ leadership in the efficacy of engaging with the authorities and following a legal path had undoubtedly faded.

Following the transition to insurgent activity, Astemirov did not articulate a drastic new position on the legitimacy of violence in general, but rather argued the circumstances had changed to make it appropriate. In Astemirov's reading, jihad was not more important than the other pillars of Islam, but moved to the fore in certain circumstances – those facing the OVKBK being, of course, just such.[71] He placed particular emphasis on the purposefulness of violence:

Today partisan war is not the purposeless destruction of infidels and damage to their property, but a deliberate strategy that does not allow the infidels to definitely become established on the ground and spread debauchery and corruption.[72]

Strategic concerns also clearly came to the fore in relation to appeals to particular communities. Astemirov, for example, adopted a broadly conciliatory position on ethno-nationalism: although he criticized nationalist celebrations, he predominantly portrayed nationalist sentiment as misguided and prioritised Islamic over nationalist identities, rather than portraying nationalists as legitimate targets for violence.[73] At the same time, he sought to co-opt support for broad Circassian nationalism, attempting to demonstrate an alignment of interests by accusing Moscow of interfering in Abkhazian affairs,[74] and eulogizing and claiming the backing of prominent nationalist figure and former Abkhazian Defence Minister Sultan Sosnaliyev.[75] Such appeals were clear manifestations of the strategic brake of attempting "to build or maintain ties with strategically useful allies who are not supportive of violent escalation." [76] This conciliatory position began to erode under Dzhappuyev, including with the assassination of Tshipinov. However, it is noticeable that the insurgency did not specifically target, rhetorically or in practice, ethnic Russian communities – a decision that can be interpreted in part as a strategic effort to avoid provoking a heavy-handed security service response, and in part as an effort to avoid alienating potential supplementary support communities.[77]

This highlights an important point in considering the evolution of the OVKBK: for the early leadership, violence was never a goal in and of itself and, unlike in other parts of the movement, it was never embraced gratuitously. Rather, the choice was presented in terms of what offered the best means of achieving goals at a given time. Astemirov sought to emphasize the restraint shown by insurgents:

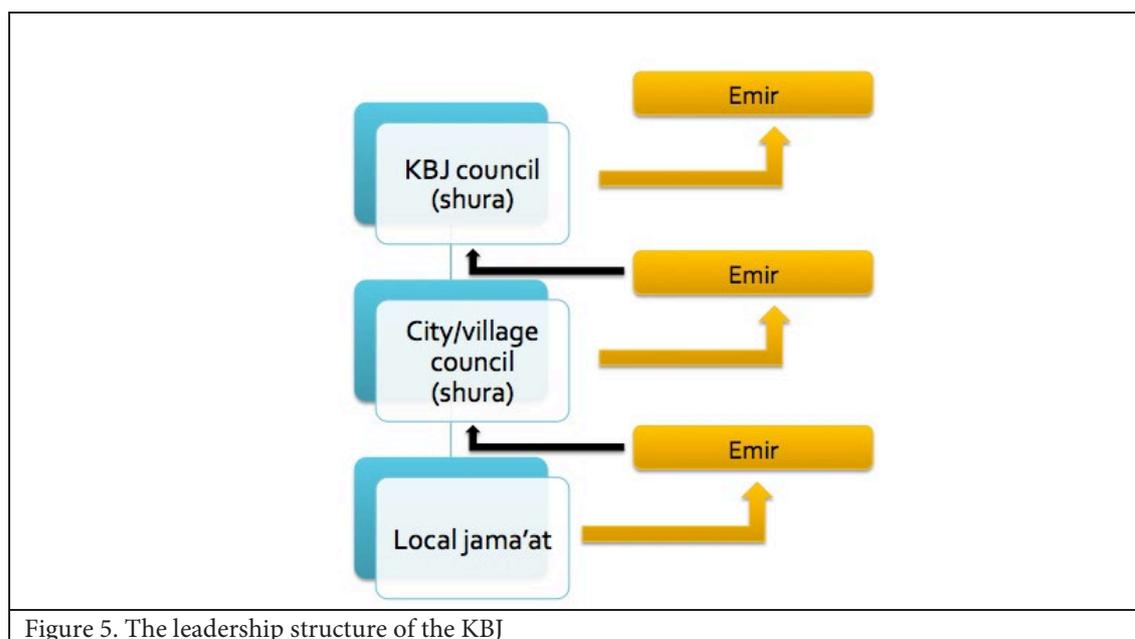
We work according to a different programme, which does not stipulate military activity at the current stage. We do not practice excessive violence except when necessary. We do not see enemies in the local population. We prefer to turn people toward the true path rather than to kill them.[78]

Whatever one thinks of the moral legitimacy of the decision to engage in violence, Astemirov and Dzhappuyev arguably provide ample evidence to demonstrate their position was a carefully considered and rationalised one. Each insurgent operation was justified in detail, and considerable efforts were made to portray individual victims of violence as deserving of their fate [79] – to portray violence, in other words, as targeted rather than indiscriminate. This stands in stark contrast to the post-Dzhappuyev leadership, at least until the emergence of Shebzukhov: these new leaders devoted far more time to the practice of violence than they did to articulating a strategic rationale for it.

#### *Brake Four: The Authority of the Leadership*

Both moral and strategic brakes centred on the position adopted by the leaders of the KBJ and OVKBK. Yet

the significance of these was dependent on a fourth brake: The authority of the leadership itself. To appreciate the degree of influence that Mukozhev and Astemirov in particular were able to exercise, we first need to consider the nature of the KBJ itself. This operated on a three-tiered structure (see Figure 5): At the base were local neighbourhood jama'ats, of which there were at least 40; at the middle-level stood a city- or village-level shura, or council; and at the apex stood a shura for the KBJ as a whole. Each level appointed an emir as leader, who then formed the membership of the next tier up in the hierarchy – with the KBJ shura's emir becoming the overall leader of the KBJ itself. For the entirety of the KBJ's existence, this senior-most role was occupied by Mukozhev.[80]



At the local level, membership was fluid: There were no admission protocols or membership cards, and the role the jama'at played in the life of members varied. Membership was instead contingent on participating in the public and social life of the movement, acknowledging the exclusive authority of the local and overall KBJ emir, and accepting the hierarchical nature of the movement.[81] Recognition of authority was thus not merely a feature of the movement, it was arguably central to the movement's very existence.[82] The KBJ emir's authority was essentially elective authoritarianism: members could raise questions for discussion, but the emirs could also forbid discussion, and open criticism of the leaders was rare. Members could choose to reject the emir's authority, but only at the cost of membership itself.[83] This strictly hierarchical structure was preserved under the OVKBK, albeit with Mukozhev and Astemirov switching roles. Astemirov repeatedly insisted on the importance of leadership by and subordination to an emir,[84] drawing on his interpretation of scripture.

The functioning of this brake needs to be considered in the context of the personal qualities of the leaders, since this invariably impacted receptiveness to this doctrinal position on authority. Both Mukozhev and Astemirov were charismatic and capable of articulating sophisticated positions on the legitimacy of violence and non-violence. While the concept of charisma is complicated and often confused, the role of personal qualities nevertheless remains highly important to the exercise of leadership.[85] One of the important changes to occur in the OVKBK post-Astemirov was a decline in the capabilities of leadership. Dzhappuyev, for example, lacked Mukozhev's and Astemirov's theological training; although he devoted considerable time to articulating a position on developments, he lacked the rhetorical skills and personal authority of either. The next in line, Zankishiyev, was severely deficient as an orator, struggling to string together coherent ideas and sentences, and several leaders who followed him made very few public statements. Thus the fourth brake continued to reinforce the moral and strategic ones, but in a negative way: Leaders post-Astemirov did not so much change the rationale for violence as fail to provide one. In eliminating Mukozhev and Astemirov, the security services killed two key insurgent ideologues, but they also killed the people who were best placed to control the

movement and act as brakes on violence. After their deaths, developments and the escalation of conflict were driven as much by external movement factors as they were by internal ones.

On a theoretical level, this brake is again difficult to account for using Busher, Holbrook and Macklin's typology because, as with social embeddedness, it relates as much to the characteristics of groups and actors as to the rationales they articulated. We can draw a qualified link to the ego maintenance (self-identification) brake, in so far as both the KBJ and OVKBK saw subordination to an emir as an important practice of 'true' Islamic movements. The actual functioning of the brake, however, differs from this conceptualisation: In their typology, the authors focus on direct restraints on violence, whereby groups do not engage in violence because it does not fit with their self-image.[86] In the case of the KBJ, such a direct role is limited, although Mukozhev did disassociate the movement from violent groups and talk about expelling extremists from its ranks[87]; in the case of the OVKBK, this direct role is entirely absent. Rather, for both movements, the self-identification brake exerted an indirect influence, reinforcing the moral and strategic ones. The requirement of clear leadership and strict subordination did not in and of itself establish a position on the merits or otherwise of violence. Instead, it ensured that the position established through those other brakes had practical significance. Without considering it, therefore, we are unable to understand how and why moral and strategic brakes were able to operate effectively.

## **Conclusion**

This article has sought to contribute to the emerging literature on internal brakes on violent escalation through a study of a movement that transitioned from an overt social movement to armed insurgency. Drawing on the typology developed by Busher, Holbrook and Macklin, it has identified four main internal brakes: the movement's social origins and ties; attitudes to the moral permissibility of violence; leadership views on the strategic benefits of violence; and the personal authority of leaders. Each of these brakes worked in conjunction with the others: we cannot talk about these individual brakes in isolation from one another or from broader environmental conditions but instead – much like the brakes of a car, we need to consider them as forming part of a complex system. If moral and strategic logics functioned as brake pads, then it was the nature of the leadership that controlled their operation, and the interaction between the rest of the vehicle and the road that conditioned them. Just as they operated in conjunction with one another, so too did they deteriorate together. They do not exclusively explain the trajectory of violence, but they do contribute an important piece of the puzzle.

This case study also has important implications and opens up further avenues for enquiry. Conceptually, these brakes imperfectly map onto the original typology: while they capture well for articulated rationales, they do not adequately account for the social relationships and organizational characteristics of the movement itself. Affording greater attention to such features may offer a fruitful avenue for refining and developing the typology.

The case study also highlights the importance of differentiating within violent movements. By focusing on the decision of KBJ leaders and members to engage in armed struggle against the state and transform into the OVKBK, we can easily lose sight of how close they remained to their Rubicon of violence in comparison to regional counterparts. The internal brakes in operation during the tenures of Mukozhev and Astemirov mean it could have been easier to find a pathway to reconciliation than would have been the case either in somewhere like Dagestan or at a later stage of the conflict in Kabardino-Balkaria itself. Such reconciliation may not have been possible, but it was at least conceivable. Instead, disrupting the internal dynamics and eroding the brakes that were in operation served to facilitate violence and significantly undermine stability, at least in the short term.

### ***Appendix: Jihadist Groups Active in Kabardino-Balkaria prior to the Nalchik Attack[88]***

1997-1998: A small group led by Anzor Atabiyev, accused of murdering two police officers in March 1997, was eliminated in a special operation in August 1998. Little is known of the activities of the group.

2000-2001: A group led by the Bekkayev brothers called for armed jihad against the authorities. It reportedly consisted of at least 300 members, though these figures cannot be verified. Some members of the group were put on trial, but the fate of the leaders is unknown.

2000-2003: A small group led by Zaurkhan Shogenov called for jihad in the republic. Several group members were arrested in connection with terrorist attacks outside the republic, and the Shogenov group organized Basayev's visit to the republic. Shogenov himself was killed in September 2003.

2003-2005: In August 2004, a Chechen rebel website reported that a Yarmuk Jama'at was preparing to wage jihad in the republic. Security services clashed with a group that they accused of killing tourists from Stavropol, and they linked the group both to the Kavkazcenter statement and Muslim Atayev, accused of attacking a police officer in May 2003. A series of attacks in the republic was attributed to Yarmuk, before Atayev was killed in January 2005.

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#### ***Notes***

[1] For a broader discussion of the evolution of conflict in the region and key literature dealing with it, see Julie Wilhelmsen and Mark Youngman, 'Violent Mobilization and Non-Mobilization in the North Caucasus,' *Perspectives on Terrorism*, 14:2 (2020), pp. 2-10.

[2] Joel Busher, Donald Holbrook and Graham Macklin, 'The internal brakes on violent escalation: a typology,' *Behavioral Sciences of Terrorism and Political Aggression*, 11:1 (2018), pp. 3-25.

[3] The Kabardins belong to the Circassian ethnic group, the boundaries of which are fiercely contested but which also includes the Cherkess of Karachayevo-Cherkessia and the Adygeans of the eponymous republic. The Balkars are a Turkic people who share a language and culture with the neighbouring Karachays. See Sufian Zhemukhov, 'The birth of modern Circassian nationalism,' *Nationalities Papers*, 40:4 (2012), pp. 503-524; Chen Bram, "'Re-Islamisation" and Ethno-Nationalism: the Circassians (Adyghe) of the Northwestern Caucasus and Their Diaspora,' in *Ethno-Nationalism, Islam and the State in the Caucasus: Post-Soviet Disorder* (London: Routledge, 2008), pp. 28-49; Chen Bram and Moshe Gammer, 'Radical Islamism, Traditional Islam and Ethno-Nationalism in the Northern Caucasus,' *Middle Eastern Studies*, 49:2 (2013), pp. 296-337; Galina Yemelianova, 'Kinship, ethnicity and religion in post-Communist societies: Russia's autonomous republic of Kabardino-Balkariya,' *Ethnicities*, 5:1 (2005), pp. 51-82.

[4] Irina L. Babich, 'Islam and the Legal System in the Northwestern Caucasus,' in *Ethno-Nationalism, Islam and the State in the Caucasus: Post-Soviet Disorder* (London: Routledge, 2008), pp. 19-27; Kafan Khanbabyev, 'Islam and Islamic Radicalism in Dagestan,' in *Radical Islam in the Former Soviet Union* (London: Routledge, 2010), pp. 82-111.

[5] Arena Atlas of Religions and Nationalities of the Russian, based on MegaFOM nationwide poll conducted 29 May-25 June 2012 in 79 subjects of the Russian Federation. Data available at URL: <http://sreda.org/en/arena>. Of the remainder, 15.6% identified as Orthodox, 11.8% as non-denominational religious, and 6.6% as atheist. The republic's three main ethnic groups are Kabardin, Russian and Balkar, accounting, according to the 2010 census, for 57.2%, 22.5% and 12.7% of the population respectively. The Kabardins and Balkars are nominally Muslim and historically associated with the Hanafi school of Sunni Islam, although pagan and Christian practices remain widespread.

[6] Vladimir Bobrovnikov, 'Al-Azhar and Shari'a Courts in Twentieth Century Caucasus,' *Middle Eastern Studies*, 37:4 (2001), pp. 1-24; Svetlana Akkiyeva, *Islam v Kabardino-Balkarii*, (Moscow: Logos, 2009); Svetlana Akkiyeva, 'Islamskiye uchebnyye zavedeniya i musulmanskoje obrazovaniye na Severnom Kavkaze: Sostoyaniye i perspektivy,' in *Islam v multikulturnom mire* (Kazan: Kazan University, 2014), pp. 330-342.

[7] Akkiyeva, *Islam v Kabardino-Balkarii*, op.cit.. This is not to argue that ethno-nationalism disappeared – Circassian nationalism remained a significant arena of contestation, particularly around the 2014 Winter Olympics in Sochi – but that its character and political role changed. See, for example, Zhemukhov, op.cit.

[8] Akkiyeva, 'Islamskiye uchebnyye zavedeniya,' op.cit.

[9] Akhmet Yarlykapov, 'The radicalization of North Caucasian Muslims,' in *Russia and Islam: State, Society and Radicalism* (Abingdon, Oxfordshire: Routledge, 2010), pp. 137-154; Akkiyeva, *Islam v Kabardino-Balkarii*, op.cit.; Aleksandr Zhukov, 'Kabardino-Balkariya: Na puti k katastrofe. Predposylki vooruzhennogo vstupleniya v Nalchike 13-14 Oktyabra 2005 goda,' *Memorial* (2008), accessed at URL: <http://www.kavkaz-uzel.ru/articles/142989>.

[10] Akkiyeva, *Islam v Kabardino-Balkarii*, op.cit.; Zhukov, 'Kabardino-Balkariya: Na puti k katastrofe'; Marat Shterin and Akhmet Yarlykapov, 'Reconsidering Radicalisation and Terrorism: The New Muslims Movement in Kabardino-Balkaria and its Path to Violence,' *Religion, State and Society*, 39:2-3 (2011), pp. 303-325; Geraldine Fagan, 'A word of justice: Islam and state repression in the North-West Caucasus,' *Central Asian Survey*, 33:1 (2014), pp. 29-46; Regnum, "'Basayeva provezli cherez granitsu militsionery'": Intervyu lidera musulmanskoj obshchiny Kabardino-Balkarii Mussy Mukhozheva,' 29 September 2004, accessed at URL: <https://regnum.ru/news/polit/333321.html>.

[11] Akkiyeva, *Islam v Kabardino-Balkarii*, op.cit.

[12] Irina Starodubrovskaya, 'Islamic Conflict and Violence in Local Communities: Lessons from the North Caucasus,' *Perspectives on Terrorism*, 14:2 (2020), p. 83.

[13] Fagan, op.cit.; Jan Koehler, Alexey Gunya, Murat Shogenov and Asker Tumov, 'Violence and the Dynamics of Political Settlements in Post-Soviet Kabardino-Balkaria,' *Perspectives on Terrorism*, 14:2 (2020), p. 98.

[14] Bobrovnikov, op.cit., p. 15.

[15] Shterin and Yarlykapov, op.cit.

[16] Zhukov, op.cit.

[17] Akkiyeva, *Islam v Kabardino-Balkarii*, op.cit.

[18] Akkiyeva, *Islam v Kabardino-Balkarii*, op.cit.; Zhukov, op.cit.

[19] Zhukov, op.cit.

[20] Zhukov, op.cit.

[21] Zhukov, op.cit.

[22] Zhukov, op.cit.

[23] Zhukov, op.cit.

[24] For simplicity's sake, throughout the text this author uses OVKBK to refer to the Kabardino-Balkarian insurgency as existed post-Nalchik attack, although it did not formally adopt this name until the proclamation of the IK. Technically, the OVKBK also incorporated the neighbouring republic of Karachayevo-Cherkessia, but in reality the overwhelming majority of insurgent activity and membership was concentrated within the boundaries of Kabardino-Balkaria. Vilayyat means province and alludes to the administrative divisions of the historical caliphate, though which one is an open question. Usually, it is presumed to be a reference to the Rashidun Caliphate, governed by the Rightly Guided Caliphs who succeeded the Prophet Muhammad. However, it could also be a reference to the post-Tanzimat Ottoman Caliphate. Although, as one of the reviewers of this article noted, the latter is seen as a poor model by contemporary Salafis, the North Caucasus insurgency was influenced by actors and debates within Turkey and, in its early years, debated whether the official language of the IK should be Turkish, suggesting that the primacy of the former reference point cannot be taken for granted.

[25] 'Byulletin Pravoazashchitnogo tsentra "Memoriala". Situatsiya v zone konflikta na Severnom Kavkaze: Otsenka pravozashchitnikov. Zima 2015-2016 gg,' accessed at URL: <https://memohrc.org/ru/bulletins/byulleten-pravoazashchitnogo-centra-memorial-situatsiya-v-zone-konflikta-na-severnom-kavk-27>.

[26] Caucasian Knot only started producing its own statistical summaries from 2010 onwards. However, it has routinely reported on events in the region across the entire lifespan of the IK and – although any single source will have limitations – it represents by far the

most reliable and consistent source of information.

[27] This excludes incidents in which suspected rebels reportedly accidentally blew themselves up in the course of either planning attacks or special operations, some of which were initially reported as suicide attacks.

[28] John O'Loughlin, Edward C. Holland, and Frank D.W. Witmer, 'The changing geography of violence in the North Caucasus of Russia, 1999-2011: Regional trends and local dynamics in Dagestan, Ingushetia and Kabardino-Balkaria', *Eurasian Geography and Economics*, 52:5 (2011), pp. 596- 630.

[29] Statistics reflect the date ranges in brackets, not the exact tenure of the rebel leaders: Although clear dates of death are available, it is not possible to tell exactly when a new leader assumed command, and the tenures of Astemirov and Shebzukhov extend beyond the range covered by the data.

[30] Rebel-initiated events include improvised explosive device (IED) attacks, small arms attacks, and suicide attacks; security service-initiated events include special operations, successful detentions, and failed attempts at detention. Classification is based on how Caucasian Knot reported the event and cannot be independently verified.

[31] Busher, Holbrook and Macklin, op.cit., p.5.

[32] Zhukov, op.cit.

[33] Zhukov, op.cit.

[34] Shterin and Yarlykapov, op.cit., p. 321.

[35] Zhukov, op.cit.

[36] B.Kh Bgazhnokov, *Sotsialnaya organizatsiya semi: po materialam istoricheskoy etnografii adygov* (Nalchik: KBIGI, 2010); M.D. Karaketov and Kh.-M.A. Sabanchiyev (eds), *Karachayevtsy. Balkartsy* (Moscow: Nauka, 2014).

[37] Zhukov, op.cit.

[38] Zhukov, op.cit.

[39] Shterin and Yarlykapov, op.cit., p. 321.

[40] Kavkazcenter, 'Press-reliz komandovaniya Obyedinennogo Vilayyata Kabardy, Balkarii i Karachay,' 2008. Exact sourcing information, such as URLs, for all insurgency-produced material has been withheld due to the nature of the material.

[41] Mark Youngman, 'Interpreting the ideological evolution of an insurgency: Lessons from the North Caucasus, 2007-2015,' PhD thesis, University of Birmingham, 2019, accessed at URL: <https://etheses.bham.ac.uk/id/eprint/9372/>; Mark Youngman, 'Ideology Along the Contours of Power: The Case of the Caucasus Emirate,' *Perspectives on Terrorism*, 14:2 (2020), pp. 11-26.

[42] Kavkazcenter, 'Dzhikhad v Kabardino-Balkarii obyazatelen,' 2005.

[43] Fatima Tlisova, 'Exclusive interview with Anzor Astemirov, March 2009,' Jamestown Foundation, 20 March 2009, accessed at URL: <https://jamestown.org/program/exclusive-interview-with-anzor-astemirov-march-2009/#sthash.E9GQLCHH.dpuf>; Kavkazcenter, 'Munafiki prinosyat bolshe vreda, chem kafiry,' 2007.

[44] Islam Din, 'Otvety na voprosy kadiya Imarata Kavkaz, amira Obyedinennogo Vilayyata Kabardy Balkarii and Karachaya Sayfullakha,' 2009.

[45] Islam Din, 'Razyasneniye amira Abdullakha o situatsii v Vilayyate KBK. Imarat Kavkaz,' 2010.

[46] Islam Din, 'Obrashcheniye Valiya Vilayyata KBK Abdullakha. Imarat Kavkaz,' 2010.

[47] Busher, Holbrook and Macklin, op.cit., p.16.

[48] Paul Staniland, *Networks of Rebellion: Explaining Insurgent Cohesion and Collapse* (London: Cornell University Press, 2014). Donatella della Porta, *Social Movements, Political Violence, and the State: A Comparative Analysis of Italy and Germany* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006). See also Donatella della Porta and Mario Diani, *Social Movements: An Introduction*, Second Edition (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2006).

[49] Busher, Holbrook and Macklin, op.cit., p.13.

[50] Shterin and Yarlykapov, op.cit., p. 305.

[51] Regnum, op.cit.

[52] Shterin and Yarlykapov, op.cit., pp. 316-317.

[53] For the competing perspectives, see Zhukov, op.cit.; Shterin and Yarlykapov, op.cit.; Gordon M. Hahn *Russia's Islamic Threat* (London: Yale University Press, 2007).

[54] Joel Busher makes a similar argument in his research on the English Defence League, noting that how activists position themselves in relation to other groups and their attendant ideological and strategic positions can have a tangible impact on their processes of mobilisation, their tactical repertoires and ultimately the trajectory of the group, even if that positioning is overwhelmingly strategic or knowingly untrue: see 'Why even misleading identity claims matter: the evolution of the English Defence League,' *Political Studies*, 66:2 (2018), pp. 323-338; see also Joel Busher, Gareth Harris and Graham Macklin, 'Chicken suits and other aspects of situated credibility contests: explaining local trajectories of anti-minority activism,' *Social Movement Studies*, 18:2 (2019), pp. 193-214.

[55] The Moscow Times, '59 Suspects Go on Trial in Nalchik,' 12 October 2007, accessed at URL: <https://web.archive.org/web/20071014212901/http://www.themoscowtimes.com/stories/2007/10/12/011.html>.

[56] Fagan, op.cit.

[57] Fagan, op.cit., p. 30.

[58] Zhukov, op.cit.

[59] Zhukov, op.cit.

[60] Fagan, op.cit.

[61] Youngman, 'Interpreting the ideological evolution of an insurgency,' op.cit., p 261.

[62] Kavkazcenter, "Pobeda delayet dzhikhad privlekatelnym," 2008; Islam Din, 'Obrashcheniye k sotrudnikam militsii i drugikh spetssluzhb,' 2009.

[63] Youngman, 'Interpreting the ideological evolution of an insurgency,' op.cit.

[64] Islam Din, 'Obrashcheniye Amira Obyedinennogo Vilayyata KBK Abdullakha Askera Dzhappuyeva,' 2010; Islam Din, 'Amir Abdullakh: "Razyasneniye po povodu podryva ippodroma,"' 2010; Islam Din, 'Obrashcheniye Valiya Vilayyata KBK Abdullakha. Imarat Kavkaz,' 2010.

[65] Islam Din, 'Amir Abdullakh: "Razyasneniye po povodu podryva ippodroma,"' 2010.

[66] Busher, Holbrook and Macklin, op.cit., p.8.

[67] Versiya, 'Amir Musa Mukozhev: Moskve vse ravno, shto budet s Nalchikom,' 13 August 2007, accessed at URL: <https://versia.ru/chelovek-podozrevaemyj-v-organizacii-napadeniya-na-nalchik-dal-intervyu-versii>.

[68] Regnum, op.cit.

[69] Domitilla Sagramoso and Galina Yemilianova, 'Islam and Ethno-nationalism in the North-Western Caucasus,' in *Radical Islam in the Former Soviet Union* (Abingdon, Oxfordshire: Routledge, 2009), p. 124.

[70] Denis Katayev, 'Vystupleniye na kruglom stole: Prava natsionalnykh menshinstv v Rossii: illyuzii i realnost,' *Gazeta Yuga*, 26 March 2003, accessed at URL: <http://www.gazetayuga.ru/archive/2003/26.htm>.

[71] Kavkazcenter, 'Oproverzheniye dovodov otsizhivayushchikhsya samoporazhentsev,' 2008.

[72] Kavkazcenter, 'Oproverzheniye dovodov otsizhivayushchikhsya samoporazhentsev,' op.cit.

[73] Youngman, 'Interpreting the ideological evolution of an insurgency,' op.cit.

[74] Kavkazcenter, 'Amir Seyfullakh: "O gnilom zapakhe natsionalizma,"' 2008.

[75] Tlisova, op.cit.; Islam Din, 'Anzor Astemirov ob Sosnaliyev: "On vseгда khotel umeret v boyu...,"' 2009.

[76] Busher, Holbrook and Macklin, op.cit., p.10.

[77] Although they never represented a key support community, the IK's leadership attempted – in some notable cases, successfully – to appeal to ethnic Russian converts to Islam. Of course, ethnic Russians were victims of violence in the republic, but they do not appear to have been singled out as targets.

[78] Tlisova, op.cit.

[79] Kavkazcenter, "Pobeda delayet dzhikhad privlekatelnym," op.cit.; Islam Din, 'Amir Sayfullakh: "Barakat Shakhidov,"' 2009.

[80] Zhukov, op.cit.

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[81] Zhukov, op.cit.

[82] Zhukov, op.cit.

[83] Zhukov, op.cit.

[84] Kavkazcenter, 'Amir Seyfullakh o protsesse podgotovki k provozglasheniyu Kavkazskogo Emirata,' 2007; Kavkazcenter, 'Oproverzheniye dovodov otsizhivayushchikhsya samoporazhentsev,' op.cit.

[85] David C. Hofmann and Lorne L. Dawson, 'The Neglected Role of Charismatic Authority in the Study of Terrorist Groups and Radicalization,' *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, 37:4 (2014), pp. 348-368; Mark Youngman and Cerwyn Moore, 'Replacing the Standard Bearer: Theorizing Leadership Transition in Insurgent Movements,' forthcoming.

[86] Busher, Holbrook and Macklin, op.cit., p.13.

[87] Regnum, op.cit.; Kavkazcenter, 'Musa Mukozhev: "Vyydya na Dzhikhad, my obreli nastoyashchuyu svobodu,"' 2006.

[88s] Zhukov, op.cit.