

PUBLIC

Document made partially accessible
to the public on:

10 NOV 2015

North Caucasian fighters in Syria and Iraq & IS propaganda in Russian language



O41 Counter Terrorism & O47 EU Internet Referral Unit
The Hague, September 2015

This Europol product is descriptive and aims at explaining the current terrorism situation in the North Caucasus and its nexus to Syria and Iraq

Table of Contents

1. KEY FINDINGS & JUDGEMENTS..... 3

2. INTRODUCTION 4

3. NORTH CAUCASIANS IN SYRIA AND IRAQ 4

4. ISLAMIC STATE PROPAGANDA IN RUSSIAN..... 10

5. RUSSIA’S CONTROVERSIAL POLICY 14

6. ASSESSMENT 15

1. KEY FINDINGS & JUDGEMENTS

For Russia the Islamic State (IS/ISIS) is a growing concern to its national security. The spread of the influence of IS/ISIS and its propaganda has significantly contributed to 2,200, almost a double number of foreign terrorist fighters who travelled to Syria/Iraq from Russian Federation in 2014. Russian passport-holders account for up to 8 per cent of IS fighters. North Caucasians make up a very powerful contingent of the foreign terrorist fighters in Syria and Iraq.

Recently, Islamic State online propaganda has been targeting Russian speaking recruits in the former Soviet Union republics through its dedicated Furat media, with Facebook, Twitter and Tumblr, Vkontakte accounts. ISIS also addresses would be jihadists in former Soviet nations in a new Russian-language propaganda magazine Istok (The Source). An on-going exodus of fighters from the North Caucasus to join the ranks of the militant group Islamic State (IS/ISIS) in Syria, after some of the Dagestani commanders and fighters had sworn allegiance to Islamic State leader [REDACTED], is likely to continue.

On June 23, Islamic State announced the formation of its Caucasus Province ("Wilayat al-Qawqaz") on the territory of Northern Caucasus. The Islamic State's Caucasus Province is taking over the fighters of the Caucasus Emirate, an al-Qaeda affiliate operating in the same region: the leader of the newly created IS province is [REDACTED] ([REDACTED] in Arabic), [REDACTED].

It is assessed, that counter-terrorist operations of the Russian Special Forces shall increase to counter the increased IS radicalisation and recruitment propaganda on the Internet, in the effort to eliminate IS influence on the region's peoples as well as any future spill over of IS activities in the North Caucasus and other Muslim-populated regions in Russia. The prospect of trained, experienced and battle-hardened jihadi fighters returning from Syria/Iraq amplifies the level of threat.

There are a significant number of foreign terrorist fighters of North Caucasian Diaspora reported by the EU MS to have been recruited and travelled to Syria/Iraq. The recently launched Russian-language propaganda of the Islamic State will undoubtedly have a considerable impact upon the North Caucasian Diaspora in EU and may attract even more individuals from the community residing across the European continent. At the same time, the number of on-going CT investigations targeting these individuals across EU and elsewhere, predominantly related to and/or influenced by the conflict in Syria/Iraq, may rise.

2. INTRODUCTION

This joint O4 Counter Terrorism's and European Union Internet Referral Unit's product provides an update on the participation of the North Caucasians in the armed conflict in Syria and Iraq and puts developments linking the region of North Caucasus and the Islamic State, especially recently launched Russian-language propaganda, into the spotlight and a big picture.

Previous topic related reports:

- Siena 1133775-1-1 of 17/03/2015 - The split in the Caucasus Emirate;
- Siena 1100033-1-1 of 16/06/2014 - North Caucasus in 2013;

3. NORTH CAUCASIANS IN SYRIA AND IRAQ

In June 2013, Russian authorities admitted the participation of some 200 militants from Russia were fighting for jihadists in Syria. Chechen leadership also admitted that residents of the republic were taking part in the war in Syria. It was reported that from a few hundreds up to 1700 natives of Chechnya were at war in the region.

On September 3, 2014, supporters of the "Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant" spread a video with a threat to start a war in the Caucasus and "liberate the Caucasus by the mercy of Allah."

According to [REDACTED], a field commander of Chechen-Kist origin, "500 Caucasians, who had fought against [REDACTED] in Syria, were killed." According to the Syrian opposition, Chechen fighters were the second largest foreign grouping that fought against the Assad regime, as reported by the Voice of America, in February 2013.

Data available at Europol suggest that majority of Chechens and other North Caucasians involved in the armed conflict in Syria, had come there from Europe, after receiving their early indoctrination via Internet. Another portion of Chechens and other North Caucasians arrive there via Turkey from the North Caucasus and some from Europe. These are people who were born in Western countries; and whose parents had long ago moved there as refugees.

Besides, there were cases of departure to Syria of Chechen pilgrims, who were making their Hajj to Saudi Arabia. In particular, in November 2013, one of Chechen pilgrims fled to Syria.

The recruitment of the North Caucasians was held not only in Northern Caucasus, but also in Russia's neighbouring states. In late September 2014 the Ministry of National Security (MNS) of Azerbaijan conducted an antiterrorist operation, where 26 Azerbaijanis, who had fought at various times in the ranks of the ISIL and other terrorist groupings, were arrested.

According to [REDACTED], [REDACTED] of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) of Syria, mercenaries from Northern Caucasus were recruited by the radical Islamist grouping "Jabhat al-Nusra" (Support Front of Syrian People).

Participation of Caucasians in warfare in Syria and Iraq

According to members of the Chechen Diaspora in Western Europe, hundreds of Chechen militants are fighting in the ranks of the Syrian opposition: they are called to join the Syrian opposition by supporters of the terrorist organization "Islamic State Imarat Kavkaz", banned in Russia. They are called to fight the ally (Syrian regime) of their enemy (Russia).

In 2014, the Chechens fighting in Syria regrouped. The majority of them, for various reasons, switched loyalties from their commanders to [REDACTED], the [REDACTED] who is one the highest ranking officials in the Islamic State (IS/ISIL) organisation.¹ More than 1,500 Chechens may be fighting in the two countries, and they are considered among the most potent military forces in the area at the moment.² Chechens in Syria are divided into three

¹ [REDACTED]

² Nouvelobs.com, 19 October 2014.

camps: followers of the Islamic State and [REDACTED] (Chechen from Georgia's Pankisi region), followers of the Caucasus Emirate and [REDACTED], and those who did not associate with either of those leaders and instead chose [REDACTED] ([REDACTED] also from Georgia's Pankisi) as their leader.

A total of nine individuals from Russia's North Caucasus Republic of Kabardino-Balkaria have died fighting in Syria since the armed insurgency began in that country in 2011, a representative from the Federal Security Service (FSB) in Kabardino-Balkaria. The FSB says that around 80 Kabardino-Balkaria residents are fighting in Syria, and that criminal cases have been opened against 28 of them.³

"Twelve people have returned from the conflict zone, three of whom were killed, three were arrested and the others are being sought. Another eight residents of the republic have undergone training in various militant training camps abroad," the FSB representative was quoted as saying.

The FSB representative warned that the republic should expect the return of militants from Syria and Iraq to exacerbate the security situation in Kabardino-Balkaria.

Various sources, including the Russia's FSB, have confirmed the information that militants from Russia are fighting for the Islamic State (IS/ISIL).⁴

3.1 Travelling to Syria/Iraq

Despite the fact that the Russian-speaking militants in Syria and Iraq are called by the Western journalist as Chechens, the North Caucasian contingent is increasing and becoming more and more diverse.⁵

There is a significant continuous rise in the number of North Caucasians fighting alongside IS at the cost of the Caucasus Emirate armed groups present in the North Caucasus.

On June 21, IS formally announced the formation of the Wilayat al-Qawqaz, a "Caucasus Province" that includes Chechnya, Dagestan, Ingushetia, and "KBK," which comprises Kabardino-Balkaria and Karachai-Cherkessia.⁶

At the same time, IS's North Caucasian faction is pushing propaganda designed to influence and recruit would-be militants from the North Caucasus's various republics.

Dagestani preachers join IS

Dagestani militants have become more visible on pro-IS social media, where several have been reported as having been killed fighting alongside IS.

The Dagestani presence in IS-controlled territory has also been boosted by the arrival of two Dagestani preachers and activists, [REDACTED]⁷ and [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] Medinsky first announced his presence in Syria in March, when he appeared in a video alongside two other Dagestanis. [REDACTED] swore allegiance to IS leader [REDACTED] in a May 23 video.

Another prominent Dagestani preacher, [REDACTED], has also joined IS. [REDACTED] have already appeared in several video and audio propaganda addresses intended to recruit more Russian-speaking militants including from Dagestan, while [REDACTED] has posted job advertisements on his Facebook page for physicians to work for IS in Syria or Iraq.

³ [REDACTED]

⁴ [REDACTED]

⁵ [REDACTED]

⁶ RFE/RL, 3 August 2015.

⁷ [REDACTED]

As with all ethnic groups fighting in Syria and Iraq, the exact number of Dagestanis who have traveled to areas under IS control is not known.⁸

Karachai-Cherkessia

Dagestanis are not the only North Caucasians to become more prominent in IS in recent months. IS's increasingly powerful North Caucasian contingent has also reached out to Karachai-Cherkessia as a source of potential recruits.

Earlier this month, IS released a video in Karachai that featured ethnic Karachai militants, including the increasingly prominent [REDACTED], a close confidante of IS military commander [REDACTED].

The number of Karachai militants in IS is unknown. However, the authorities in Karachai-Cherkessia said in June that they had opened criminal cases against 16 residents of the republic suspected of fighting alongside militant groups in Syria. The suspects were aged between 22 and 57 and had all flown at different times from Mineralnye Vody in Stavropol Krai to Istanbul, from where they traveled on to Syria in November 2013. They were allegedly trained in a camp close to the Syrian border town of Atmeh.⁹

Ingushetia

Over the past few months, IS militants identifying as ethnic Ingush have also emerged on Russian-language IS social networks. Three Ingush militants have been reported on social media as killed since May 2015.

[REDACTED] was killed in the Iraqi town of Baiji in May, while [REDACTED] was reportedly killed near Kobani in Syria in June. [REDACTED] died in May, unknown location.

The fact that [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] died in two completely different locations indicates that they were almost certainly fighting alongside different North Caucasian battalions within IS, which suggests that IS's Russian-speaking contingent does not necessarily group militants from the same ethnic group together.

Another ethnic Ingush, [REDACTED], whose nom de guerre is taken from Ingushetia's capital, has been photographed alongside Chechen IS military [REDACTED].

The number of Ingush who have been recruited to IS is unknown. However, in June security authorities in the town of Nazran killed a married couple, [REDACTED], whom they alleged were recruiting militants for IS. Police in Ingushetia also claimed that "tens of young people" had gone to Syria from the republic over the past year, according to the Russian news site Kommersant.¹⁰

3.2 Affiliation of major North Caucasian fighting groups in Syria and Iraq

There is no doubt that on-going developments in the North Caucasus (Caucasus Emirate) and Syria and Iraq (Islamic State) have been interlinked. On one hand, the North Caucasus or a wider region of the Caucasus is an appreciated source of foreign fighters for the Islamic State and other Islamist fighting groups in Syria and Iraq. On the other hand, those fighters either from the Pankisi Gorge or with links to the North Caucasus region and/or its Caucasus Emirate, who have established themselves in Syria and Iraq and gained their reputation, do their best to revive the founding idea of the Caucasus Emirate to unite all the Muslim populated territories in southern Russia. The picture below describes the links between the regions, and how the North Caucasian fighting groups affiliate with major local Islamist fighting groups in Syria and Iraq (Jabhat al-Nusra, The Islamic State, etc.), as well as how they try to contribute to or influence the cause in the other region.

⁸ Republic of Dagestan [REDACTED] said earlier in July that more than 300 residents of the republic had left to fight alongside IS in Syria. The figure includes Dagestanis who have been killed, those who are still in Syria, and those who have returned home.

⁹ [REDACTED]

¹⁰ [REDACTED]

NORTH CAUCASUS

CAUCASUS EMIRATE



CAUCASUS PROVINCE
OF THE ISLAMIC STATE



GEORGIA - TURKEY



JUNUD A-SH-SHAM
JAISH AL-MUHAJIRIN
WAL-ANSAR



CAUCASUS EMIRATE IN SYRIA



OTHER JIHADI GROUPS



JABHAT AL-NUSRA

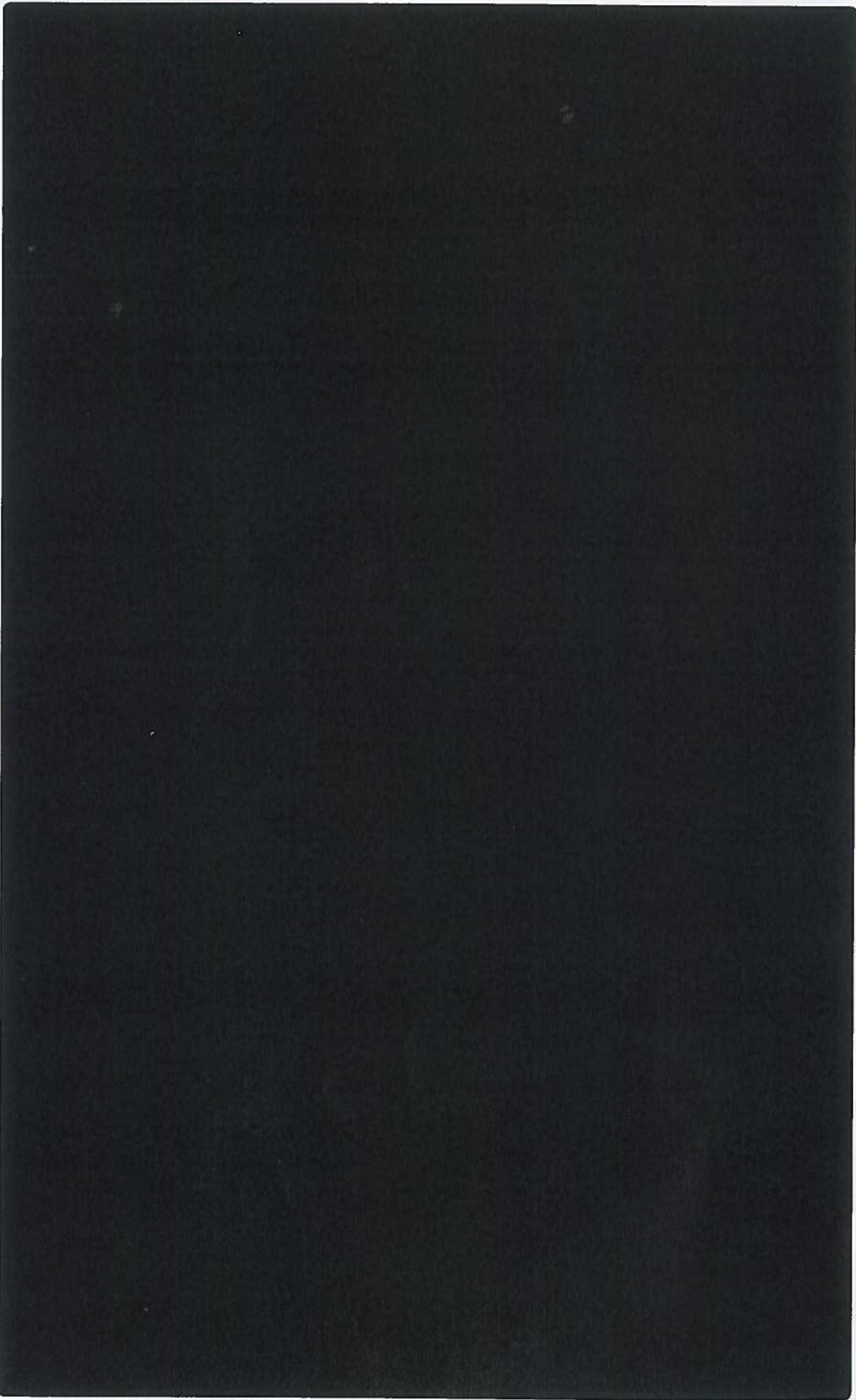
ISLAMIC STATE



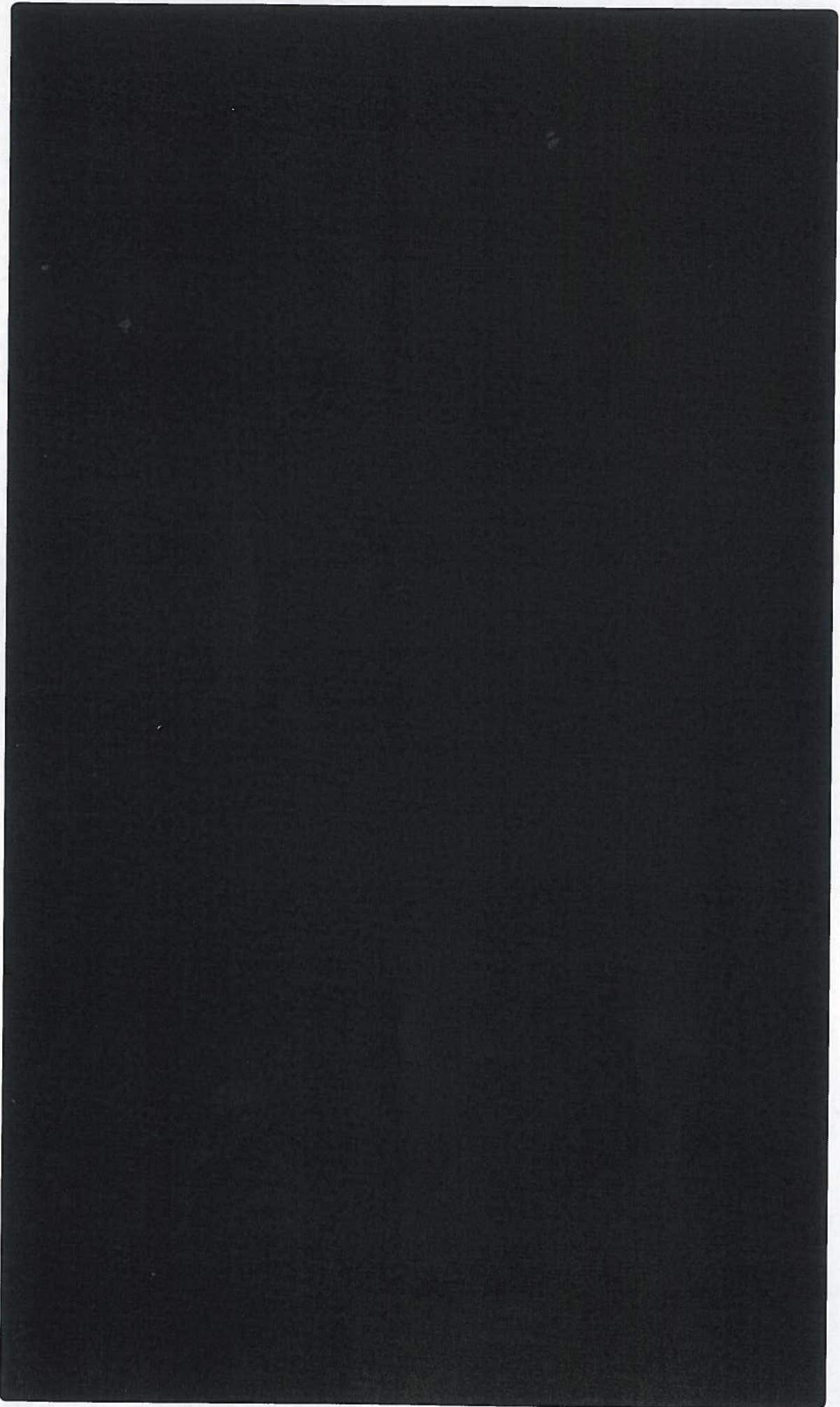
SYRIA - IRAQ

Affiliation of major North Caucasian fighting groups in Syria and Iraq and mutual dynamics between the regions

Key Russian-speaking figures of the ISLAMIC STATE



Key figures of the CAUCASUS EMIRATE



4. ISLAMIC STATE PROPAGANDA IN RUSSIAN

In 2015 the Islamic State has significantly increased its propaganda in Russian language, which is now the third most used language by the group, following Arabic and English.¹¹ In March 2015, IS began broadcasting its daily Al-Bayan Radio news bulletins online in Russian in a range of formats. In May 2015 Furat Media was created which boosted mainly video production for the terrorist group. In addition, three IS magazines have been published solely in Russian in 2015: "Furat Press", "Istok 1" ("The Source") and "Istok 2".

The increase of IS propaganda in Russian coincided with many of the Caucasus Emirate middle-level commanders pledging their allegiance to the Islamic State¹², which resulted in the official announcement of the formation of the IS Caucasus Province ("Wilayat al-Qawqaz") on 23 June 2015. The announcement came in an audio speech by [REDACTED], who also named [REDACTED], as the wali of the Caucasus Province of the Islamic state¹³.

It should be noted that, while the IS is notorious for its critique against its rival groups, its propaganda in Russian has so far not targeted the Caucasus Emirate in a negative way. This policy is probably driven by the hope of attracting the remaining fighters of CE to the Islamic State, rather than fighting them.

4.1 Furat¹⁴ Media

Since May 2015 the Islamic State is spreading its Russian-language propaganda almost exclusively through media group Furat Media. According to some media reports, the creator of Furat Media is [REDACTED]¹⁵, the second-in-command to [REDACTED], the leader of IS's military wing. Furat Media issues both original material in Russian – mainly speeches by Russian-speaking fighters - and translations of IS videos in Arabic. It publishes on average 1-3 videos per week.

Furat Media appears to have created for two main purposes: firstly, informing its Russian-speaking fighters, both in Iraq/Syria and in Caucasus about the news and ideology of the IS and secondly, recruiting new Russian-speaking militants, both from the Russian Federation (North Caucasus), and from elsewhere in the former Soviet Union, especially from Central Asia.

In fact, the first role seems to be more important than recruitment: by translating Arabic-language material into Russian, Furat is able to ensure that its Russian-speaking fighters in IS-controlled territories and outside have access to the same messages and ideology as their Arabic-speaking counterparts. Furat is, therefore, playing an important role in building



¹¹ BBC, 24 July 2015.

¹²

¹³

¹⁴The name Furat comes from the Arabic word for the Euphrates River. Furat Media should not be confused with the Furat Province of the Islamic State.

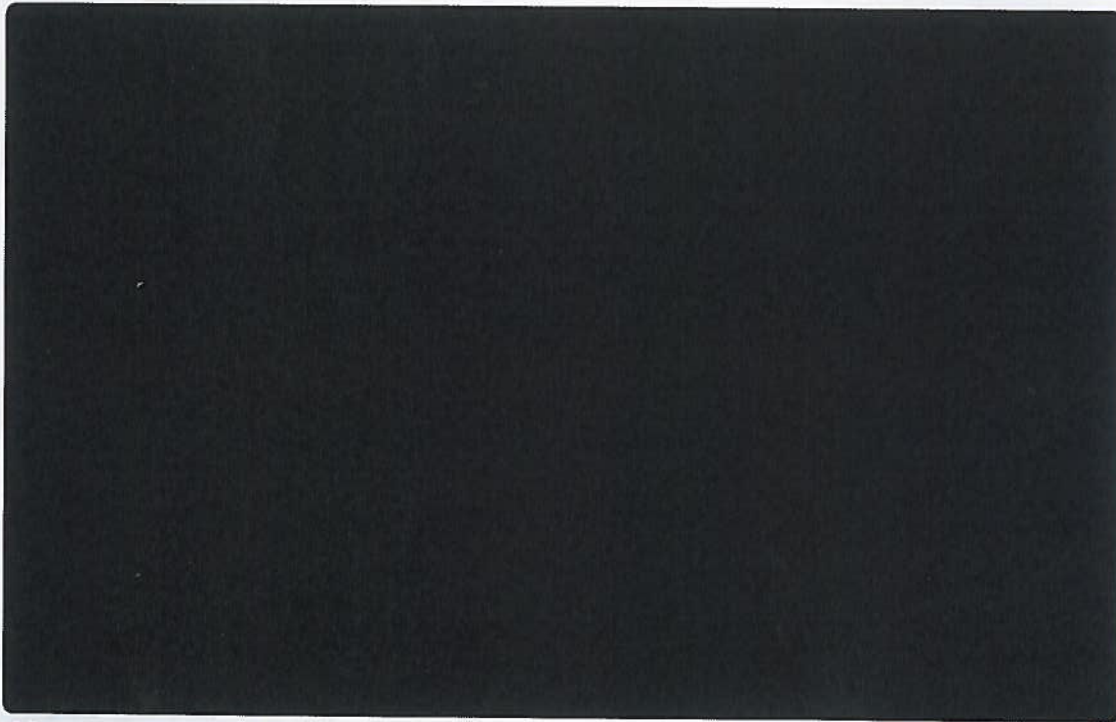
¹⁵

ideological bridges between militants in Syria and Iraq, and those who are still in the North Caucasus.

In addition to fighters and potential new recruits in the Caucasus, Furat is also targeting other Central Asian republics, an example of this is the video "A message to the people of Kyrgyzstan", in which a Kyrgyz fighter of IS calls its compatriots to join the IS¹⁶. Also, a prominent Tajik fighter [REDACTED] ([REDACTED]) is known to work for the Furat Media¹⁷.

Significant IS videos with Russian subtitles are published by Furat very quickly, mostly on the same or next day of the publication of the original. This suggests that not only has Furat Media a significant number of "workers" with good knowledge of Arabic and Russian, but also that it cooperates with other IS propaganda outlets, receiving the videos before they are officially released.

On average, Furat videos get much less re-tweets and views than IS videos in Arabic or English. The views on its videos on archive.org range from 100 to 2000¹⁸ (In comparison, one of the most successful IS videos, "The Clanging of the swords" in Arabic, was viewed over 120 000 times on YouTube within three days¹⁹). A trend can be seen that Furat's original material in Russian (featured by Russian-speaking fighters and preachers) is usually more popular than translations. The best example of this is Furat's by far most popular video "[REDACTED]²¹,²⁰ published on [REDACTED]



The video is a parade of Dagestani preachers within IS, featuring [REDACTED]. On the video they address the fighters of the newly-created Caucasus Province of the Islamic State and its leader [REDACTED], calling him to be fair, follow the word of God and implement sharia law on the territories under his rule.

¹⁶ [REDACTED]
¹⁷ Thought to have been killed, [REDACTED] has been linked to several prominent Russian-speaking IS ideologues, including Dagestani preachers [REDACTED] and [REDACTED], but also [REDACTED]

¹⁸ [REDACTED]
¹⁹ [REDACTED]

²⁰ [REDACTED]

²¹ [REDACTED]

The unprecedented high score of views of the video was, however, not due to the popularity of the Dagestani preachers, but due to the last speaker: ██████████, a known German jihadist, who seems to have recently befriended with the Caucasus fighters in Syria (in addition to this video he has been seen with Caucasus fighters on pictures posted on social media and he has written *nashids* about Caucasus that are used on other Furat videos).

While other speakers call the fighters in Caucasus be strong in their difficult situation and follow the "right" path, ██████████ is the only one explicitly inviting "the youth in Dagestan, Chechnya and in other regions in the Caucasus" to emigrate to the Islamic State.

4.2 Communication channels of Furat Media



Furat is spreading IS propaganda mainly through its Twitter account, where links to new videos are posted. The Twitter account is almost exclusively used for spreading new videos – almost no other tweets are posted on it. The account is frequently suspended, but recreated with a different handle and the same screen name Furat Media for posting a new video²². Furat Media is resilient to take-downs also thanks to its "satellites" – accounts that pick up and disseminate further to their followers. Most active Furat satellites are following:²³



Most of Furat's videos are hosted on archive.org platform where they are uploaded under the account "FuratVideo" by email fisyria@mail.com (FiSyria was the name of the predecessor of Furat Media).

Furat Media has also a website <http://furatinfo.com>, a Tumblr account and a group on Russian social media platform vk.com. The latter is less resilient to take-downs than Furat's Twitter

²² In August 2015 following handles were used by Furat Media: @infoFurat1; @furatInfo1; @furatmedia; @mediaFurat.

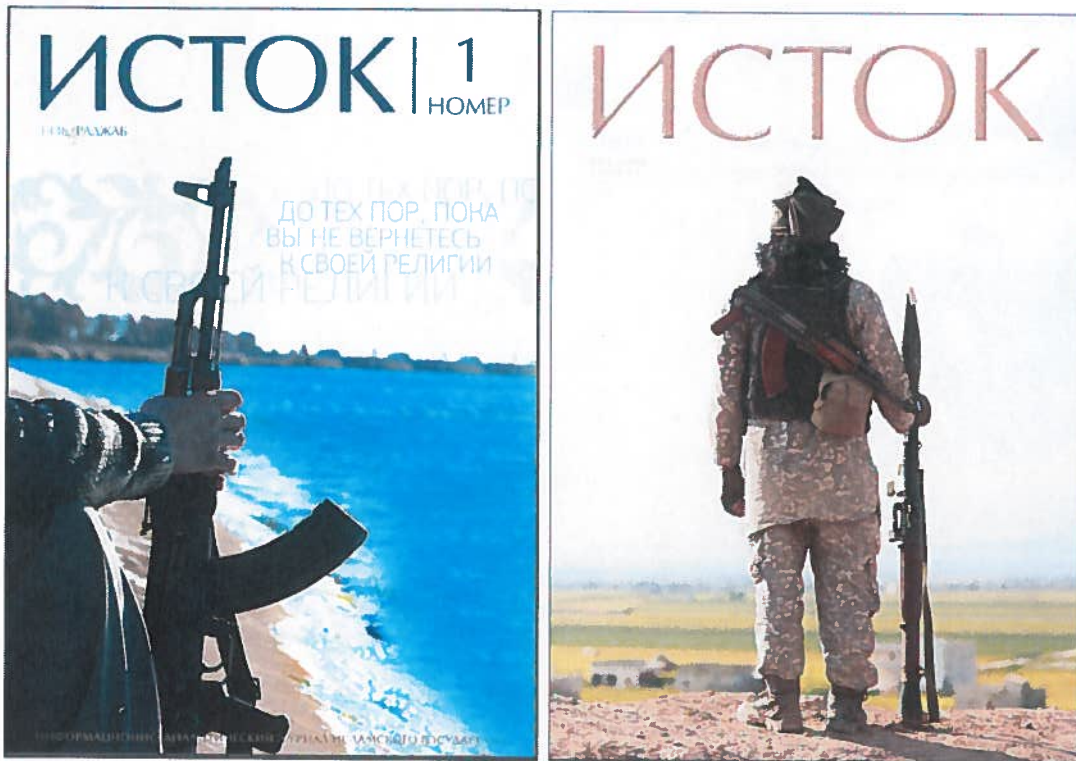
²³ Just as Furat's own accounts, these are suspended frequently, but this is anticipated by the account holders as they already post the name of their next account as a "pinned tweet" (ie adding a different number, from @ignovosti to @ignovosti2 etc).

account. Since the end of August, furatinfo website is not working and the links to the videos are posted on isdarat.tv, a website that hosts IS propaganda also in other languages.

In addition to spreading its material through Internet, media reports say that Furat videos are also sent on CDs to Russian-speaking militant groups in IS-controlled territory.

4.3 ISTOK Magazine

In addition to Furat publications, another media outlet of IS, al-Hayat Media has so far published two issues of the magazine "ISTOK" ("The Source").²⁴



Al-Hayat Media Centre is also responsible for other IS magazines such as the English-language Dabiq, and its French counterpart Dar-al-Islam.²⁵

The two issues of Istok are similar, providing mainly articles about the creation and ideology of the Islamic State. The second issue re-prints also a transcript of an audio speech by [REDACTED], [REDACTED], titled "[REDACTED]"²⁶.

Only some of the articles in Istok can be attributed to Russian-speaking fighters: both issues feature articles explaining why fighters changed their affiliation from Jaysh al-Muhajirin wal-Ansar, at that time mainly Russia-speaking group, to the Islamic State.

Unlike other IS publications, Istok does not provide its readers with guidelines for preparing terrorist attacks or with any other "practical" advice.

It should be noted that just like Furat's propaganda videos, the Istok magazines make no reference to the conflict between the Islamic State and the Caucasus Emirate and the newly created Caucasus Province of the IS.

²⁴ [REDACTED]

²⁵ International Business Times, 3 June 2015.

²⁶ [REDACTED]

5. RUSSIA'S CONTROVERSIAL POLICY

Recently an article has surfaced in the Russian daily Novaya Gazeta citing Russian journalist [REDACTED] that the Russian Federal Security Bureau (FSB) facilitates the travel of extremists from out of Chechnya and neighbouring Dagestan into Syria with the overall goal of reducing potential violence within Russia's North Caucasus. Despite the fact that the article has been re-published, referred to, and echoed by many other international daily and weekly newspapers and online magazines, so far no other independent sources has brought more light, confirmed and/or denied the allegations brought by the author of this article. True or not, the findings published by the Novaya Gazeta daily can bring a different perspective to the steep increase in a number of foreign fighters travelling from the North Caucasus to join the fighting groups in Syria and Iraq, as well as the circumstances and measures leading to the significant decrease in the activities and victims of the armed conflict in the North Caucasus. For this reason, an abridged version of the article published in English by businessinsider.com.au, on 25 August 2015 has been included into this report.²⁷

Quote:

"There is increasing evidence that Moscow may be helping to facilitate Islamic extremism in the Middle East, and appears to benefit from a cultivation of extremism in the Middle East, particularly in the form of the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria/Levant (ISIS/ISIL).

The militant Islamist fighting group ISIS functions as an ideal magnet for "wannabe jihadists and militants" in Chechnya and elsewhere in the North Caucasus. The Russian Federal Security Bureau (FSB) facilitates the travel of extremists from out of Chechnya and neighbouring Dagestan into Syria with the overall goal of reducing potential violence within Russia's North Caucasus.

Officially, the success in fighting the insurgency is attributed to the competent law enforcement and security authorities. In fact, it seems the steep decrease derives from the fact that all the aggressive, competent fighters are no longer fighting in Dagestan but are in Syria as part of ISIS.

The strategy to steer terrorists out of a home country and direct them towards a warzone is not new. The same strategy was used by Saudi Arabia against the Soviet Union in Afghanistan in the 1980s.

A reduction in violence and potential extremists within Russia's borders would conceivably be cause enough for the FSB to steer militants from Chechnya and around into Syria, Novaya gazeta writes.

Since June, Russia has been meeting with officials from various Syrian rebel groups and other Middle Eastern government officials in an attempt to create a grand coalition including Syria's Assad regime against ISIS."

Russian Novaya Gazeta reports that some groups of militants in the Middle East, such as Jaish al-Muhajireen wal-Ansar, have not been blacklisted by Russia. Jaish al-Muhajireen wal-Ansar is primarily made up of Chechens, Dagestanis and other people from CIS countries.²⁸

According to the newspaper, "several leaders of the underground movement in the village of Novosaitl, in Dagestan's Khasavyurt district, reached an agreement with the Federal Security Service (FSB), which allowed them to receive foreign passports and secure safe passage to Turkey and then on to Syria. Among them was the so-called amir of the Northern Sector of the Caucasus Emirate who, officially, is dead, but in reality, according to the report, went to Turkey. The Russian security services routinely offer "agent agreements" in exchange for safe passage to Syria, Novaya Gazeta writes. Instead of solving the pressing social issues that propelled the armed underground movement, such as corruption and the lack of social mobility

²⁷

²⁸

and opportunity, the government in Dagestan has adopted a new strategy—exporting militants to the Middle East.²⁹

The strategy is similar to the old Russian strategy in the Caucasus, when the Tsarist authorities promoted the emigration of the unwanted populations. The destination of the "steered" emigration remains the same - Turkey and the Middle East.

By allowing and promoting the emigration of Islamists, Russian authorities reduce violence in the country, but by exporting militants to the Middle East they contribute to the volatility in the Middle East."

Unquote

Estimated 2,200 people from Russia are believed to be fighting in the Middle East now. Analysts have expressed concerns about a possible deterioration of the security situation in the North Caucasus after the militants start returning to the region. Surprisingly, by now, the situation in the region is constantly improving; the number of casualties has decreased significantly over the last two years. According to the Russian expert on Islam, [REDACTED], officials from Dagestan traveled to Syria specifically to convince the Dagestani militants fighting there to stay in the Middle East and refrain from returning back home.³⁰

6. ASSESSMENT

The number of fighters from the North Caucasus region joining the various fighting groups in Syria and Iraq is constantly growing; thus weakening the insurgency in the region by exporting fighters from restive Russia region abroad.

If true, the unofficial strategy of steered travel to Syria is the cause behind the steep decline of violence in the North Caucasus region, surprisingly since the conflict in Syria and Iraq began.

On the one hand, involvement in IS activities officially became a crime in Russia in February 2015. On the other hand, Russia does not seem to have taken the appropriate steps to stem the outflow of volunteer fighters to the Middle East. Given the powers of the Russian state to control the movement of its citizens, there are few if any indications that the government is preventing people from going to the war torn region.

A recent investigative report by the Russian newspaper Novaya Gazeta states that beyond failing to create obstacles for Russian citizens seeking to go to Syria to fight, the Russian security services contribute to the outflow and regard as a threat only those who try to return from the war.

The spread of the influence of the Islamic State and its propaganda has significantly contributed to almost double number of foreign terrorist fighters who travelled to Syria/Iraq from Russian Federation in 2014.

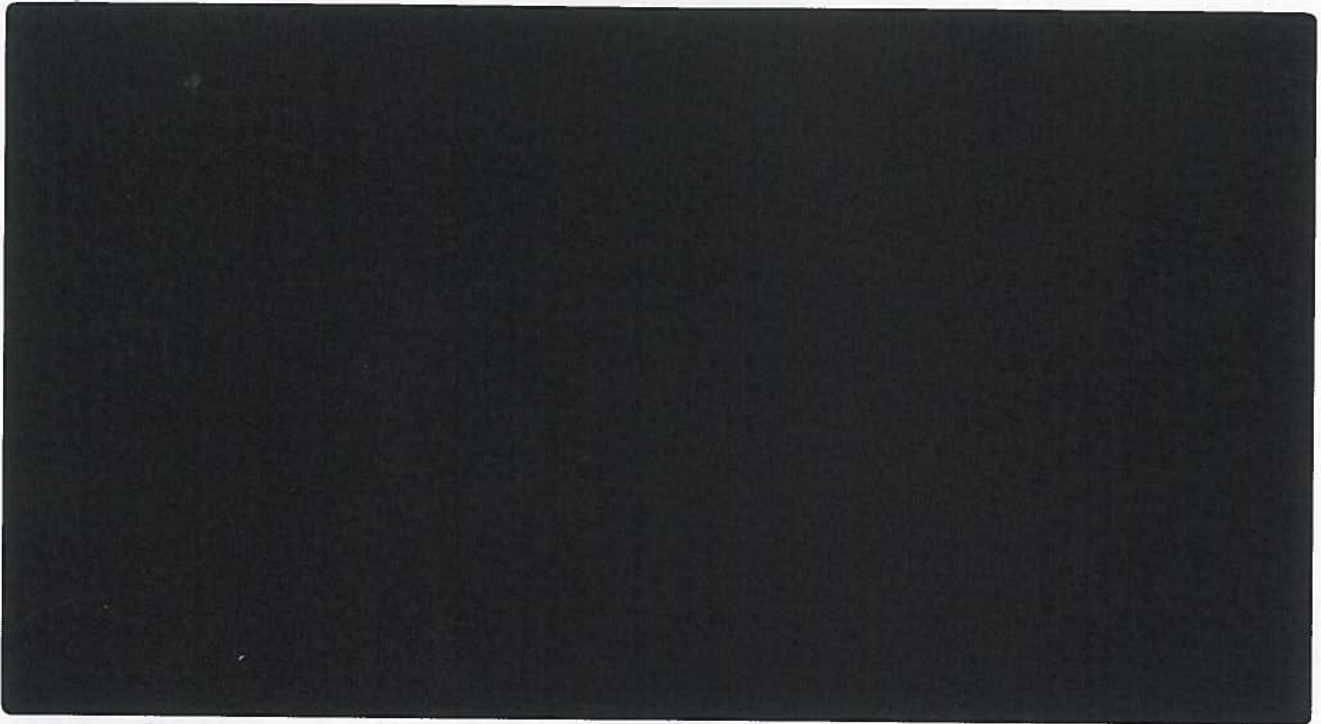
On-going exodus of fighters from the North Caucasus to join the ranks of the militant group Islamic State (IS) in Syria, after some of the Dagestani commanders and their fighters had sworn allegiance to [REDACTED] [REDACTED] is likely to continue with a recently increased impact of the IS Russian-language propaganda then the level of fighting in the North Caucasus is likely to fall ever more.

²⁹ [REDACTED] Based on extensive fieldwork in one village in the North Caucasus, reporter [REDACTED] has concluded that the "Russian special services have controlled" the flow of jihadists into Syria, where they have lately joined up not only with ISIS but other radical Islamist factions. [REDACTED] makes her case study the village of Novosaitili in Dagestan's Khasavyurt district. Since 2011, nearly 1 per cent of the total population of Novosaitili has gone to Syria—22 out of 2,500 residents. Of that figure, five were killed and five have returned home. But they didn't leave Russia, a country notoriously difficult to enter and exit, without outside help. The FSB established a "green corridor" to allow them to migrate first to Turkey, and then to Syria. Russians, including those living in the North Caucasus, can catch any of the daily non-stop flights to Istanbul and visit Turkey without a visa.

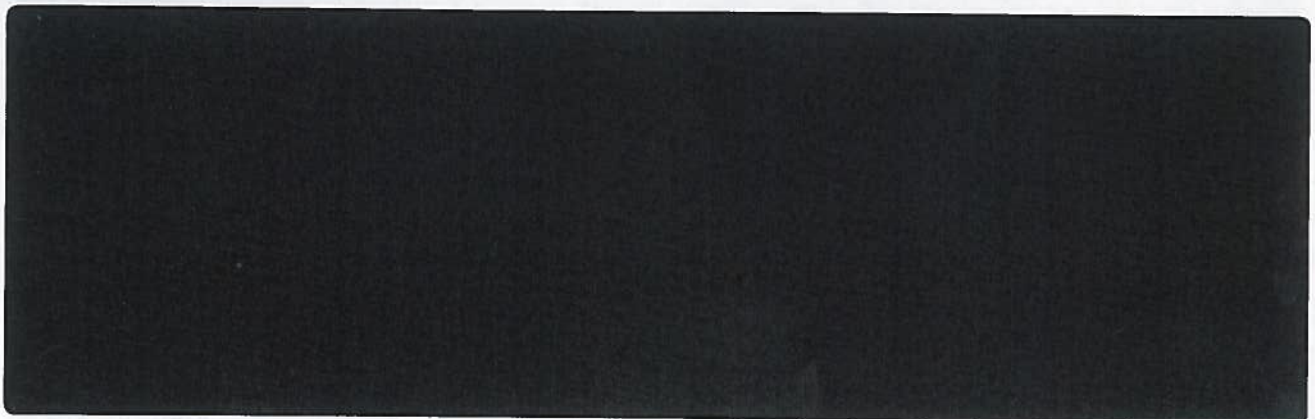
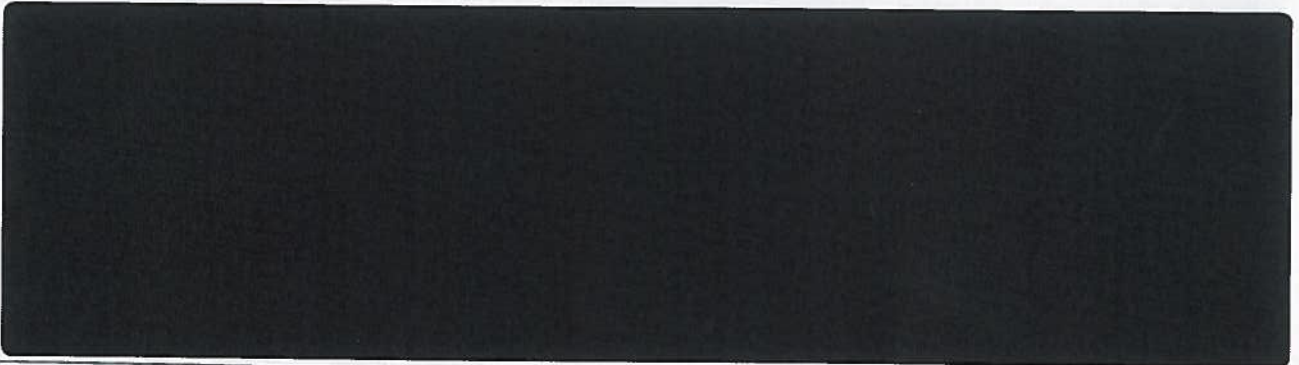
³⁰ [REDACTED]

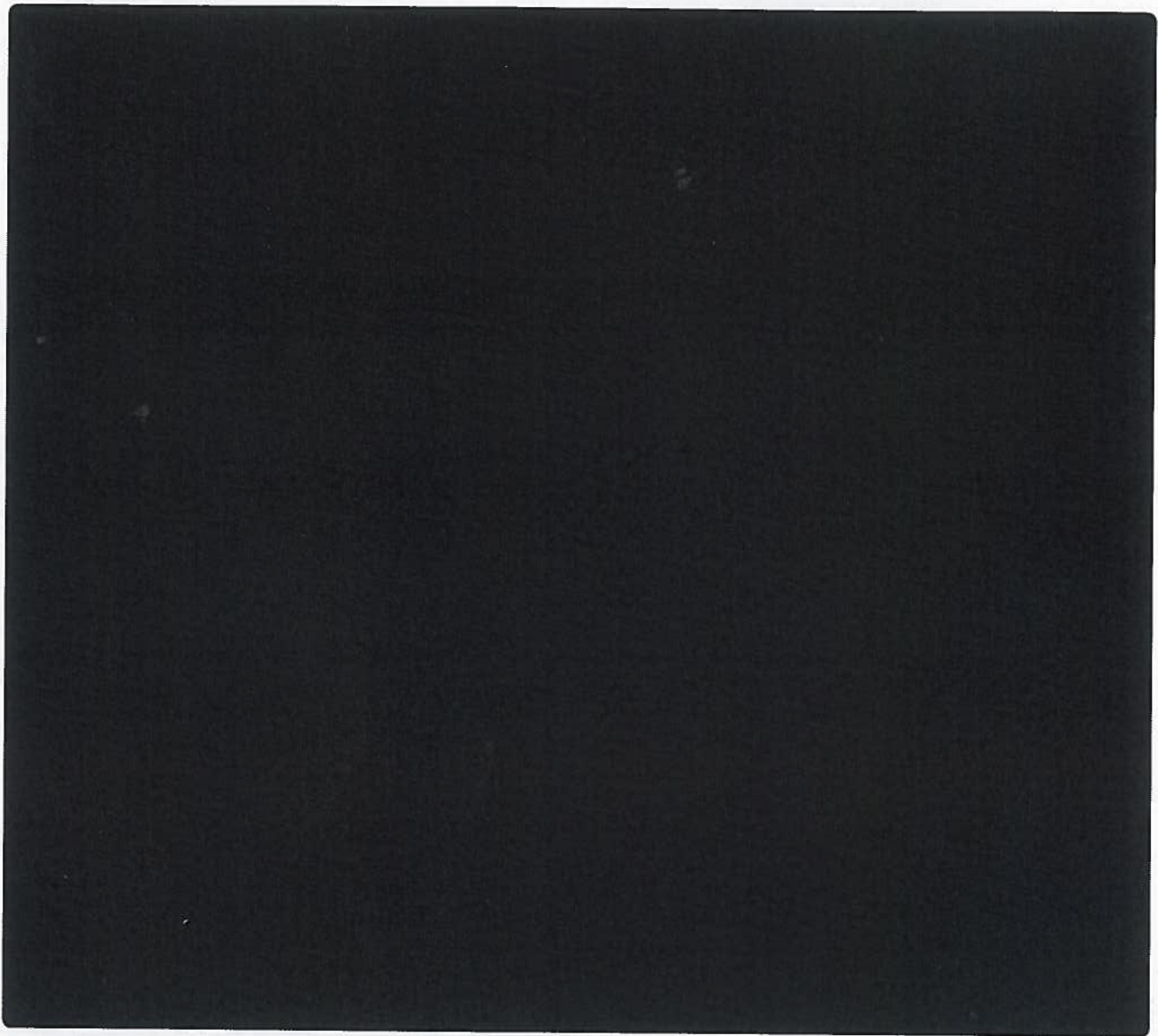
ANNEX

List of messages where fighters from the North Caucasus pledge allegiance to either the Islamic state or the Caucasus Emirate



New oaths to [redacted] since the last report:



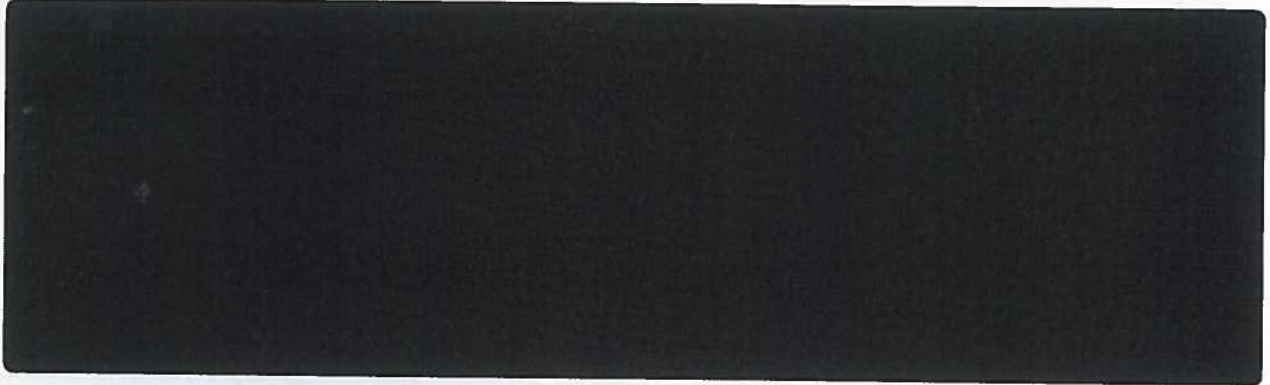


Oaths/appointments within the Caucasus Emirate since the last report:



Recent oaths given by Russian-speaking fighters in Syria:

To the Islamic state



To the Caucasus Emirate



PUBLIC
Document made partially accessible
to the public on:
10 NOV 2015

